



A National Statistics publication for Scotland

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2022

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1. Introduction

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is a data collection to establish the extent and state of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. The survey has been operating since 1988. The data are collected from local authorities and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority. From 2011 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park took responsibility for surveying vacant and derelict land within the park boundaries. Sites within Cairngorms National Park boundaries are still surveyed by the relevant local authorities. The survey base date is 31 March 2022.

These statistics provide the evidence base for monitoring the extent and state of urban vacant and derelict land. Also for monitoring the remediation of vacant and derelict land and progress in bringing it into re-use. The statistics can be used to inform the programming of rehabilitation, planning, and reuse of urban vacant and derelict sites.

The statistics are used by the Scottish Government to help allocate and monitor the impact of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF). The fund aims to tackle long-term vacant and derelict land in Scotland. Its objectives are to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, promote environmental justice and improved quality of life, and to support communities to flourish and tackle inequalities. For 2022 to 2023, five local authorities received a share of £7.605m reflecting the extent of vacant and derelict land in these areas and levels of deprivation.

The statistics will also be used in future years to monitor the impact of the low carbon Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme. This is a £50 million capital programme scheduled over five years to help with tackling persistent vacant and derelict land, supporting place based approaches to delivering regeneration and sustainable inclusive growth, as part of a 'just transition' to net-zero.

2. Summary of Findings

- The amount of derelict and urban vacant land fell by 3% in 2022. This continued the downward trend. The amount has fallen by more than a quarter (27%) since 2016.
- Sites reused for housing - more sites were brought back into use for residential (including housing) purposes than any other use (140 of the 262 reused sites).
- Living within 500 metres of derelict land - in Scotland 27% of the population were estimated to live within 500 metres of a derelict site, though there are regional differences. In Na h-Eileanan Siar none of the population lives within 500 metres of a derelict site whilst this is 69% in North Lanarkshire.
- Funding sources for land reuse - 374 hectares of derelict or urban vacant land was brought back into use in 2022. Where the funding source was known 11% used public sector funding only, 50% used private sector funding only and 21% involved a mix of public and private funding. The Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund made either a partial or full contribution to the removal of 14 hectares.

3. General Points to Note

Vacant land is land unused for the purposes for which it is held and which is viewed as an appropriate site for development. This land must either have had prior development on it or preparatory work must have taken place in anticipation of future development.

Derelict land (and buildings) is land which has been so damaged by development, that it is incapable of development for beneficial use without rehabilitation. In addition the land must currently not be used for the purpose for which it is held or a use acceptable in the local plan. Land also qualifies as derelict if it has an un-remedied previous use which could limit future development. For both vacant and derelict land, site records must be at least 0.1 hectares in size to be included.

Urban Vacant land: the survey covers vacant land that is located within settlements of over 2,000 in population. Some local authorities have also surveyed for vacant land within settlements of under 2,000 in population. These statistics can be found in Annex 2. The survey does not cover vacant land in the countryside.

All references to '**Area**' and '**Size**' are measured in **hectares**.

1 hectare = 10,000 square metres (100 metres x 100 metres). The playing area of an international-sized rugby union pitch is just over one hectare.

All references to '**Sites**' are **numbers**.

4. Points to note for 2022 survey

Responses: Angus did not carry out a survey for 2022 and results have been rolled forward from 2021.

Revisions: Small revisions to the data for 2016 to 2021 have been carried out based on updates to information about sites. For example, sites have been added that have been identified as having first become derelict or vacant in previous years.

[View the revisions policy web page](#)

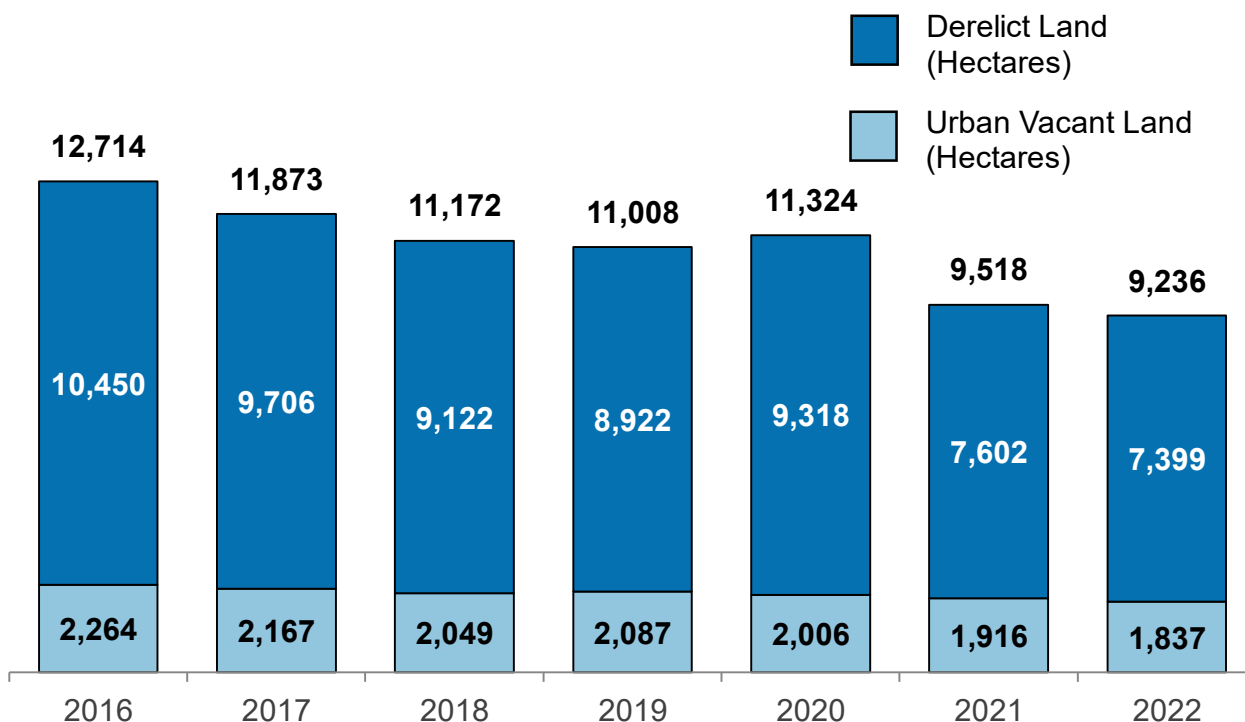
5. Derelict and Urban Vacant Land: Location and Trends

In 2022 there were 9,236 hectares of derelict and urban vacant land. Derelict land made up four-fifths (80%) of the total. Five councils (North Lanarkshire, North Ayrshire, Glasgow, East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway) together contain over 50% of all derelict and urban vacant land.

The number of sites was 3,186. There are ten derelict sites with an area over 100 hectares. The largest are Eastriggs former Ministry of Defence depot in Dumfries and

Galloway (432 hectares), a former explosives factory in Ardeer, North Ayrshire (332 hectares) and the Port of Arderseir in Highland (302 hectares).

Chart 1: Derelict and Urban Vacant Land, 2016-2022



The downward trend in the amount of derelict and urban vacant land continued in 2022. The amount has fallen by more than a quarter (27%) since 2016. The largest fall was in 2021 when 11 former coal mining sites were naturalised and 2 former airfields were reclaimed.

While the majority of derelict sites are located within settlements (77%), derelict sites in the countryside are larger. Sites in the countryside make up 53% of the area of derelict land. The amount of urban vacant land has been falling steadily over the period 2016 to 2022. Almost a fifth (19%) of urban vacant land is located in Glasgow City.

6. People's Proximity to Derelict Land

Over a quarter (27%) of Scotland's population is estimated to live within 500 metres of a derelict site. A further 24% are estimated to live between 500 metres and 1,000 metres of a derelict site.

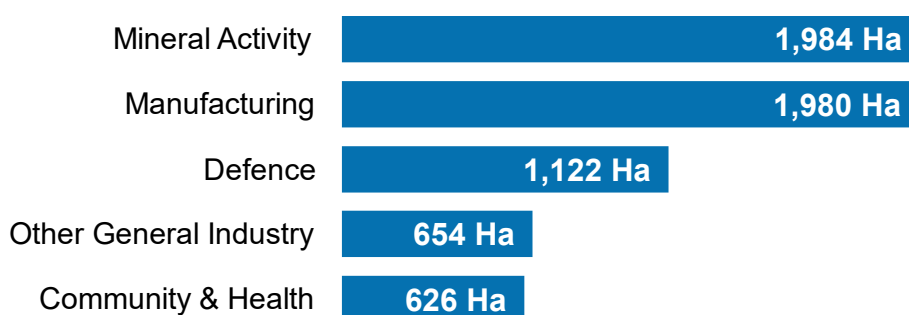
People's proximity to derelict land varies significantly by authority. The council with the highest proportion of its population living within 500m of derelict land is North Lanarkshire (69%). In Na h-Eileanan Siar none of the population lives within 500 metres of a derelict site. Almost a sixth (16%) of Scotland's population lives within 500m of a long-term derelict site (became derelict prior to 2006).

7. Derelict and Urban Vacant Land: Location Relative to Deprivation

Eleven percent of derelict and urban vacant land is located within the 15% most deprived data zones. More than half (51%) of all derelict and urban vacant land located within the 15% most deprived data zones is in Glasgow City.

8. Derelict and Urban Vacant Land: Previous Uses and Development Potential

Chart 2: Top 5 Previous Uses of Derelict and Urban Vacant Land, 2022



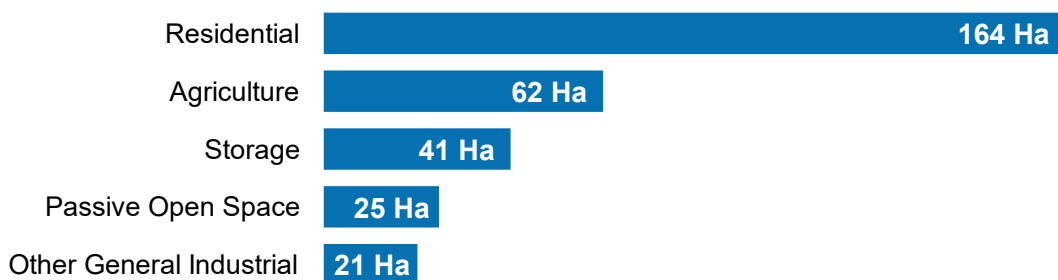
More than a quarter of derelict land (27%) had previously been used for mineral activity. Almost a quarter had been used for manufacturing. For urban vacant land, 13% had been used for manufacturing and a further 13% had former residential use.

Almost half (47%) of urban vacant land is considered to be developable in the short-term (within 5 years). This is lower for derelict land at 19%. However more than half of derelict land is considered developable within 10 years.

9. Derelict and Urban Vacant Land Reclaimed or Brought Back into Use

A total of 374 hectares (262 sites) were reclaimed or brought back into use since the previous survey. A further 172 hectares (56 sites) were removed because they had become naturalised.

Chart 3: Top 5 New Uses of Derelict and Urban Vacant Land Reclaimed or Brought Back into Use, 2022

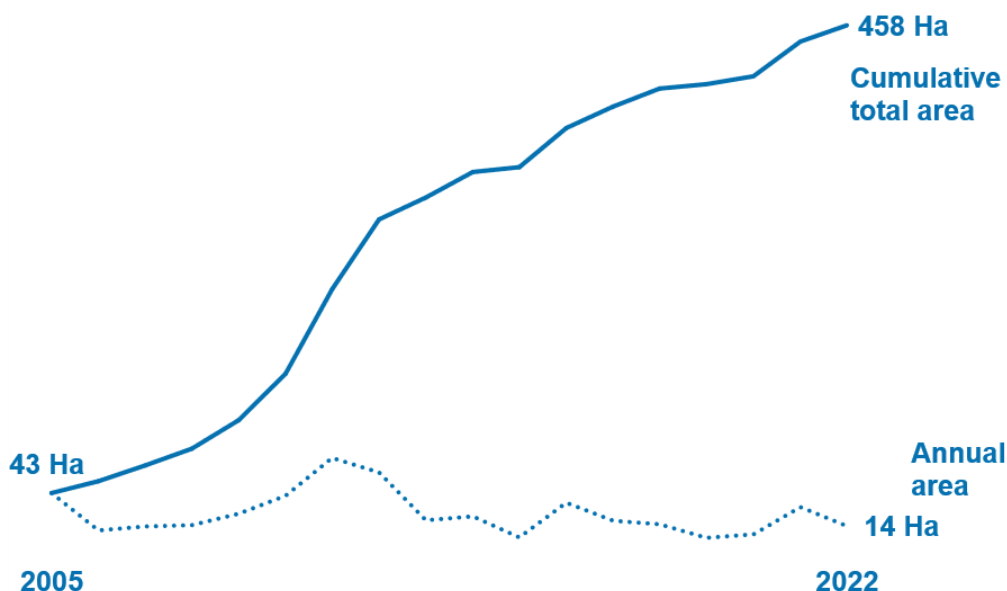


Almost half (44%) of the land was brought into residential use.

Private sector funding brought back 168 hectares into use. Public sector funding accounted for 36 hectares and mixed public and private funding was used for 71 hectares.

Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF)

Chart 4: Derelict and Urban Vacant Land reclaimed with contributions from the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Fund 2022



The Vacant and Derelict Land Fund has made either a partial or full contribution to the removal of 14 hectares (7 sites).

Across the seven councils in the VDLF for 2005 to 2022, in 2022 an estimated 186,400 properties (both private households and communal establishments) were within 500 metres of land reclaimed with the involvement of the VDLF.

10. Former Surface Coal Mines

A number of opencast coal mining sites were affected by the liquidation of Scottish Coal and ATH Resources in 2013 across sites in East Ayrshire, Fife and South Lanarkshire. Sites in East Ayrshire were affected by a shortfall in restoration bonds that meant the level of financial guarantees fell short of the amount of money required to return all the land to its original condition.

In 2015, East Ayrshire Council identified 2,217 hectares of former surface coal mines in East Ayrshire that were considered to be derelict. The council has reviewed the sites each year, reducing site sizes to reflect any areas of naturalisation. The total area of these former surface coal mines is now 557 hectares, a reduction of 75% since the initial listing.

Annex – Data Quality and Processing

A.1. Data Quality

Details of the quality assurance checks undertaken on survey returns have been published on our website. [View details of the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey quality assurance checks](#)

A.2 Planning Authority response rate

The overall data quality for a particular year will depend on how many planning authorities have updated their survey for that year. If a planning authority does not update their data then data for the previous year is rolled forward. This will provide a reasonable estimate but will not take account of any changes in the latest year.

Annex Table 5 in the supporting file of tables records planning authority annual participation in the survey. Response rates should be borne in mind when using and interpreting the figures for authorities, including any time series and Scotland totals.

A.3 Removal and Addition of Sites

The means by which new sites are detected are largely centred on the expert knowledge of planning authority planning officers supported by the SVDLS guidelines which clearly state the definitions for the recording of derelict and urban vacant land. Sometimes a site or part of a site will be changed in such a way that it no longer meets the criteria for inclusion in the survey. Statistics on these sites removed for definitional reasons are reported in Annex Table 4 in the supporting file. [Download the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey guidance for authorities \(PDF\)](#).

A.4 Changes in Historic Data, 2016-2022

Revisions are carried out to improve the statistics supplied in the previous years. These are only carried out for up to six prior years. This is done to allow for improved time series analysis. Sites that planning authorities indicated had become derelict or vacant in previous years were added. Sites identified by the planning authority as having been re-

used earlier or incorrectly included in the survey were removed. Increased use of GIS tools has resulted in more accurate mapping of sites over time. The revised data for 2016 to 2022 is used throughout the tables and time series analysis of this bulletin.

The SVDLS has been running continuously since 1993. Historical data on the amount of derelict and urban vacant land in Scotland for the years 2000 to 2015 is given in Annex Table 1 of the supporting file. These statistics are not revised and care should be taken when comparing 2000-2015 data in Annex Table 1 to the data shown in this publication.

A.5 Land area eligible

Local authorities are asked to note all derelict land for the survey but to limit recording vacant land to land within settlements as defined in their latest council approved local plan.

A.6 Coverage of Settlements

Local authorities were asked to survey for vacant land within all settlements defined in their latest council approved local plans. However, due to resource constraints some local authorities (particularly those covering large rural areas), were unable to do a full survey of every settlement for vacant land. All returned surveys covered every settlement with a population of 2,000 or more. To ensure consistency, the statistics presented on vacant land throughout this bulletin refer only to land located within settlements that have a population of at least 2,000 (according to the local plan). Some local authorities also undertook either a full or partial survey for vacant land in settlements of under 2,000 in population - these are reported separately from the rest of the bulletin in Annex Table 2 of the supporting file.

A.7 Estimate of the proportion of local authority population living within a defined distance of a Derelict Site

Tables 9 and 10 in the publication show estimates by local authority of the percentage of their population living within various distances of derelict land. For Table 9 a circular buffer zone based on the area of each derelict site was drawn around the grid co-ordinate points supplied for that site. This gives an estimated boundary for each site therefore data should

be treated with care as actual site boundaries are not being used. Table 10 used the same estimated site boundaries and also estimated the proportion of local authority population living in close proximity to land that has been derelict prior 2001. In addition to derelict sites which were identified as being derelict prior to 2001 the analysis also included sites where the length of time derelict is unknown but where the first site inspection occurred prior 2001.

To measure the proportion of each local authority population that lives within a certain distance of derelict land, a national data set was constructed that estimated the population of each property identified as likely to be residential in the latest National Records of Scotland (NRS) Address Register. Average household size figures were calculated by dividing NRS census (2011) population by census household counts at the Census Output Area (COA) level. All records in the Address Register that were identified as likely to be residential were assigned an estimated household size figure based on the average household size of the COA they fall within.

To ensure consistency with previously published population estimates, the latest available small-area estimates of population by NRS were used as a control factor on the calculated household size figures. For each property in the Address Register based dataset, the distance to the nearest estimated derelict site boundary was calculated, to highlight those properties within the defined distance of derelict land. Those properties' estimated populations were then aggregated up by data zone to give a proportion of each data zone's population (and hence each local authority's population) estimated to live within the defined distance of derelict land.

A.8 Deprivation Areas using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020)

Table 11 shows the amount of derelict and urban vacant land located within Scotland's 15% most deprived data zones. Those data zones are identified using the 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The SIMD 2020 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland. Sites in the SVDLS are identified as being located within Scotland's most deprived areas if their grid co-ordinate point (i.e. the centre of the site) falls within a 15% most deprived data zone. Care should be taken with this data as there are instances of sites crossing data zone boundaries, hence part of the site may

be in a 15% most deprived data zone, whilst the other part could be outwith. Further information on the SIMD 2020 project can be found on the Scottish Government's web page at: [Visit the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation webpage.](#)

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Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Planning Statistics

Communities Analysis Division

Telephone: 0131 244 0439

e-mail: planstats@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician

Telephone: 0131 244 0442

e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

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If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to:

Chief Statistician

St Andrews House

Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

Telephone: (0131) 244 0302

e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

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