“All models are wrong, but some are useful” George Box

London open spaces expenditure and income 2008 to 2019

Presented by Occam’s Razor Consulting Ltd

Purpose of the exercise

- To find verifiable, publicly available data instead of rumour and anecdote
- To collect and process data in a repeatable way
- To present data in a way that allows comparisons to be made
- To assist the creation of meaningful performance indicators

Where are the data from?

- Base data - annual returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Inflation data - H M Treasury
- Population data – Office for National Statistics
- Area managed by each authority – Ordnance Survey

Base data

Local authorities report income and expenditure data for all activities

Information is categorized into broad activity areas, e.g. Housing, Culture

Within each broad category there are more specific sections, e.g. Waste management, Cemeteries, Open spaces, Golf courses

More detail

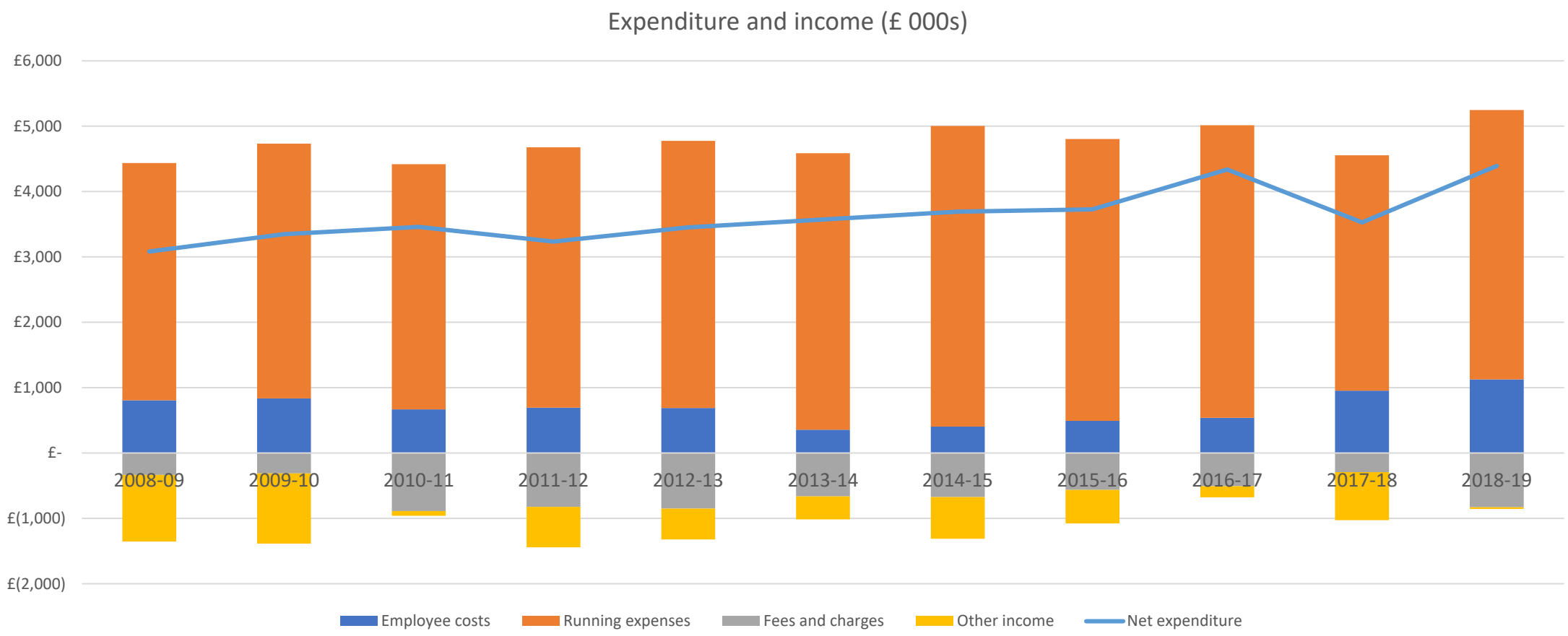
- MHCLG publishes guidance to assist authorities
- Expenditure is sub-divided into employee costs and running costs
- Income is sub-divided into fees and charges and other income
- The difference between total expenditure and total income represents the net expenditure on the service

Year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Employee costs	£ 807	£ 836	£ 668	£ 693	£ 689	£ 357	£ 404	£ 493	£ 539	£ 953	£ 1,126
Running expenses	£ 3,629	£ 3,897	£ 3,751	£ 3,984	£ 4,086	£ 4,231	£ 4,600	£ 4,311	£ 4,475	£ 3,601	£ 4,121
Fees and charges	£ (334)	£ (312)	£ (887)	£ (824)	£ (850)	£ (663)	£ (674)	£ (563)	£ (508)	£ (292)	£ (830)
Other income	£ (1,020)	£ (1,073)	£ (72)	£ (619)	£ (473)	£ (352)	£ (638)	£ (513)	£ (169)	£ (735)	£ (25)
Net expenditure	£ 3,083	£ 3,348	£ 3,459	£ 3,234	£ 3,452	£ 3,572	£ 3,692	£ 3,728	£ 4,337	£ 3,527	£ 4,392

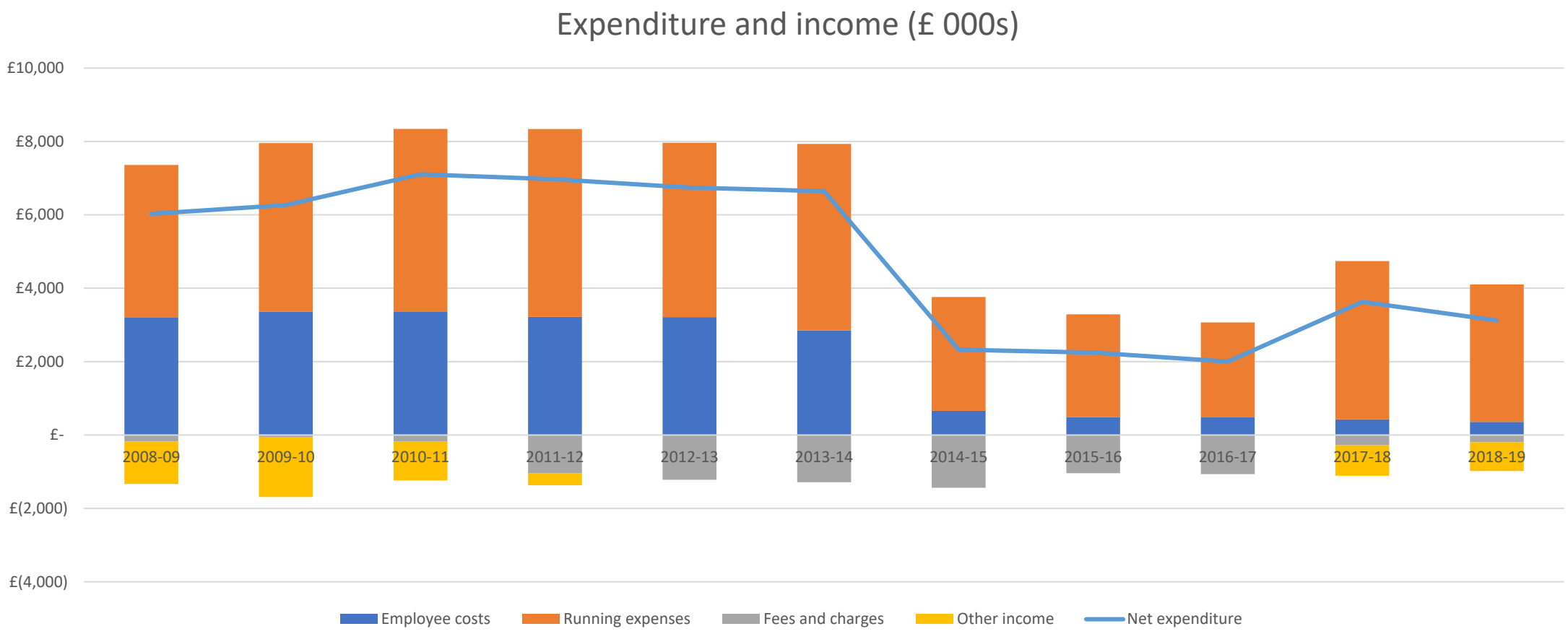
An example

- All values are in £ 000s
- These figures have been adjusted for inflation

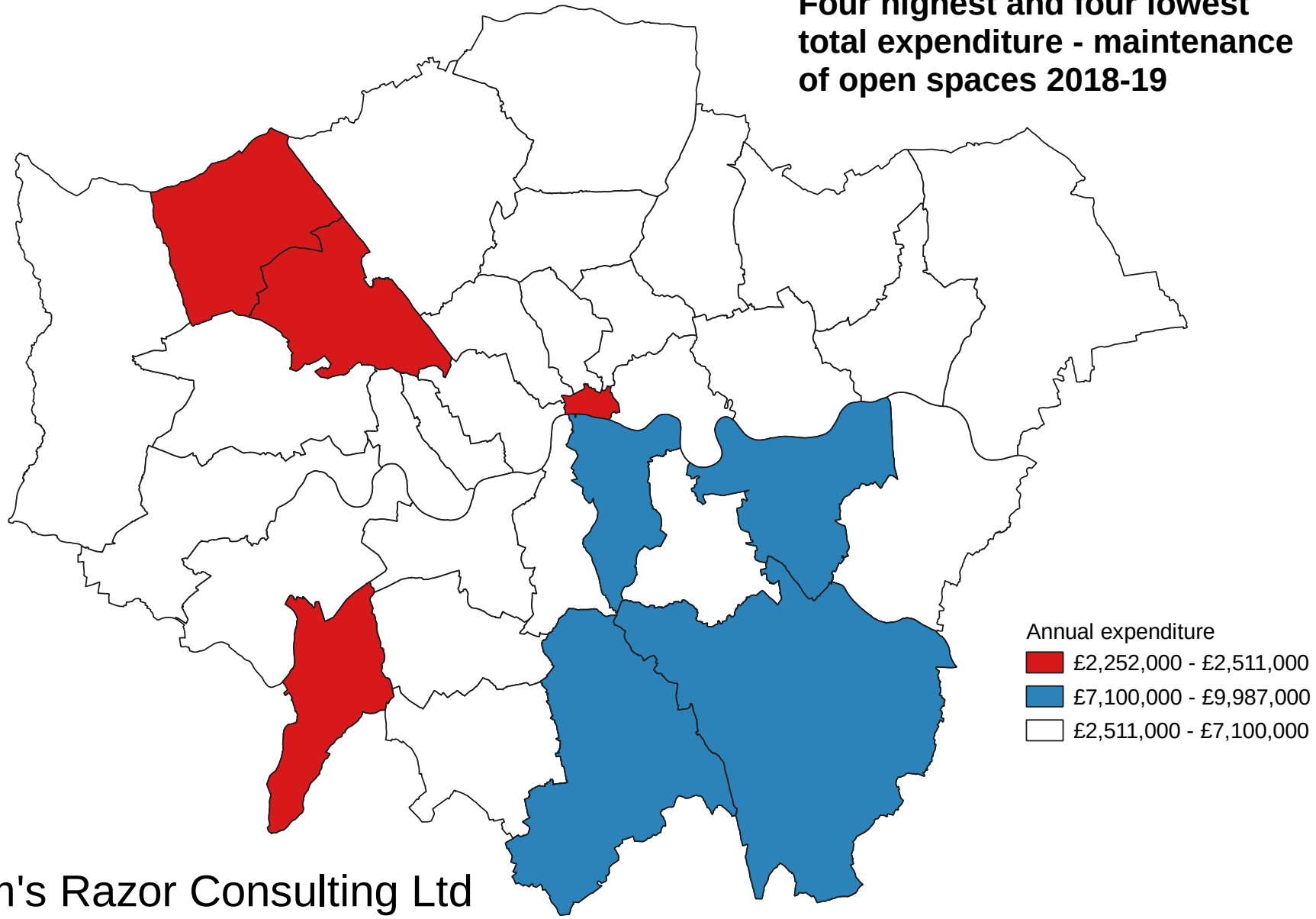
The same data represented as a chart



Some charts tell a different story…



Four highest and four lowest total expenditure - maintenance of open spaces 2018-19

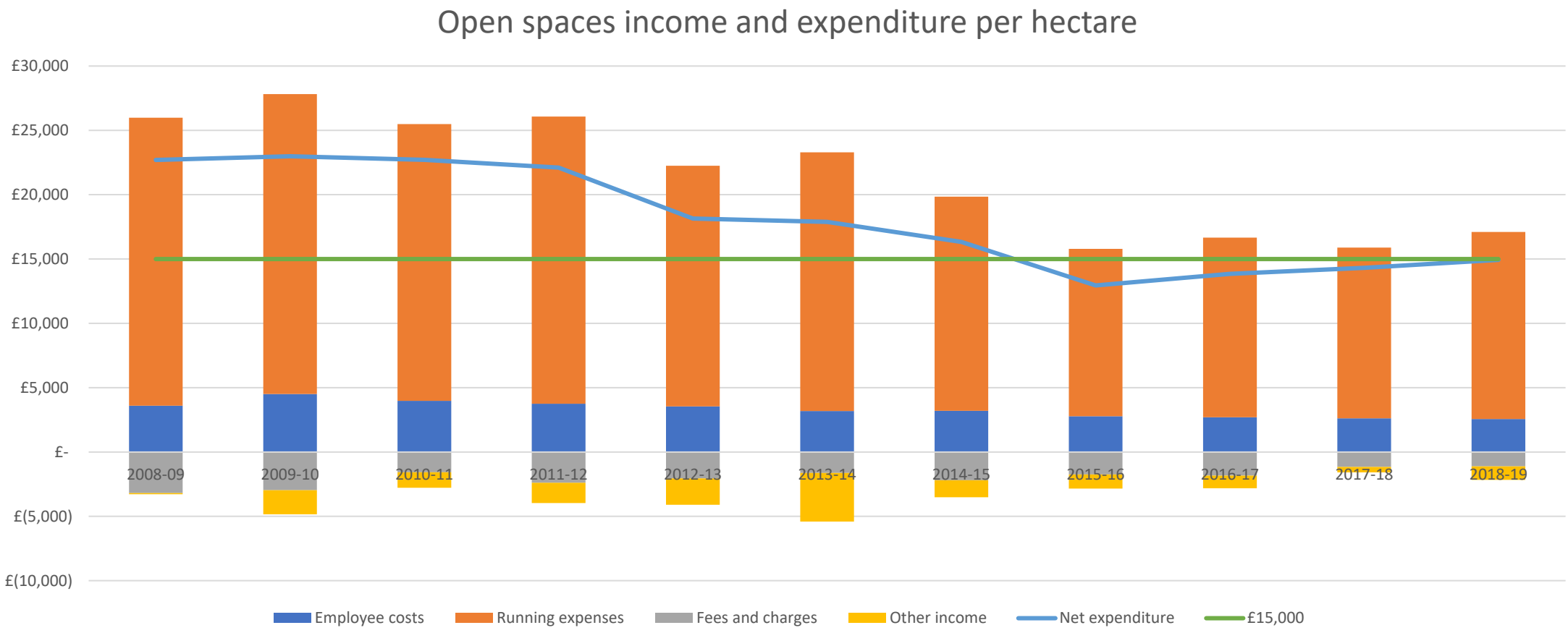


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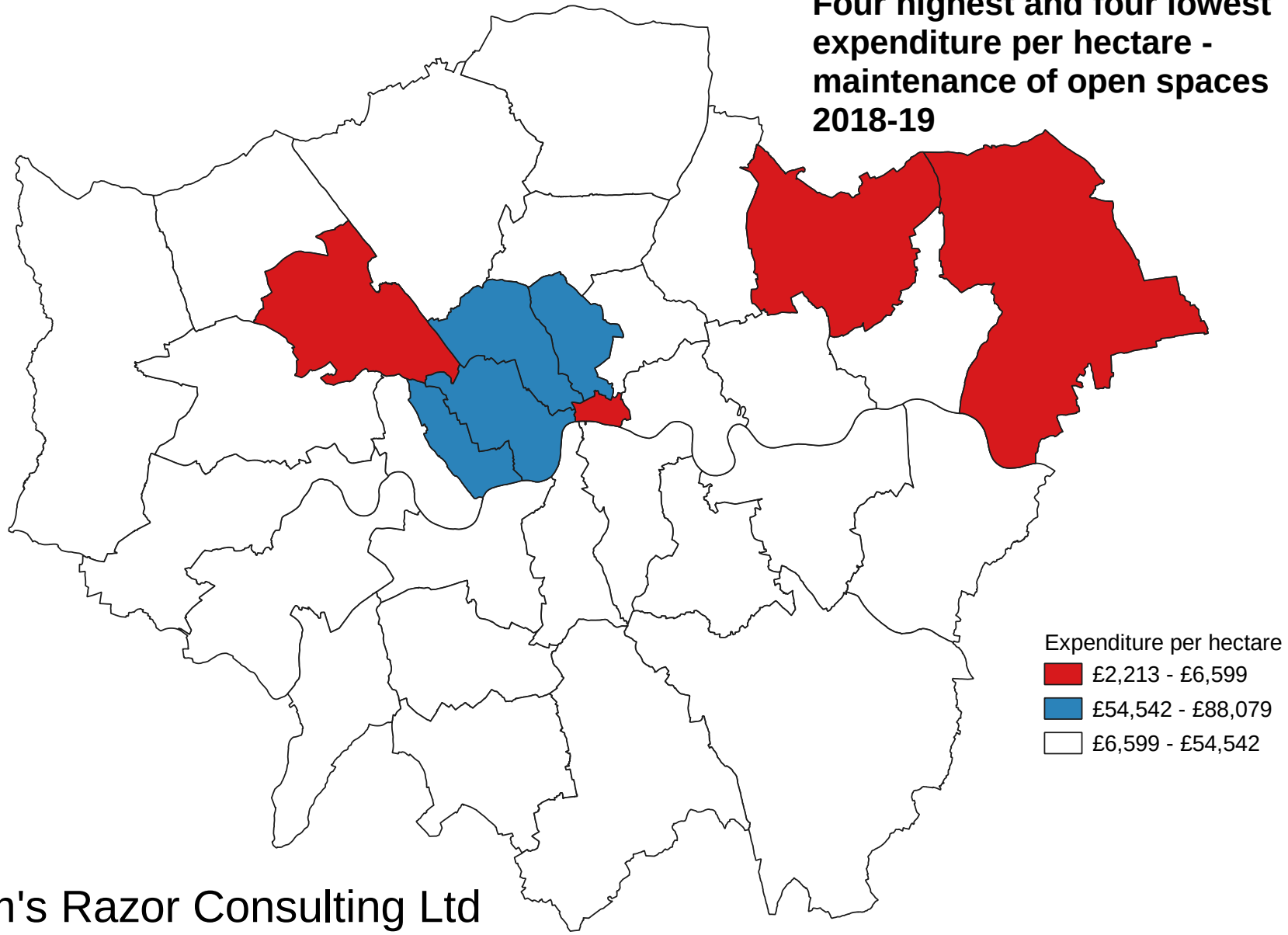
Financial data can be related to the area managed by each authority

- Areas managed are challenging to calculate
- Ordnance Survey has released a map of Great Britain showing Greenspace
- Greenspace is categorized as Public park or garden, golf courses, religious grounds etc.
- We have created an algorithm to create a usable proxy for the area managed by councils

Financial information related to area of one authority



Four highest and four lowest expenditure per hectare - maintenance of open spaces 2018-19

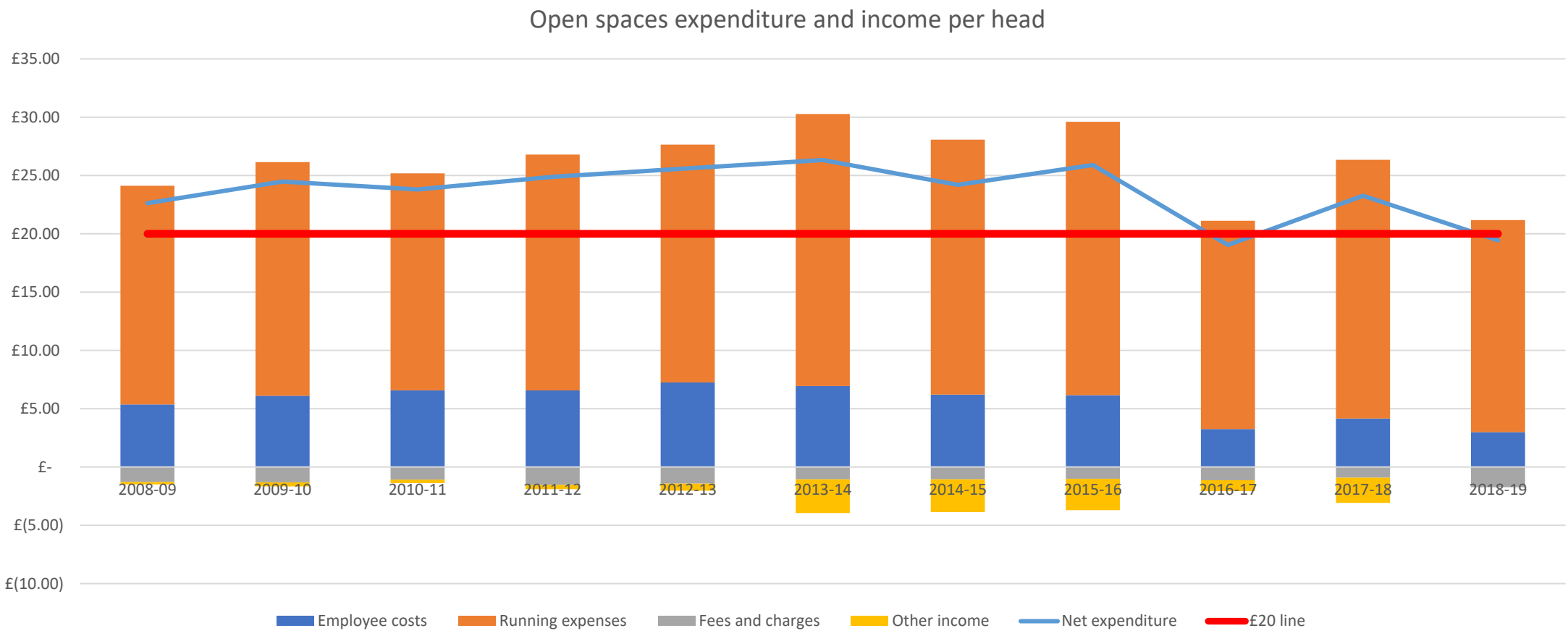


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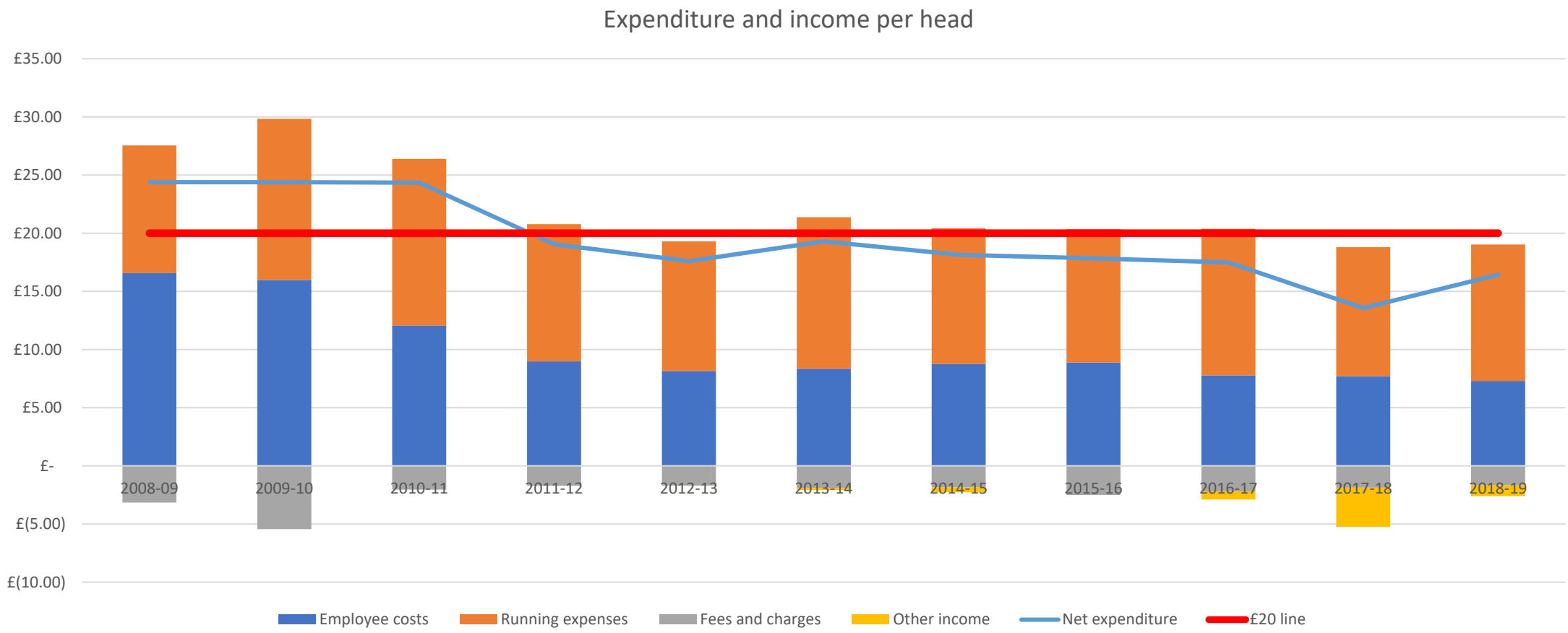
Financial data can also be related to population data

- Annual estimates of population for each borough are readily available from ONS
- Almost all authorities have seen population increase between 2008 and 2019
- Estimated numbers for London have increased by 16% over that time
- Charts incorporate population changes for each year

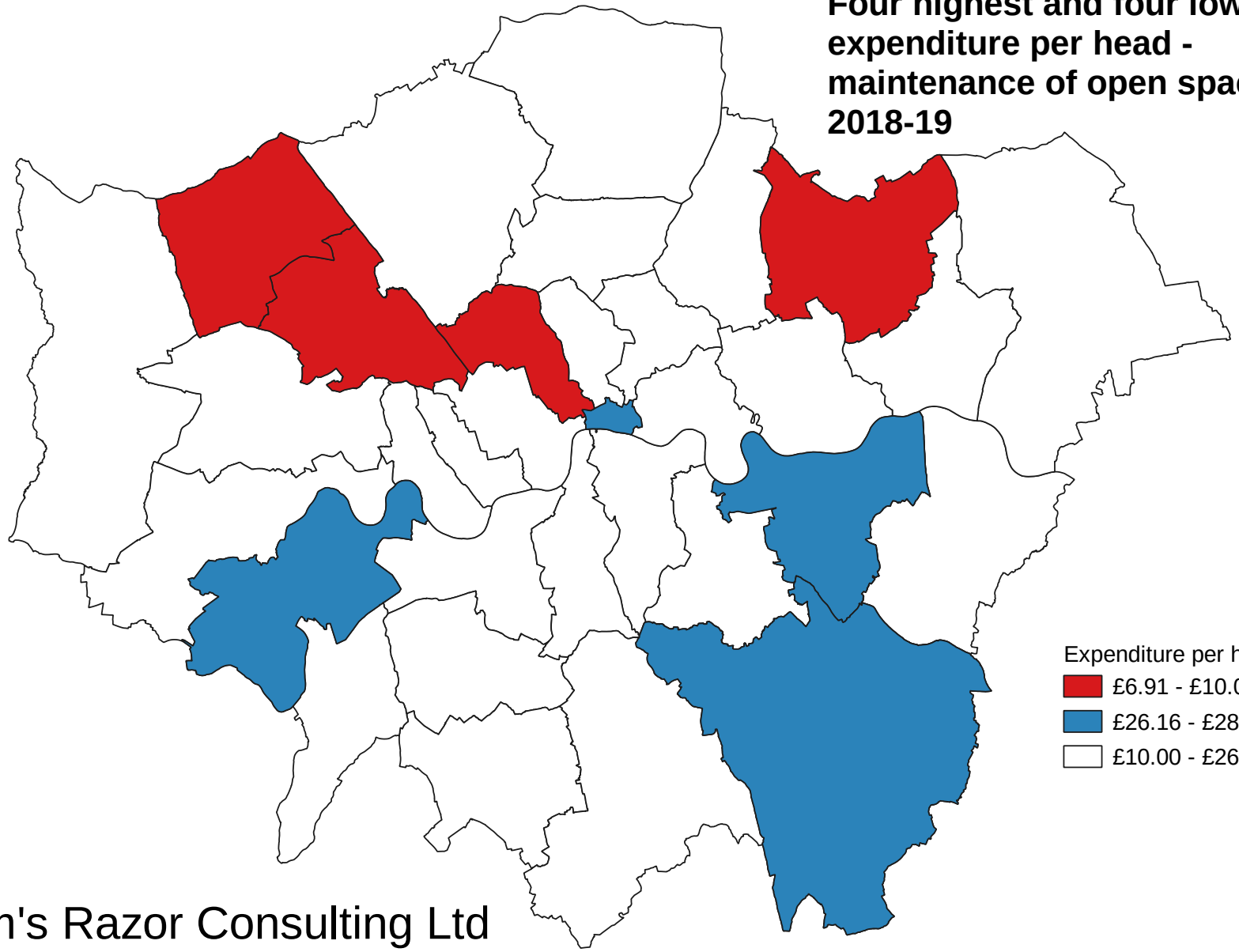
Here is one of the few authorities to see population fall



Population in this authority has increased by 30% between 2008 and 2019



Four highest and four lowest expenditure per head - maintenance of open spaces 2018-19

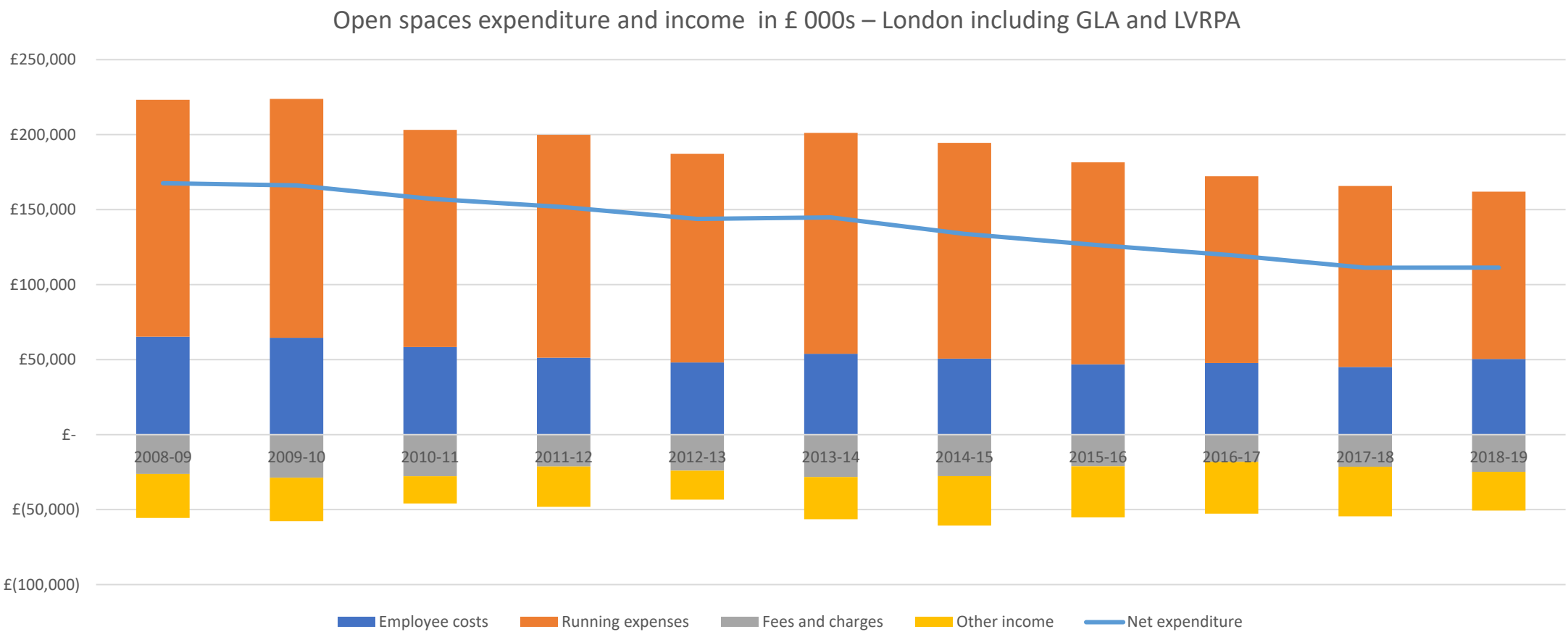


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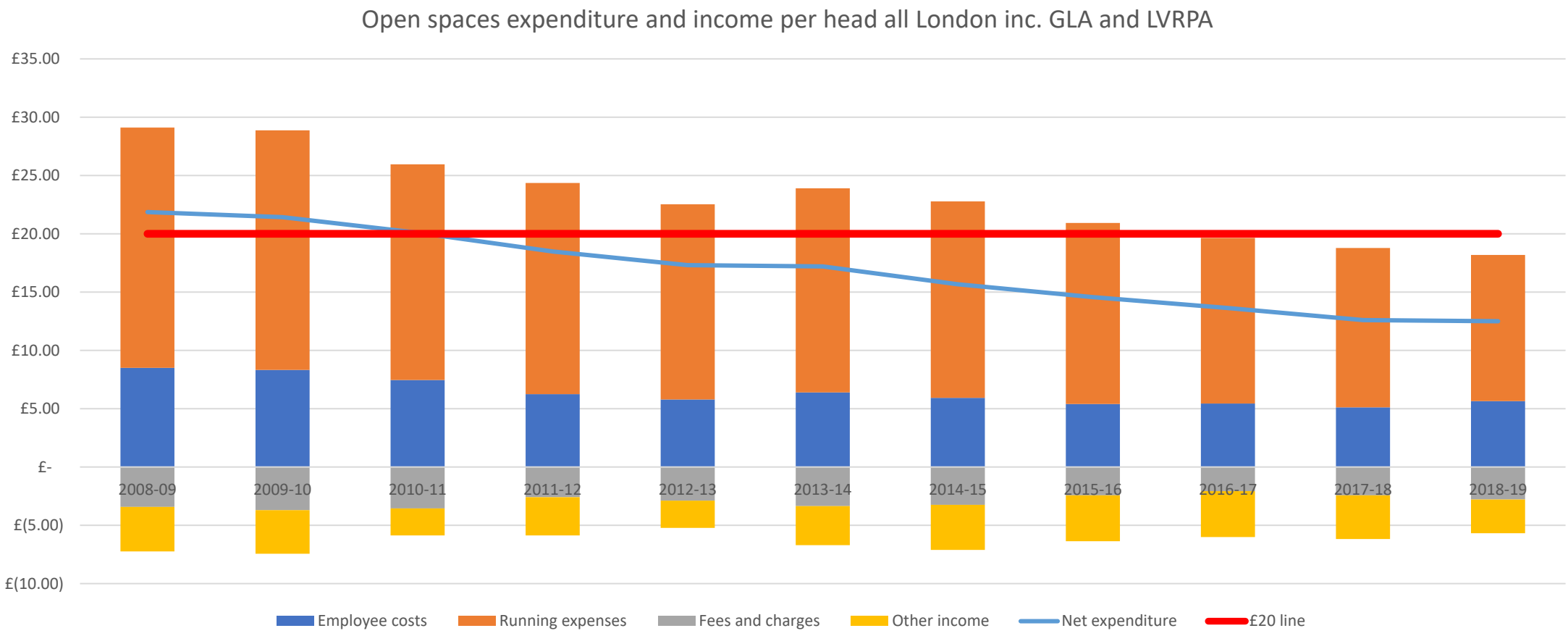
Summarizing and aggregating

- Aggregating and averaging conceal as well as clarify
- There do seem to be some identifiable trends
- The net cost across London appears to be reducing in line with overall expenditure
- Employee costs appear to be fairly stable

Expenditure and income for 33 London authorities, GLA and LVRPA (£ 000s)



Expenditure and income per head for 33 London authorities, GLA and LVRPA (£ 000s)



What conclusions can we draw?

In most cases data appears to be collected and presented consistently

Consistency is more evident over time than necessarily across different councils

Comparisons between authorities should be made with care

What happened over the last decade?

Most authorities have seen reductions in expenditure since 2008/9 – the hardest hit quartile by 50% over that time

6 authorities saw an increase over the last decade

Over the same time period London councils saw an average reduction of 23%

What happened over the last three years?

Most authorities have seen reductions in expenditure over the last three years – the hardest hit quartile by 32% over that time

9 authorities saw no reduction or an increase over the last three years

Over the same time period London councils saw an average reduction of 13%

That concludes the presentation

- Thank you for your attention
- This presentation with notes will be made available through Parks for London.
- Three spreadsheets of data will be available from Occam's Razor, total income and expenditure from 2008/9 to 2018/19, the same data related to area managed and expenditure per head.
- For further details info@orcl.co.uk