

Item: 4

Development and Infrastructure Committee: 2 April 2019.

Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

1. Purpose of Report

To scrutinise service performance against relevant indicators within the Local Government Benchmarking Framework for 2017 to 2018, which fall under the remit of the Development and Infrastructure Service.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

The performance of the Development and Infrastructure Service against the Local Government Benchmark Framework Indicators for 2017 to 2018, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

3.1.

The Council has been reporting performance information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) since 2010 to 2011. This is a statutory function of Scottish local government.

3.2.

The Improvement Service – the national improvement service for local government in Scotland – co-ordinates and facilitates the LGBF process. Some indicators are reported directly to the Improvement Service, with data for other indicators being gathered by the Improvement Service from various sources, to which all local authorities make annual returns.

3.3.

LGBF data is published annually by the Improvement Service in its National Benchmarking Overview Report, although it is almost one year out-of-date at the time of publication. The 2017 to 2018 report was published on 6 February 2019.

4. Response to the Best Value Assurance Report 2017

4.1.

Although the Council has reported its performance in accordance with the LGBF requirements for several years, primarily through its Annual Performance Report, it was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 April 2018 that in 2019 this information would also be reported to Service Committees for scrutiny.

4.2.

This commitment is part of the Council's response to recommendations in the Best Value Assurance Report, which was published in December 2017. This has subsequently been incorporated into the Council Delivery Plan 2018 to 2023.

5. Performance

5.1.

Appendix 1 sets out the performance against the Local Government Benchmark indicators in 2017 to 2018 which fall under the remit of the Development and Infrastructure Service. This includes comparisons with previous years' performance, the Scottish average, and other local authorities in Orkney's benchmarking 'family groups'. For some indicators officers have also provided some additional context where it is felt this would be beneficial to help explain the performance.

5.2.

For Children's Services, Adult Social Care Services and Housing Services indicators, similar local authorities are grouped by their level of deprivation. For these indicators Orkney's family group includes:

- East Renfrewshire Council.
- East Dunbartonshire Council.
- Aberdeenshire Council.
- City of Edinburgh Council.
- Perth and Kinross Council.
- Aberdeen City Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.

5.3.

For Corporate Services, Economic Development, Environmental Services and Culture and Leisure Services, similar local authorities are grouped by their population density. For these indicators Orkney's family group includes:

- Western Isles Council.
- Argyll and Bute Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.

- Highland Council.
- Scottish Borders Council.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- Aberdeenshire Council.

5.4.

It should be noted that the monitoring periods for some of the indicators may differ. For example, most are for 2017 to 2018, but some may be for 2015 to 2018 or 2014 to 2018. This is because all the indicators are calculated from national figures and are generated by different organisations for different purposes.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Cross-Cutting Priorities.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to the Priority - To deliver the actions and targets in the Best Value Assurance Report recommended by the Accounts Commission, and specifically to action 5(b) - Report Local Government Benchmark Indicators to Service Committees.

7. Financial Implications

All 32 Scottish local authorities pay an annual rate to the Improvement Service for participation in the LGBF. In 2017 to 2018 this was £2,032, which increased to £2,516 for 2018 to 2019. For this, the Improvement Service provides local authorities with data services and co-ordination of family group activity.

8. Legal Aspects

Under section 1(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1992 and in accordance with section 13 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has been directed by the Accounts Commission to report on information drawn from the Local Government Benchmark Framework.

9. Contact Officers

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Performance of the Development and Infrastructure Service against the
LGBF indicators 2017 to 2018.

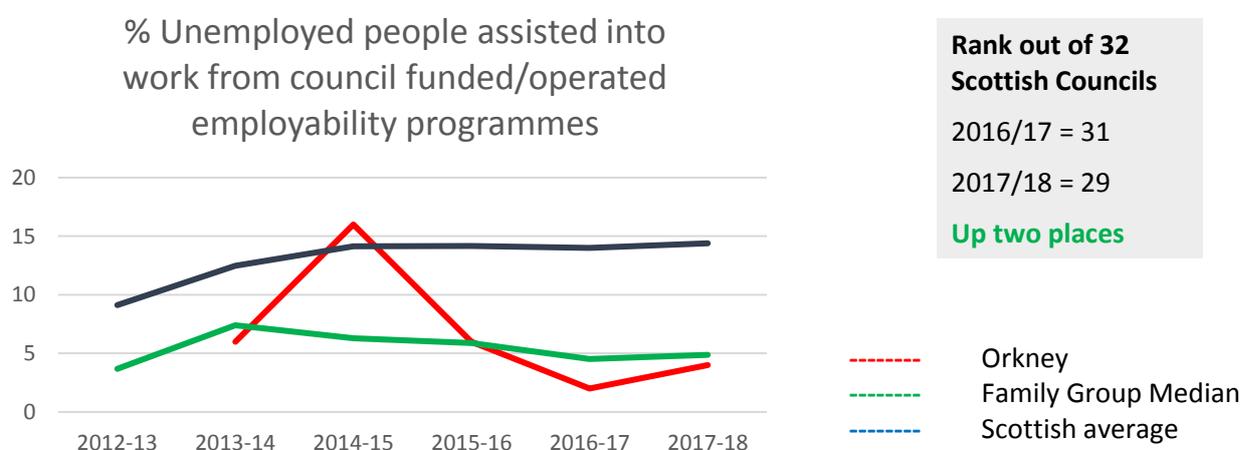
Local Government Benchmark Framework Indicators 2017/18

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECON1 – Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes

In 2017/18, 4% of unemployed people were assisted into work from council operated/funded employability programmes, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of 2%, but less than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 14.4%.

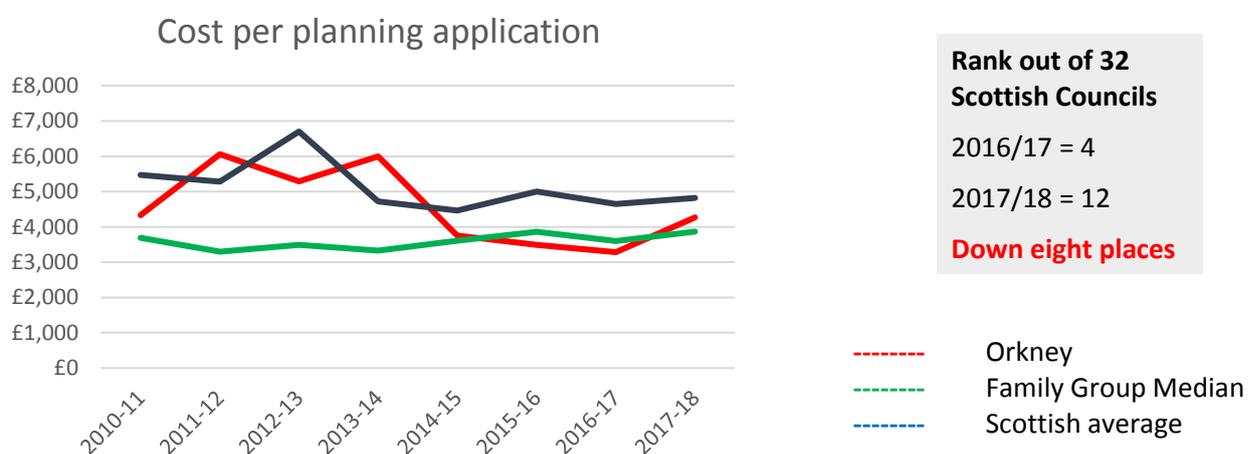
This is due in part to Orkney's low unemployment rates and the availability of national employability scheme places allocated to Orkney.



ECON2 – Cost per planning application

In 2017/18, the cost per planning application in Orkney was £4,268, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £3,284, but less than the 2017/18 Scottish average of £4,819.

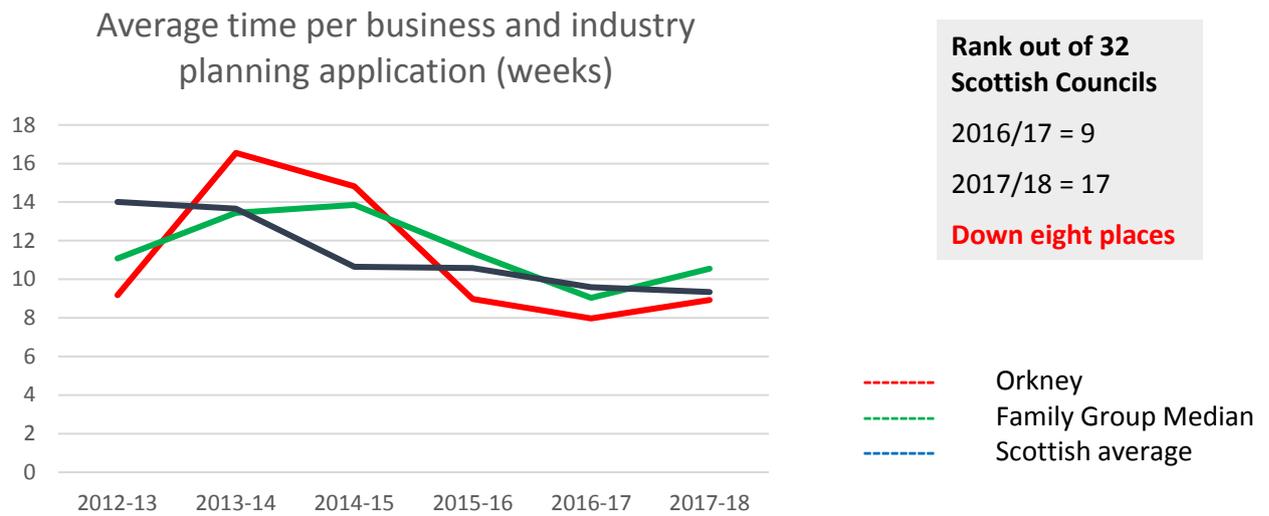
There was a minor reduction in the number of recorded applications, combined with an increase in the number of non-fee payable submissions, and advice in relation to strategic development which is also non-fee payable.



ECON3 – Average time per business and industry planning application (weeks)

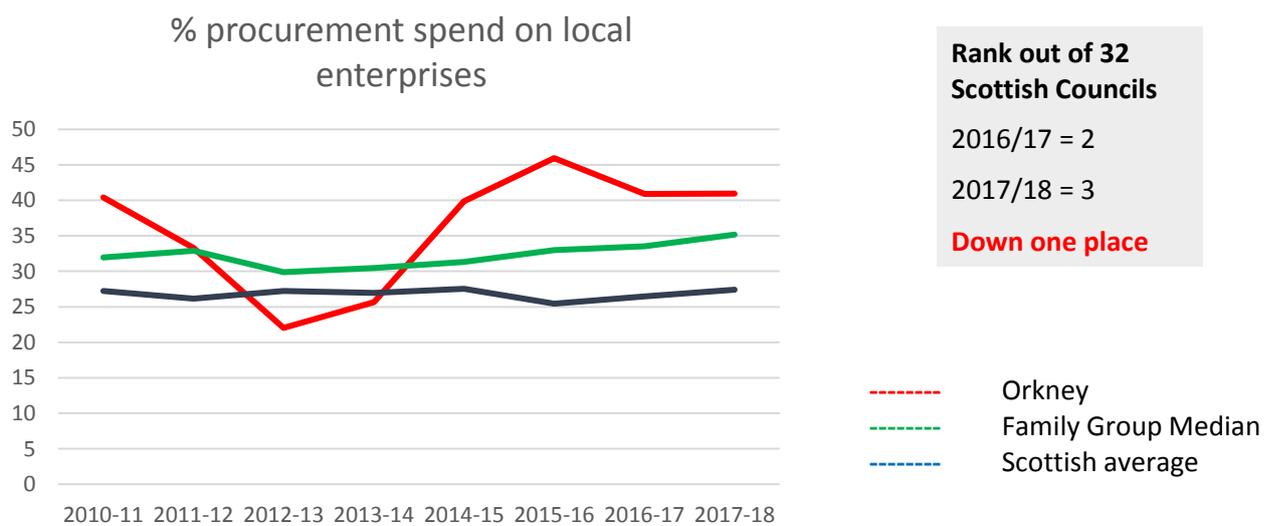
In 2017/18, the average time per business and industry planning application in Orkney was 8.92 weeks, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of 7.97 weeks, but less than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 9.43 weeks.

Given the relatively small number of cases dealt with in Orkney, one or two individual complex applications, which result in additional time required for determination, can affect the overall average figure.



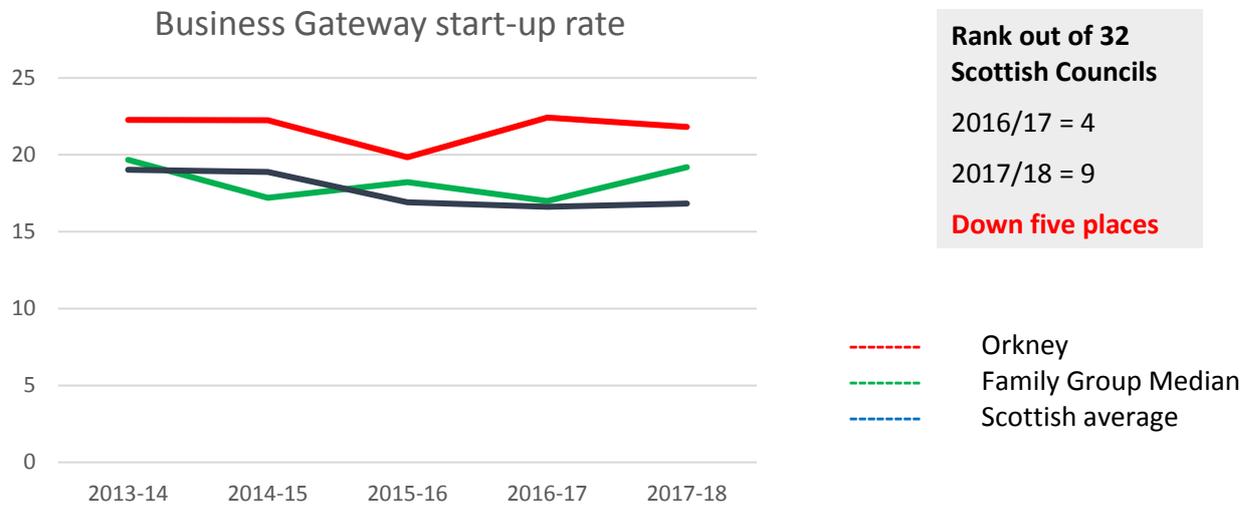
ECON4 – Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises

In 2017/18, 40.96% of council procurement was spent on local enterprises, which is about the same as the 2016/17 figure of 40.91%, and more than 2017/18 Scottish average of 27.4%.



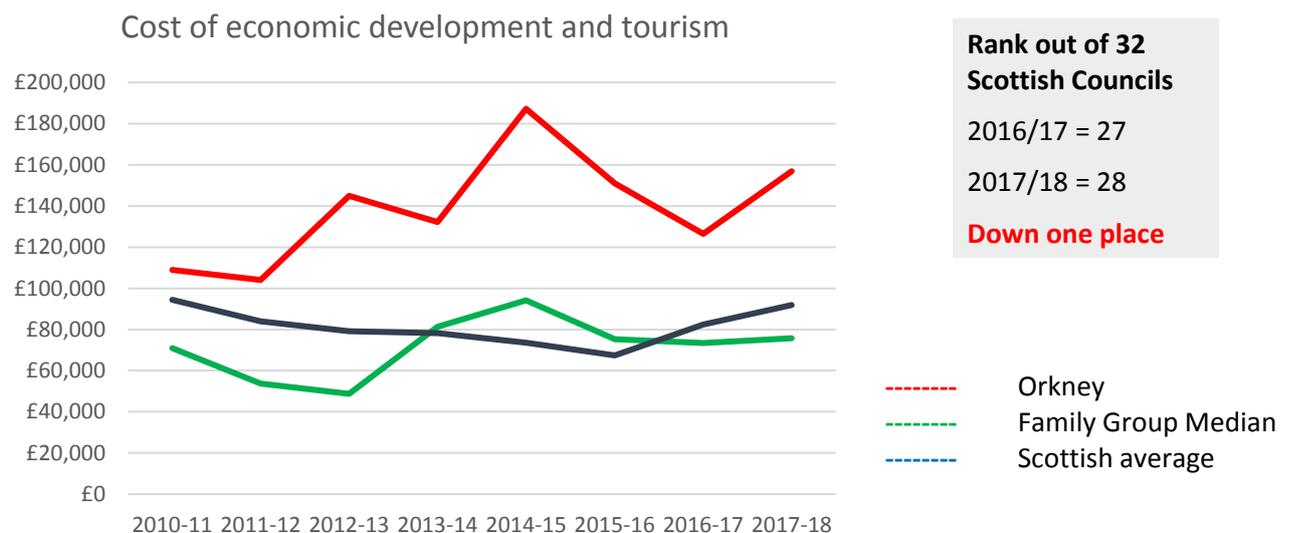
ECON5 – Number of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population

In 2017/18, the number of business gateway start-ups in Orkney per 10,000 population was 21.82, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of 22.44, but more than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 16.83.



ECON6 – Cost of economic development and tourism per 1,000 population

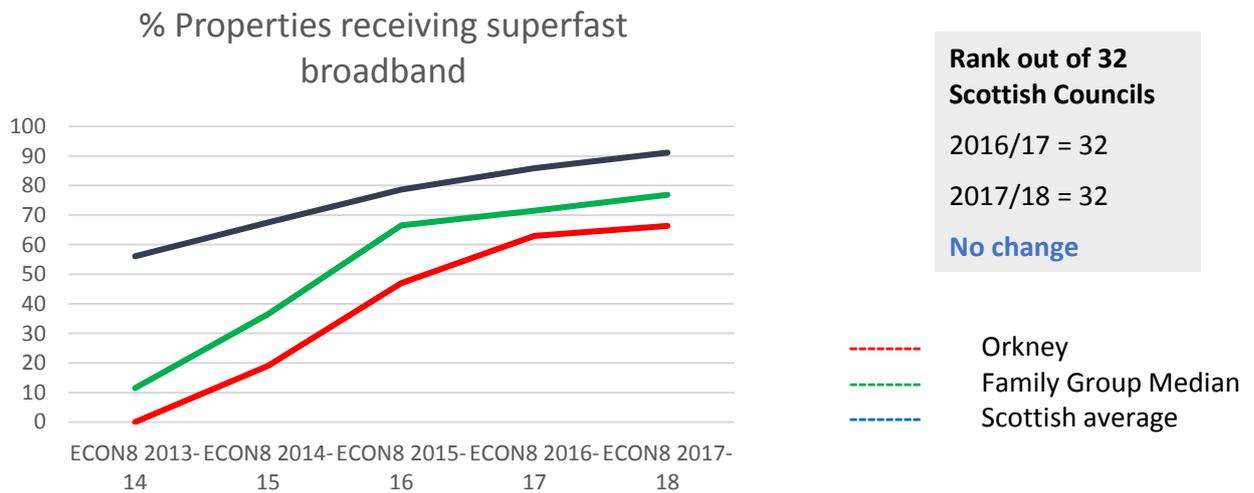
In 2017/18, the cost of economic development and tourism per 1,000 population in Orkney was £156,818, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £126,475, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £91,806.



ECON8 – Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband

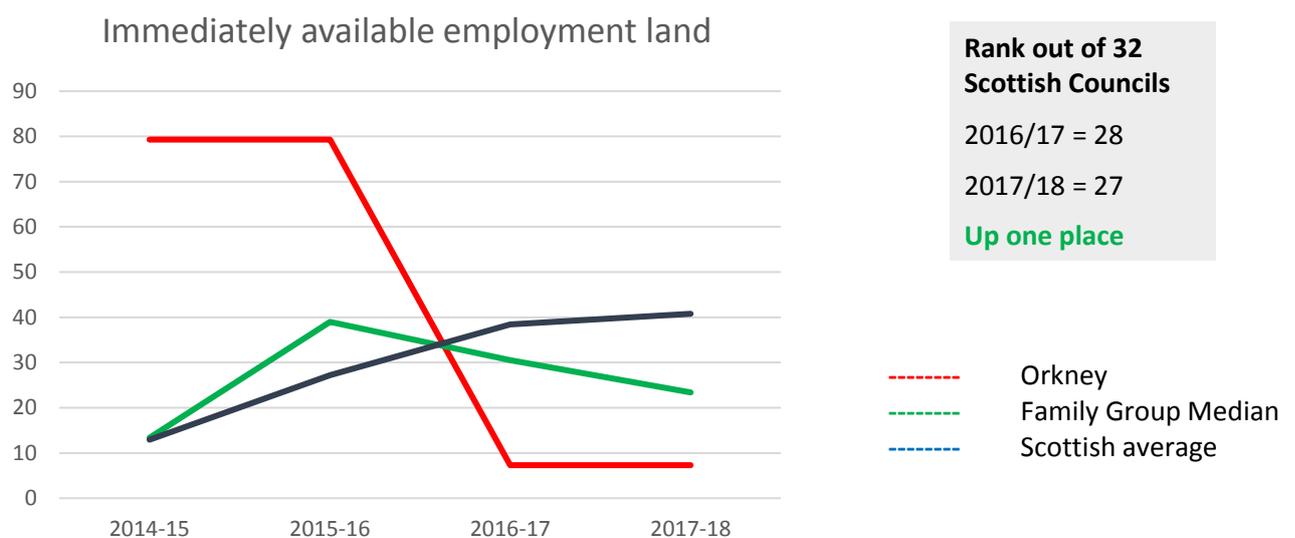
In 2017/18, 66.34% of properties in Orkney were receiving superfast broadband, which is better than the 2016/17 figure of 63%, but not as good as the 2017/18 Scottish average of 91.13%.

We are currently waiting for details of the R100 programme – the Scottish Government’s commitment to ensuring every home and business in Scotland to has access to superfast broadband by 2021.



ECON10 – Immediately available employment land as a percentage of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan

In 2017/18, 7.3% of land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan was immediately available, which is the same as the 2016/17 figure, but less than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 40.78%.

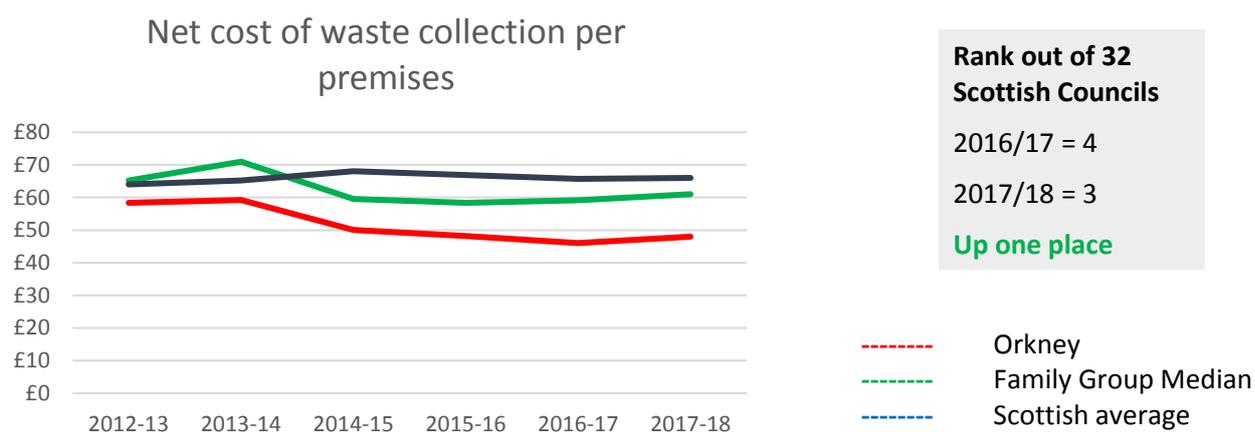


ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

ENV1a – Net cost of waste collection per premise

In 2017/18, the net cost of waste collection per premise in Orkney was £48, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £46.03, but less than the Scottish average of £65.98.

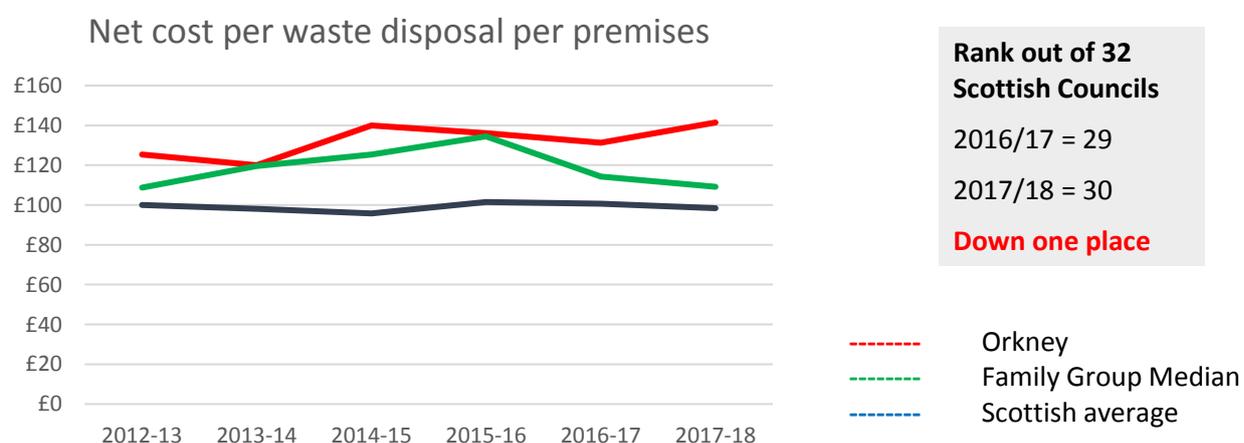
Changes to services, the Introduction of Alternate weekly collections (AWC), were completed in March/April 2018, the final phase being improvements to recycling points to complement the AWC service provision. While 2017/18 figures increased on the previous year the increase represents a rise of just 4.4%, an increase in line with standard inflationary increases.



ENV2a – Net cost of waste disposal per premise

In 2017/18, the net cost of waste disposal per premise in Orkney was £141.43, which more than the 2016/17 figure of £131.26, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £98.42.

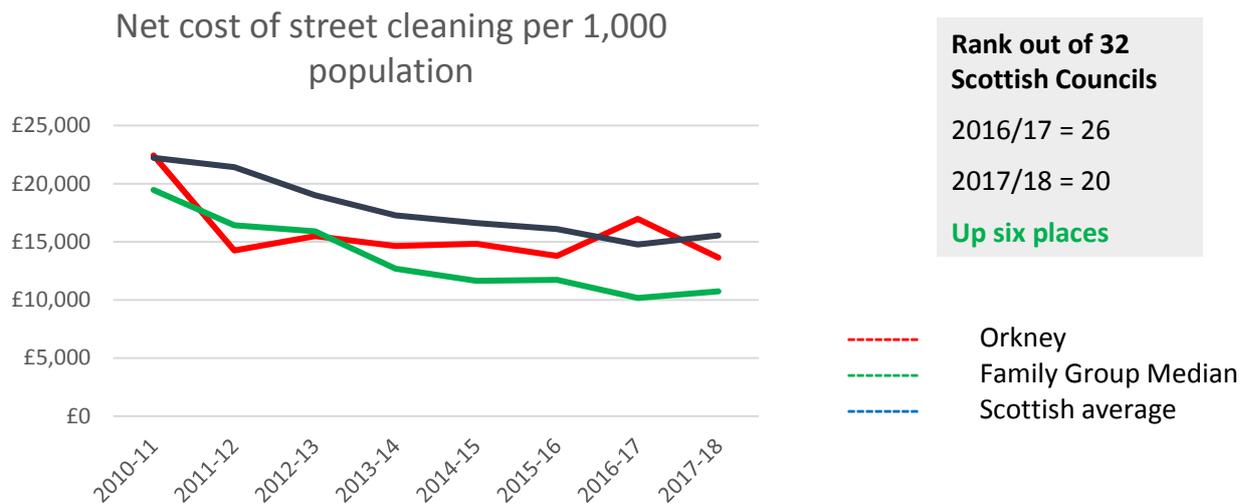
Unlike collection services, provided via in-house services, the disposal of Orkney’s waste requires shipping to Shetland for incineration. Increasing costs for disposal to Shetland are driven by operational and legislative changes beyond our control and have potential to increase above inflation in the future. Alternate disposal or treatment options are being assessed to try and stabilise or reverse costs for the future disposal of waste – for example, potential options for treatment, processing and/or further diversion.



ENV3a – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population

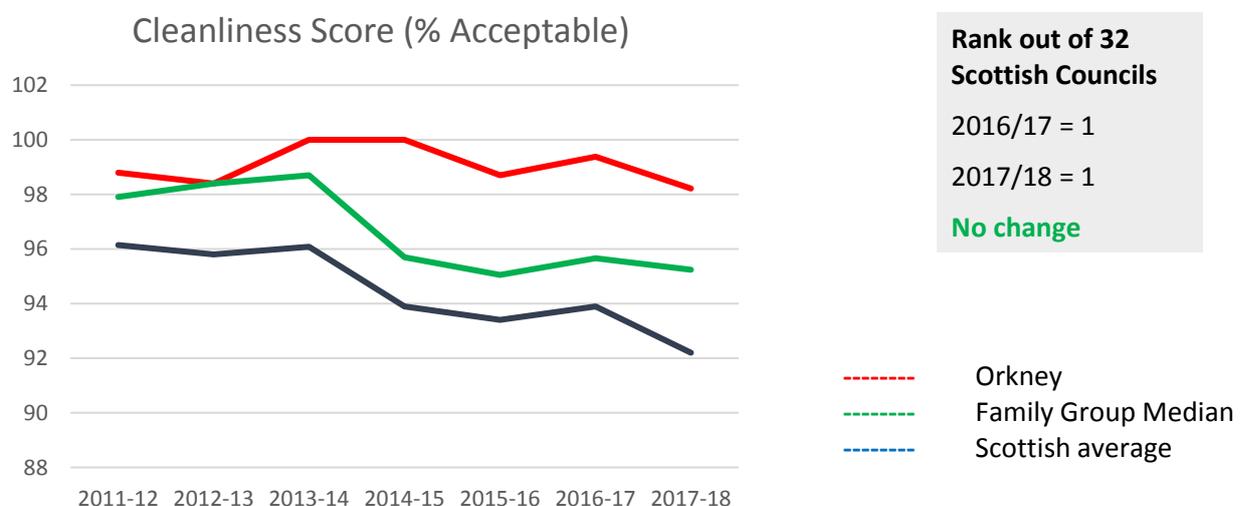
In 2017/18, the net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population in Orkney was £13,636, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £16,975, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £15,551.

Our street cleaning costs result from our flexible approach to available staff capacity, since our drivers cover Roads, Waste and Cleansing operations. So, there are times when Roads and Waste collection requirements are the priority, and cleansing operations are as a result delayed, meaning that the plant/vehicles are not running as efficiently per kilometre of swept road length, leading to higher average costs.



ENV3c – Street cleanliness score

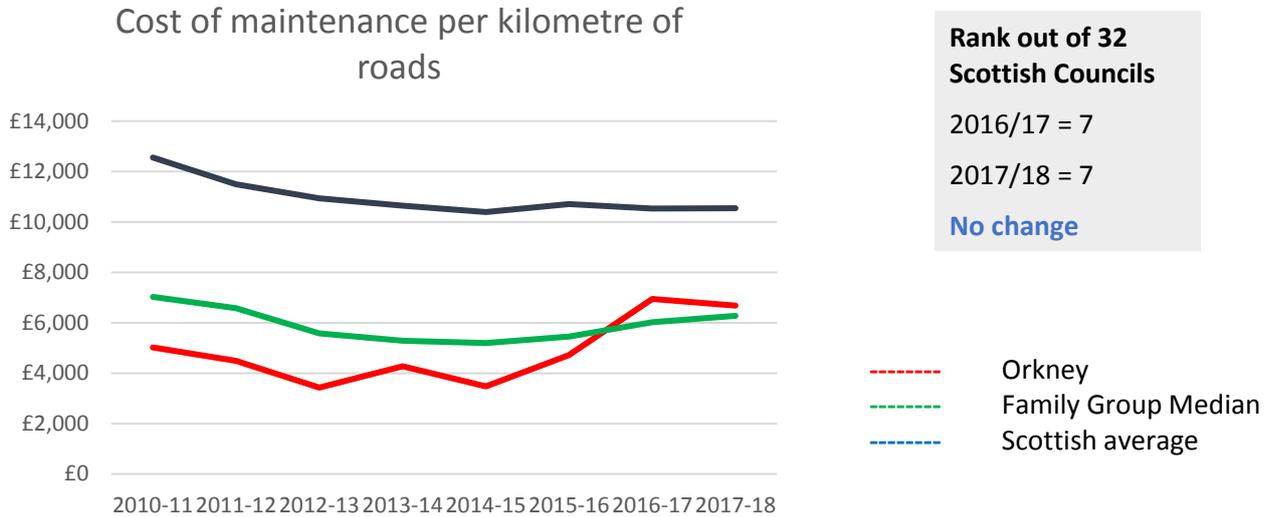
In 2017/18, the street cleanliness score in Orkney was 98.21%, which is not as good as the 2016/17 figure of 99.38%, but better than the 2017/18 Scottish average of 92.2%.



ENV4a – Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads

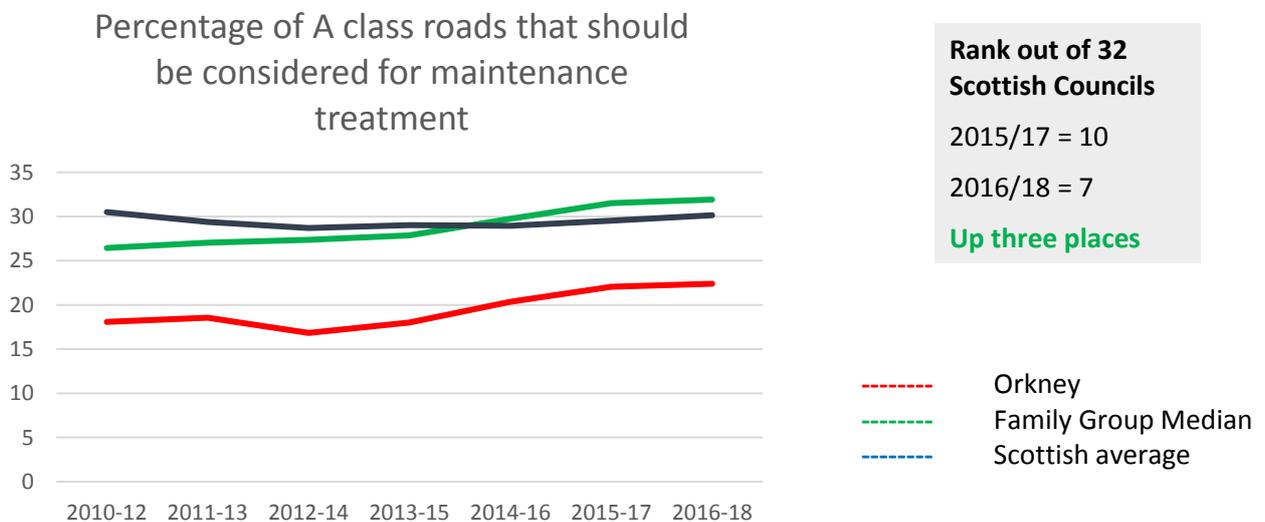
In 2017/18, the cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads in Orkney was £6,681, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of £6,945, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £10,547.

The volume of work carried out on Orkney’s roads in 2017/18 was reduced due to the decrease in revenue surface treatment budget.



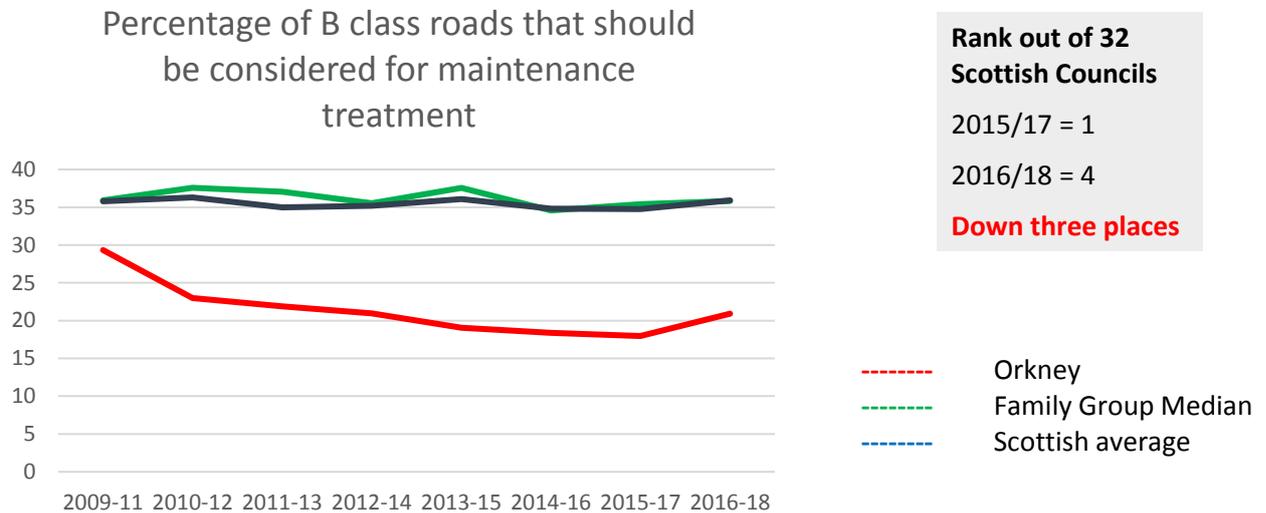
ENV4b – Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

In 2016/18, 22.39% of class A roads in Orkney should have been considered for maintenance treatment, which is more than the 2015/17 figure of 22.07%, but less than the 2016/18 Scottish average of 30.16%.



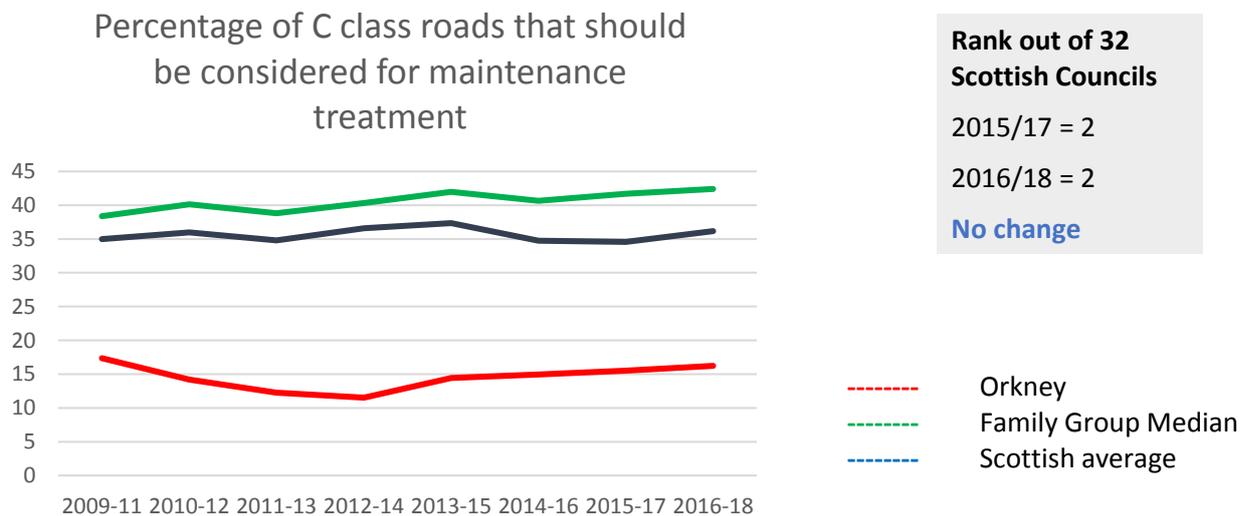
ENV4c – Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

In 2016/18, 20.92% of class B roads in Orkney should have been considered for maintenance treatment, which is more than the 2015/17 figure of 17.96%, but less than the 2016/18 Scottish average of 35.9%.



ENV4d – Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

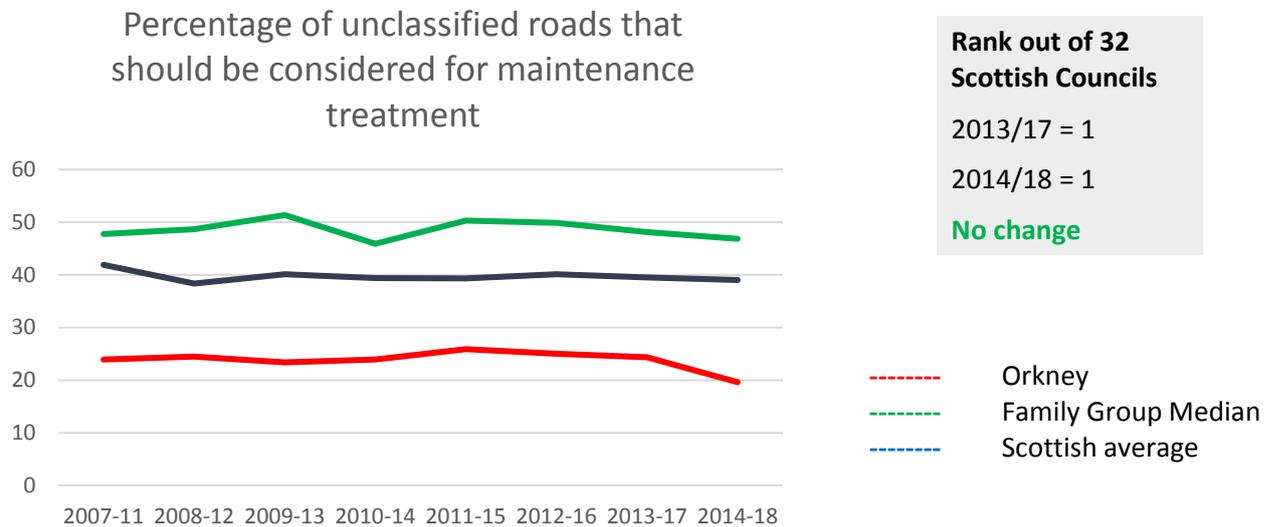
In 2016/18, 16.24% of class C roads in Orkney should have been considered for maintenance treatment, which is more than the 2015/17 figure of 15.49%, but less than the 2016/18 Scottish average of 36.16%.



The figures for class A, B and C roads show marginal increases in cost. This is as a result of a reduced budget and an increase in material costs, while resources have been more focussed on Class A roads. However, it must be stressed that we are still well below the Scottish average across all three categories.

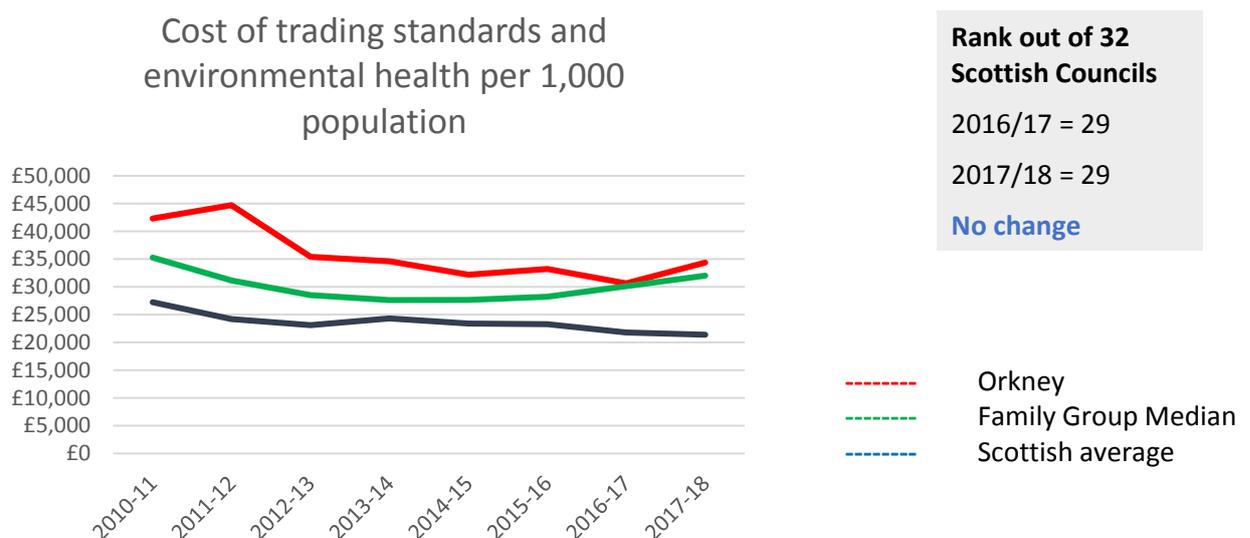
ENV4e – Percentage of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

In 2014/18, 19.61% of unclassified roads in Orkney should have been considered for maintenance treatment, which is less than the 2013/17 figure of 24.34%, and the 2014/18 Scottish average of 38.99%.



ENV5 – Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population

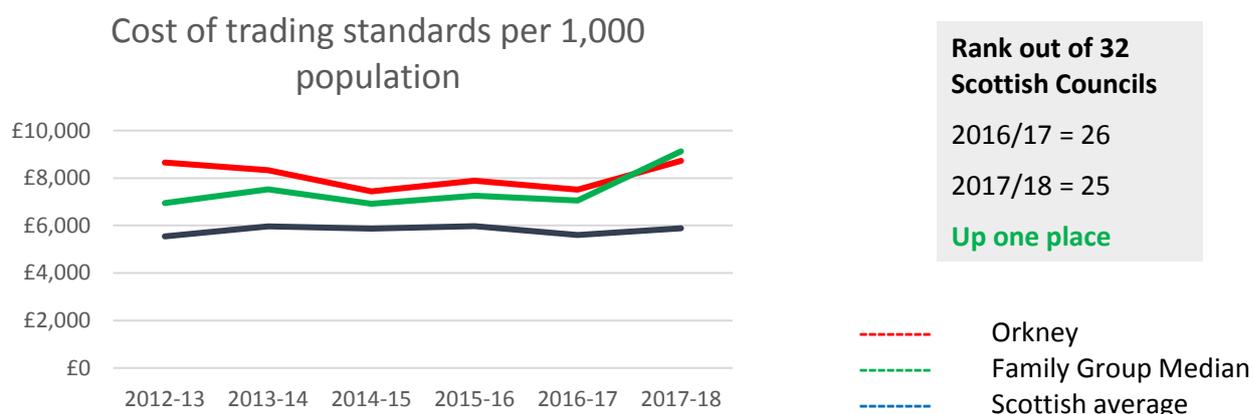
In 2017/18, the cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population in Orkney was £34,364, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £30,639, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £21,385.



ENV5a – Cost of trading standards, money advice and citizen advice per 1,000 population

In 2017/18, the cost of trading standards, money advice and citizen advice per 1,000 population in Orkney was £8,727, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £7,503, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £5,890.

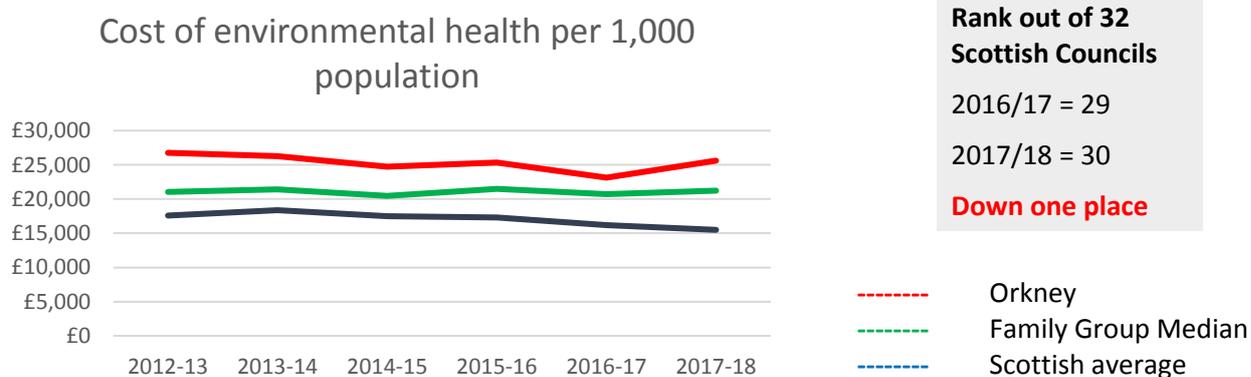
In all Scottish councils there is a minimum level of core service required to provide the trading standards service. This has an adverse impact on our costs as there are no economies of scale. Despite Orkney’s low population base, we still provide a good level of trading standards services to Orkney’s consumers, to our diverse business types, and across our dispersed geography. In April 2017 the animal welfare post transferred to Trading Standards which also contributed to the increased cost.



ENV5b – Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population

In 2017/18, the cost of environmental health per 1,000 population in Orkney was £25,636, which is more than the 2016/17 figure of £23,131, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of £15,496.

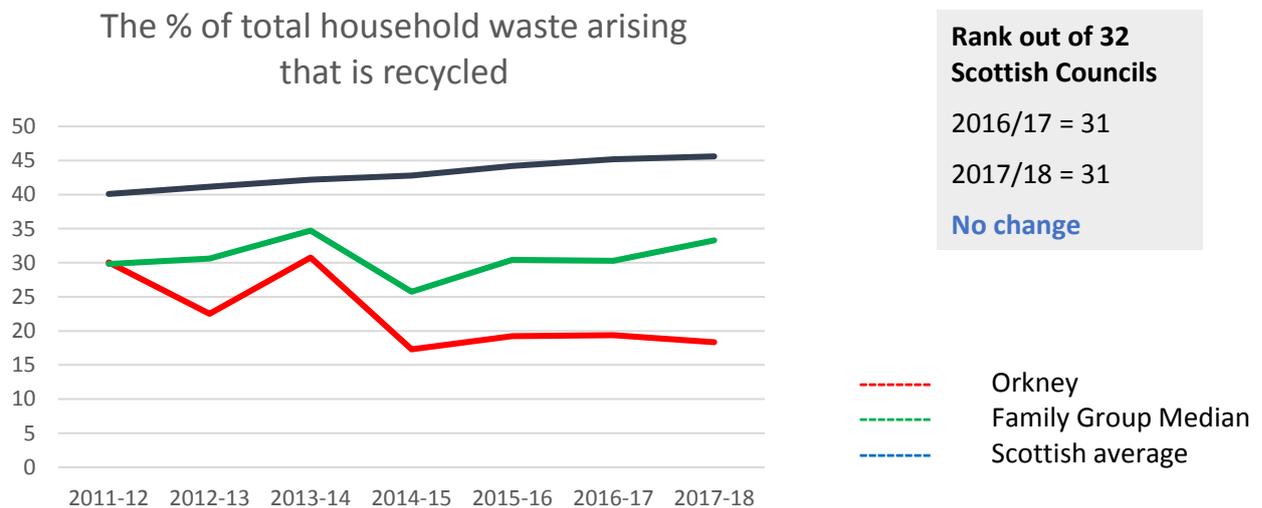
In all Scottish councils there is a minimum level of core service required to provide the environmental health service. Despite Orkney’s low population base, we still provide a good level of environmental health services to Orkney’s consumers, to our diverse business types, and across our dispersed geography. This has an adverse impact on our costs as there are no economies of scale. Central establishment charges to the Environmental Health Service also increased from £61,000 in 2016/17 to £128,000 in 2017/18.



ENV6 – Percentage of household waste arising that is recycled

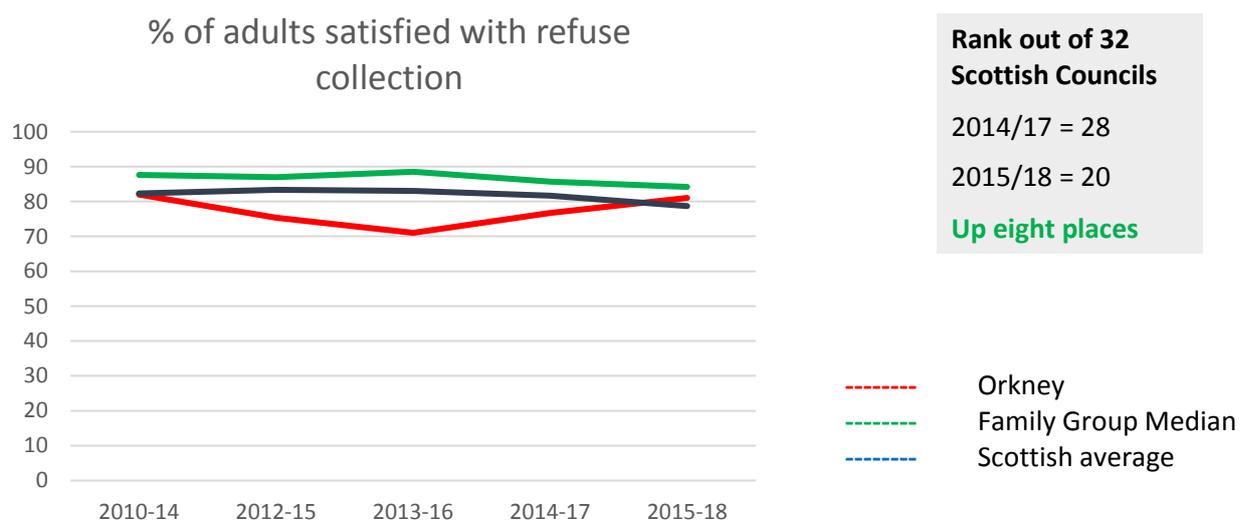
In 2017/18, 18.33% of household waste in Orkney was recycled, which is less than the 2016/17 figure of 19.39%, and the 2017/18 Scottish average of 45.6%.

There was a significant drop in Orkney’s recycling rate between 2013/14 and 2014/15 which was a direct result of changes to the reporting of recycled materials. This 12% drop reflected that composted waste could no longer count towards recycling rates.



ENV7a – Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection

In 2015/18, 81% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with refuse collection, which is better than the 2014/17 figure of 76.67%, and the 2015/18 Scottish average of 78.67%.



ENV7b – Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning

In 2015/18, 78.67% of adults in Orkney were satisfied with street cleaning, which is not as good as the 2014/17 figure of 80.33%, but better than the 2015/18 Scottish average of 69.67%.

