

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND AREA COMMITTEE
11 FEBRUARY 2014**

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CS/10/14

Housing and Property Services Performance Report - 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013

Report by the Interim Director of Housing and Property

Summary

This report provides information on how the Housing and Property Service performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during the first three quarters of 2013/2014.

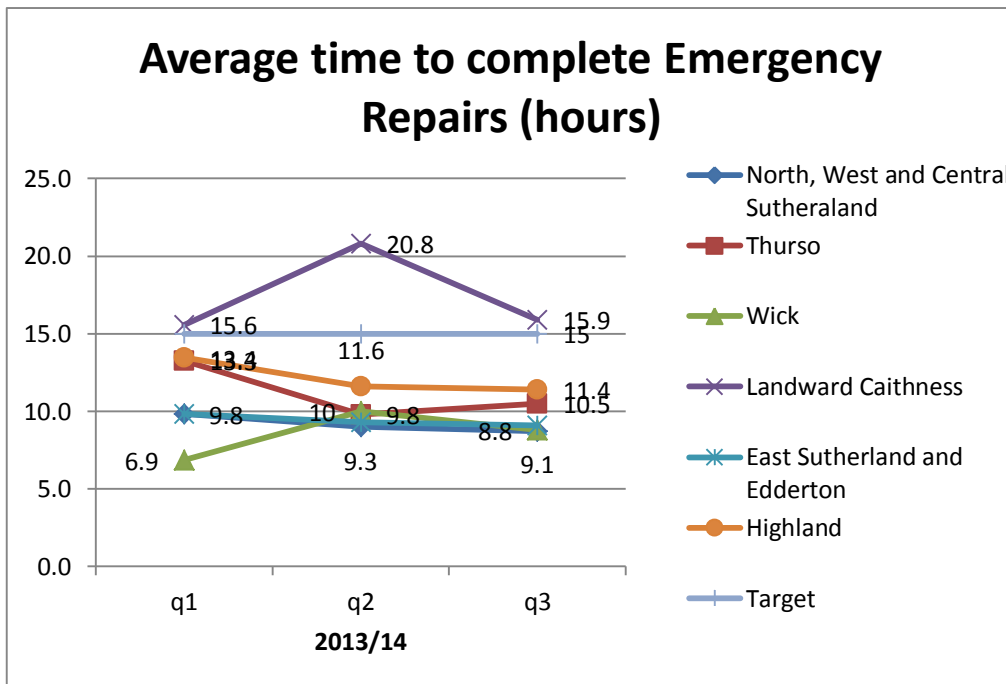
1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator has set out the performance indicators that it will use to form part of its scrutiny of landlords. These replace statutory performance indicators for housing from April 2013, with the Council required to make its first Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May 2014 and an annual report to tenants later in the year.
- 1.2 This report provides information on performance in the first 9 months of 2013/14 based on the reporting framework agreed by the Finance, Housing and Resources Committee on 5 June 2013. Most of the indicators required are not directly comparable with previous statutory performance indicators. Unfortunately that means it is not possible to obtain data retrospectively to allow reporting of data trends.
- 1.3 The revised format of this report was agreed at Finance, Housing and Resources Committee on 27 November 2013.

2 Repairs

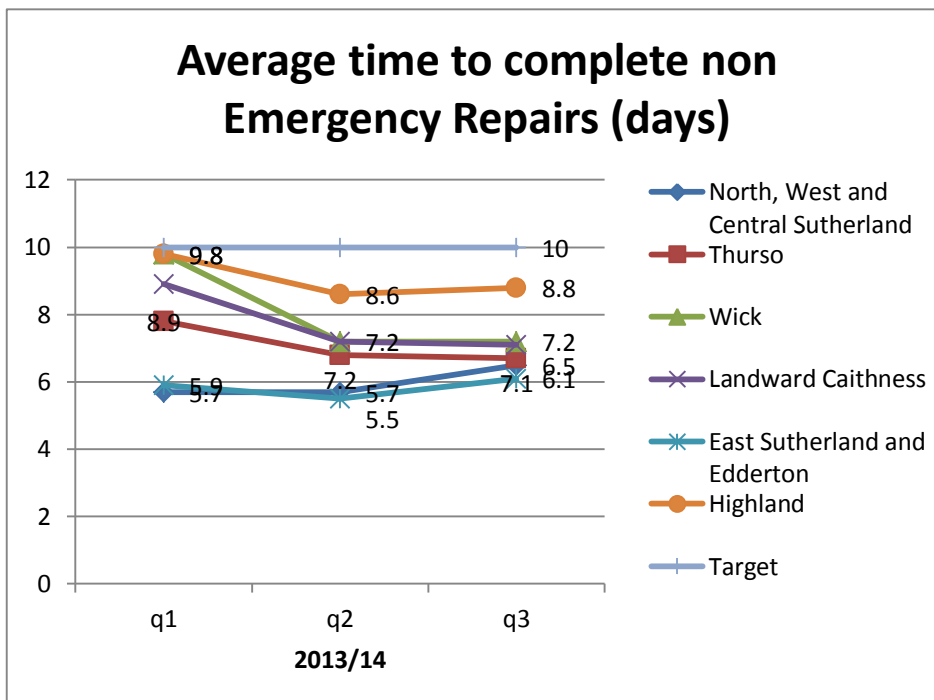
- 2.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are considered to be the average time taken to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs. As these indicators only applied from 1 April 2013 we have no historical data.
- 2.2 The average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs is calculated in hours with the Highland Council target being 15 hours.

2.3 *Chart 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)*



2.4 The data shows that the average length of time to complete emergency repairs in Caithness and Sutherland was less than the Highland average with the exception of Landward Caithness which was slightly above the target at 15.9 hours. Building Maintenance have been asked to identify how performance for Landward Caithness can be improved to bring it within target timescales.

2.5 *Chart 2 : Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)*



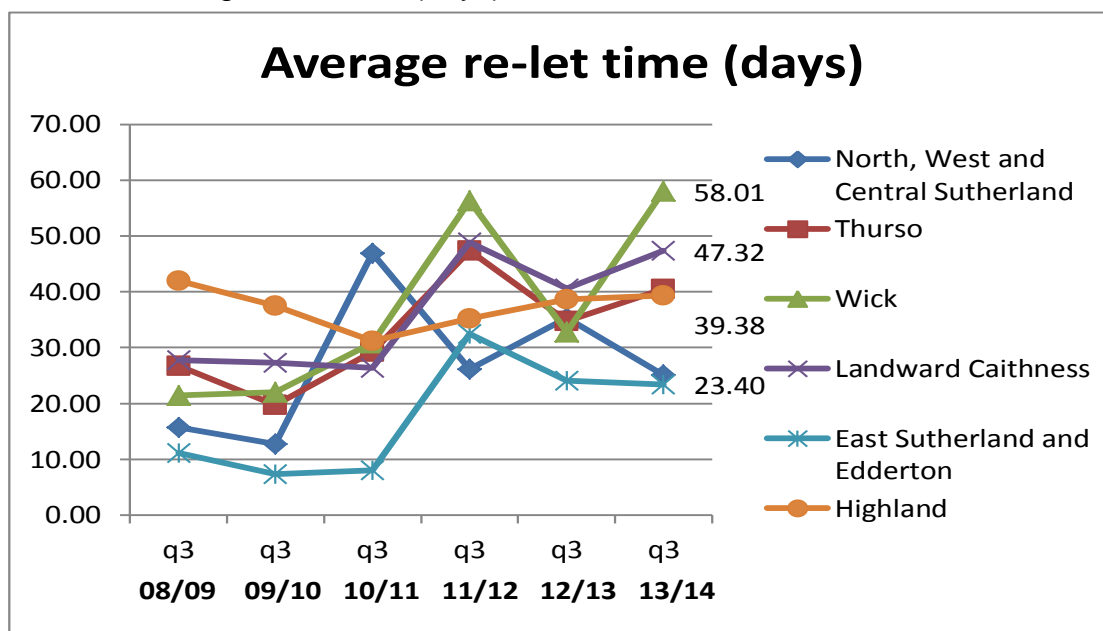
2.5 Non-emergency repairs are measured in working days. Chart 2 shows that the average time to complete these repairs in Caithness and Sutherland wards is better than the Highland average figure of 8.8 and also the target of 10 working days.

2.6 Overall repairs completion times are performing well across the Caithness and Sutherland area. In gathering the information for repairs indicators we do not include instances where we have been unable to gain access to properties.

3. Tenancy Management

3.1 The chart below provides information on the average re-let time showing the trend back 5 years and highlighting the same quarter in previous years for comparison.

3.2 *Chart 3 : Average re-let time (days)*



3.3 Performance on re-letting void properties is mixed across the wards. The overall figure for Highland for quarter 3 is currently 39.38 days against the target of 35 working days.

3.4 Both Wick and Landward Caithness continue to provide challenges in achieving re-let targets. Refusal rates for the past twelve months for Wick were 51% and for Landward Caithness 58%. The average refusal rate Highland wide (excluding Caithness) is 31%.

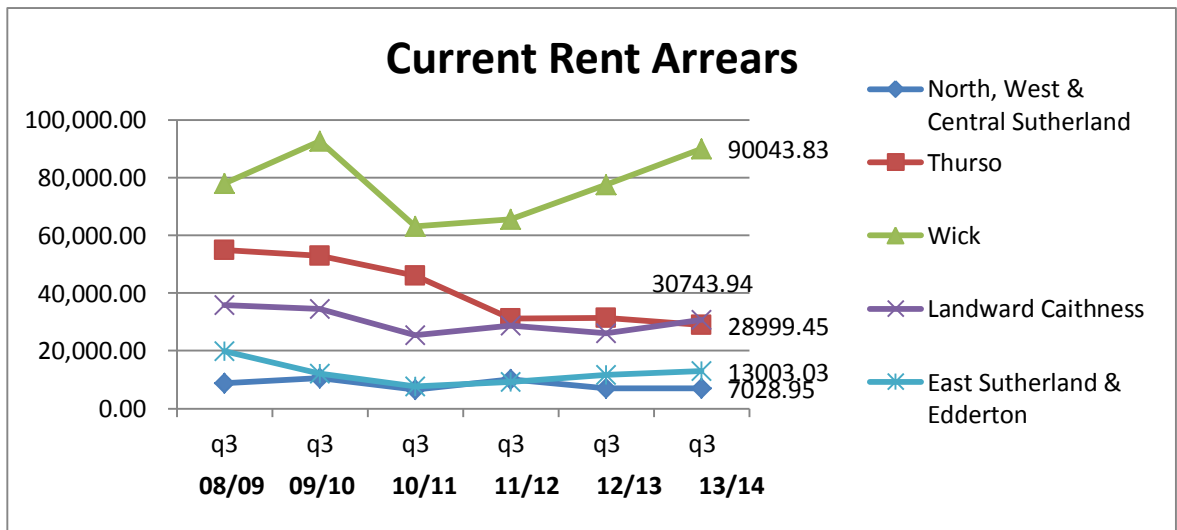
3.5 A working group with partner registered social landlords who have reported similar problems has been established to look in more detail at this area of business and performance pressure. We expect to bring a report back to Committee with proposals and a strategy to try and improve the situation. In the meantime the area teams continue work to explore all avenues for securing outcomes for applicants.

4. Rent Arrears

4.1 A key indicator for rent arrears is considered to be the value of current rent arrears. The chart at 4.3 provides information on current rent arrears going back 5 years and shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in previous years.

4.2 The Highland wide current rent arrears figure is £1,254,942. The total value of arrears for Sutherland at the end of the third quarter is £20,032.89 and for Caithness £149,787.22.

4.3 Chart 4 : Current Rent Arrears

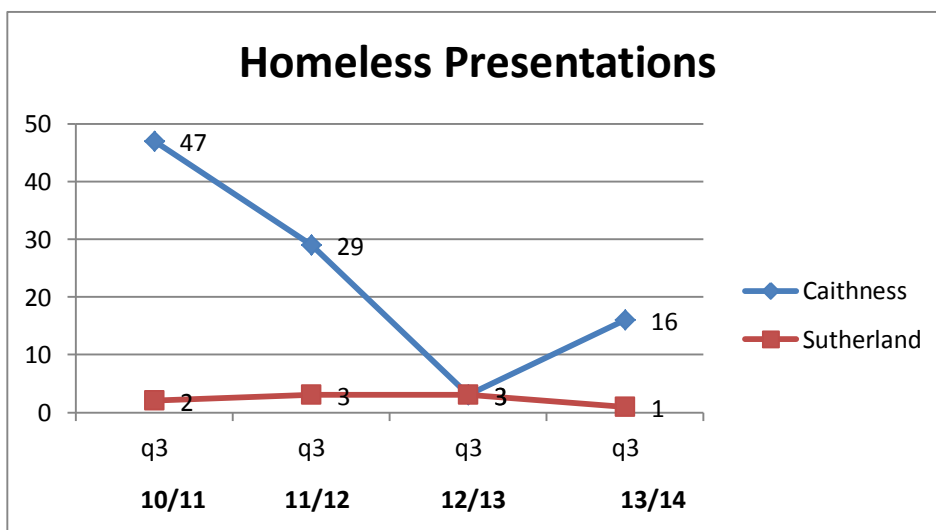


4.4 Wick ward continues to present challenges in the management of arrears as evidenced in the graph at chart 4; however, progress is being made through the consistent application of the policy. The teams remain focussed; in the third quarter we have seen a net reduction in Caithness arrears of £26,578.12 and in Sutherland a reduction of £2,926.32. The DHP awards have contributed positively to the improved position.

5. Homelessness/Homeless Prevention

5.1 Performance information on homelessness is not collected as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. However a number of indicators have been agreed by the Council.

5.2 Chart 5 : Homeless Presentations



5.3 Chart 5 details the number of homeless presentations received at each of the Area offices and give details back to 2010/11 when we started to record this information at Area level.

5.4 Homeless presentations at the quarter ending 31 December 2013 show a reduction

down from 3 to 1 presentations when compared to December 2012 for Sutherland; however, there has been an increase from 5 to 16 for Caithness in this third quarter. The homeless prevention team continues to deal with a high caseload.

- 5.5 Background relating to the implementation of the Homeless Prevention Team can be found in the Housing and Social Work Committee papers of 9 March 2011 and 9 November 2011 at the following links:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdoonlyres/E1FF5AC5-B8E6-4F36-8804-68792848C9F0/0/Item8HSW3211.pdf>

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdoonlyres/8460EC0A-DFCB-465F-A0F4-14123F45725A/0/Item12HSW11411.pdf>

- 5.6 *Table 6: Total number of prevention team cases received*

	2013/14			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr3	Qtr4
Highland Wide	615	1423	1590	
Caithness	39	83	133	
Sutherland	7	23	34	

- 5.7 Table 6 shows that the Homeless Prevention Team dealt with a total of 61 new cases in Caithness and Sutherland during Quarter 3 of 2013/14. Details of the primary advice reasons associated with all cases are given at table 7.

- 5.8 *Table 7: Primary Advice Reasons*

	2013/14			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Relationship Breakdown	19	33	53	
Family dispute	9	16	32	
Notice received from landlord	10	12	37	
Financial Problem	1	3	10	
Relocation to Highlands	4	5	15	
Overcrowding Issue	1	1	4	
Prison release		2	6	
Antisocial Behaviour		0	3	
Medical Housing Need	1			
Hospital Discharge	1	1	1	
Poor Housing Condition	1	2	6	
Leaving Armed Forces		0		
Total	47	75	167	

- 5.9 During Quarter 2, 49 homeless prevention cases were closed for Caithness and Sutherland as shown in table 8.

Table 8: Total Closed Homeless Prevention Cases

	2013/14			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr3	Qtr 4
Highland Wide	474	913	1304	
Caithness	31	43	114	
Sutherland	6	6	18	

- 5.10 Primary outcomes for Caithness and Sutherland cases are shown at Table 9.

Table 9: Primary Outcomes

	2013/14							
	Qtr 1	%	Qtr 2	%	Qtr 3	%	Qtr 4	%
Homeless Presentation	11	18%	22	22%	44	25%		
Advice & Information	5	8%	11	11%	18	10%		
Private Rented Sector	7	11%	12	12%	14	9%		
Issues with Landlord Resolved	10	16%	7	7%	6	3%		
Living with Family / Friends	5	8%	10	10%	20	12%		
Support Referral								
Housed by HHR	20	34%	37	37%	63	37%		
Lost Contact	2	3%	1	1%	7	4%		
LIFT Scheme	1	2%						
Total	61	100%	100	100%	172	100%		

6. Implications

- 6.1 **Resources:** There are ongoing resource implications arising from the need to develop and maintain performance monitoring systems relating to Scottish Housing Charter Performance Indicators. This is managed within the current HRA budget.
- 6.2 **Legal:** The need to set up new performance monitoring and reporting systems relating to Scottish Housing Charter performance indicators is a legal requirement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 6.3 There are no specific equality, climate change/carbon clever or risk implications arising from this report

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 Committee is asked to scrutinise the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013.

Designation: **Interim Director of Housing and Property**

Date: 30 January 2014

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Background Papers: Scottish Housing Regulator: The Scottish Social Housing Charter: Indicators and Context Information