

## The Highland Council

Caithness Committee  
25 April 2016

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Agenda Item | <b>8.</b>       |
| Report No   | <b>CC/11/16</b> |

### Housing Performance Report - 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015

#### Report by the Director of Community Services

#### Summary

This report provides information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 31 December 2015.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords. These replaced statutory performance indicators for Housing from April 2013.
- 1.2 This report provides information on performance based on the agreed reporting framework. Information on the key performance indicators is set out in the report below. Information on other performance indicators for housing management is presented in tabular format at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 Further performance information by Council Ward can be found on the Highland Council Intranet ward reporting pages.  
[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/13/members\\_intranet/37/ward\\_reporting/2](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/13/members_intranet/37/ward_reporting/2)
- 1.4 In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter guidance the Repairs, Tenancy Management, Rent Arrears figures are cumulative. The Homeless Presentations figures are given for each separate quarter.
- 1.5 Benchmarking information for 2014/15 across all Scottish Landlords has also been provided where available.

#### 2 Repairs

- 2.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are considered to be the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and non-emergency repairs. As these indicators only applied from 1 April 2013 we have limited historical data.
- 2.2 The average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs is calculated in hours.
- 2.3 Performance overall in this category is very positive and all wards are well within the 14 hours Highland target. Thurso is slightly below the Highland of 7.1 hours and we will continue to monitor this position for improvement.

2.4 *Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)*  
 Target 14 hours  
 2014/15 Benchmark – 5.9 hours

|                    | No of Houses | 2013/14     |             |             |             | 2014/15     |             |            |            | 2015/16    |            |            |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                    |              | Q1          | Q2          | Q3          | Q4          | Q1          | Q2          | Q3         | Q4         | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         |
| Thurso             | 585          | 13.3        | 9.8         | 10.5        | 10.5        | 7.6         | 7.6         | 7.2        | 6.3        | 3.5        | 5.6        | 8.0        |
| Wick               | 940          | 6.9         | 10          | 8.8         | 9.0         | 6.1         | 5.1         | 4.9        | 4.9        | 5.0        | 4.7        | 3.9        |
| Landward Caithness | 579          | 15.6        | 20.8        | 15.9        | 14.2        | 7.3         | 6.4         | 7.1        | 6.4        | 3.7        | 3.8        | 4.8        |
| <b>Highland</b>    | <b>13933</b> | <b>13.4</b> | <b>11.6</b> | <b>11.4</b> | <b>14.5</b> | <b>14.8</b> | <b>11.1</b> | <b>9.3</b> | <b>9.1</b> | <b>6.2</b> | <b>6.9</b> | <b>7.1</b> |

2.5 Non-emergency repairs are measured in working days.

2.6 *Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)*  
 Target 8 days  
 2014/15 Benchmark – 7.9 days

|                    | No of Houses | 2013/14    |            |            |            | 2014/15    |            |            |            | 2015/16    |            |            |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                    |              | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         | Q4         | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         | Q4         | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         |
| Thurso             | 585          | 7.8        | 6.8        | 6.7        | 6.5        | 5.7        | 6.2        | 6.2        | 6.4        | 4.9        | 5.7        | 6.0        |
| Wick               | 940          | 9.8        | 7.2        | 7.2        | 6.8        | 5          | 5.9        | 5.8        | 6.2        | 5.1        | 5.1        | 5.2        |
| Landward Caithness | 579          | 8.9        | 7.2        | 7.1        | 7.0        | 5.4        | 6.2        | 6.3        | 6.7        | 5.1        | 5.2        | 5.7        |
| <b>Highland</b>    | <b>13933</b> | <b>9.8</b> | <b>8.6</b> | <b>8.8</b> | <b>8.7</b> | <b>7.5</b> | <b>7.6</b> | <b>7.4</b> | <b>7.3</b> | <b>7.1</b> | <b>7.3</b> | <b>7.5</b> |

2.7 Performance for all Wards remains within the Highland 8 day target time.

2.8 In gathering the information for repairs indicators we do not include instances where we have been unable to gain access to properties. This is in accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter guidance.

### 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 *Table 3 : Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days*  
 2014/15 Benchmark – 36.9 days

|                    | No of Houses | No of relets | 2010/11      | 2011/12      | 2012/13      | 2013/14      | 2014/15      | 2015/16      |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                    |              |              | Q3           | Q3           | Q3           | Q3           | Q3           | Q3           |
| Thurso             | 585          | 68           | 29.27        | 47.32        | 34.70        | 40.50        | 37.10        | 37.26        |
| Wick               | 940          | 148          | 30.80        | 56.36        | 32.81        | 58.01        | 106.31       | 139.72       |
| Landward Caithness | 579          | 73           | 26.33        | 48.86        | 40.65        | 47.32        | 53.42        | 59.93        |
| <b>Highland</b>    | <b>13933</b> | <b>1027</b>  | <b>31.25</b> | <b>35.25</b> | <b>38.61</b> | <b>37.60</b> | <b>39.20</b> | <b>49.28</b> |

3.3 The re-let times for Thurso, Wick and Landward Caithness remain challenging due to lack of demand and some properties remain empty for extended periods of time. Members will be aware that the Service has set up a dedicated Void Management Team, reporting directly to the Principal Housing Officer, to undertake day to day void management.

3.4 The Choice Based Letting scheme has now been operating since February 2015 and has evidenced some success. Many long term voids have been allocated, however the high turnover of tenancies does mean the number of void properties remains a concern.

3.5 There are currently 58 mainstream void properties in Caithness, with 4 of these being declared surplus to requirement. Of the 54 remaining properties, 20 are now classed as low demand and of those 20, 1 remains void since 2013, 2 others since 2014 and 11 from 2015. The remaining 6 became empty in 2016. The majority of the

low demand properties are on the East side of the county and the great majority are flatted properties, although Thurso currently has 3 low demand non-flatted properties and Lybster a further 3.

- 3.6 It is proposed that the Choice Based Letting model will continue to be applied whilst other initiatives are explored to further reduce these voids. A good example of this involves a joint initiative with Children’s Services to provide a Link property in Wick in order that independent living skills can be developed with youngsters hoping to have their own tenancies in the future.
- 3.7 It is likely that further measures, including declaring some units surplus to requirements, will be brought to Members in a future report.

#### 4. Rent Arrears

4.1 A key indicator for rent arrears is considered to be the value of current rent arrears. The table below shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in the previous five years. The figures in table 4 illustrate the Caithness team are consistently demonstrating excellent performance in the management of rent arrears and are to be commended given the current economic climate. The Highland wide current arrears figure is £1,353,725.

4.2 *Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears*

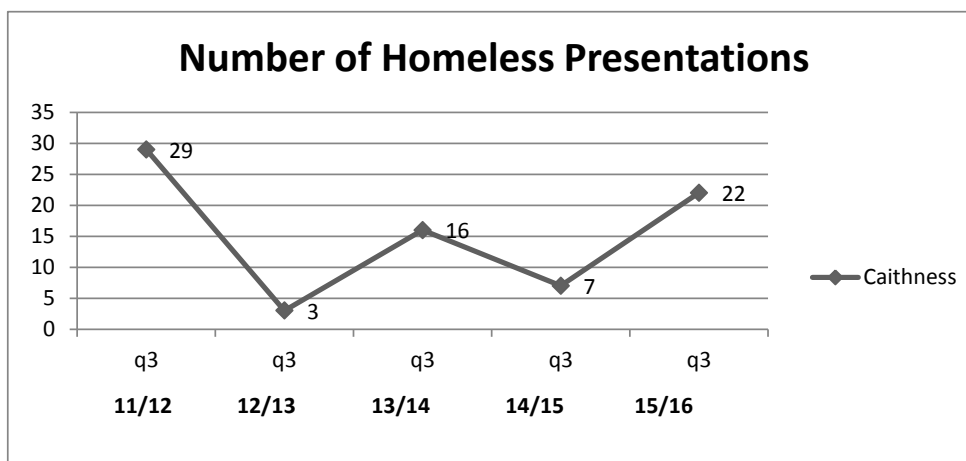
|                    | No of Houses | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                    |              | Q3      | Q3      | Q3      | Q3      | Q3      | Q3      |
| Thurso             | 585          | 45933   | 31107   | 31309   | 28999   | 28114   | 22332   |
| Wick               | 940          | 63035   | 65528   | 77589   | 90044   | 69837   | 55354   |
| Landward Caithness | 579          | 25355   | 28697   | 26059   | 30744   | 26305   | 17200   |

#### 5. Homelessness

- 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 Table 5 shows the number of homeless presentations received by Caithness charting the same quarter in previous years when we started to record this information. Homeless presentations in Caithness increased from 17 in Quarter 2 to 22 in Quarter 3.
- 5.3 There were 203 presentations across Highland in the quarter ending 31 December 2015.

5.4

Table 5 - Homeless presentations



5.5 Following a thematic inquiry, in May 2014, by the Scottish Housing Regulator on Housing Options our Homelessness Service delivery was reviewed. This involved a re-design of the job roles of staff to ensure a person-centred approach. The officers currently involved in this area of the Service have been confirmed in the new Housing Options Officer posts. The table 6 provides information on the cases opened and closed in the quarter. These figures are by quarter and are not cumulative.

5.6

Table 6 - Housing Options cases

|                              | Qtr1 | Qtr2 | Qtr 3 |
|------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Housing Option cases opened  | 13   | 12   | 20    |
| Housing Options cases closed | 27   | 26   | 18    |

5.7 Table 7- Approach reasons

|  | Qtr1      | Qtr2      | Qtr3      |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Anti-Social Behaviour                                  |           |           |           |
| Financial Problems                                     | 1         |           |           |
| Accommodation unsuitable due to medical reason         |           |           |           |
| Accommodation unsuitable due to overcrowding           | 2         | 1         | 1         |
| Accommodation unsuitable due to poor housing condition |           |           |           |
| Eviction notice received                               |           |           | 3         |
| Hospital discharge                                     |           |           |           |
| Leaving care   |           |           |           |
| Leaving armed forces                                   |           |           |           |
| Marital/domestic breakdown                             | 4         | 4         | 10        |
| Notice given to landlord                               |           |           |           |
| Notice served by landlord                              | 1         | 1         | 4         |
| Prison release   | 1         |           | 1         |
| Relocating to the Highlands                            | 1         | 2         |           |
| Section 11   |           |           |           |
| Wants to leave parental home                           | 3         | 4         | 1         |
| Tied accommodation ended                               |           |           |           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>13</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>20</b> |

- 5.8 The data and text presented in Tables 7 and 8 provide Members with information on the housing options approach including reasons and the case closure outcomes for the reporting year's quarters, and reflect the extensive work the area team put into preventing homelessness wherever possible.

*Table 8 – Case closure outcomes*

|  | Qtr1      | Qtr2      | Qtr3      |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Homeless application route followed    | 7         | 6         | 7         |
| Remained in current accommodation      | 4         | 4         |           |
| Private rented – short assured tenancy | 2         | 1         | 1         |
| Local Authority Tenancy                | 9         | 10        | 2         |
| RSL (Housing Association) Tenancy      | 1         | 1         | 6         |
| Private Rented                         | 1         |           |           |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>24</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>16</b> |

## 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 Equality

There are no known specific equality implications resulting from this report.

### 6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

There are no known climate change/carbon clever implications resulting from this report.

### 6.5 Risk

Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.

### 6.6 Gaelic

There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

### 6.7 Rural

There are no rural implications arising from this report.

## **Recommendation**

Members are invited to scrutinise the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 18 March 2016

Author: Tina Luxton, Area Community Services Manager  
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Background Papers: Scottish Housing Regulator: The Scottish Social Housing Charter: Indicators and Context Information

## Appendix 1

| SPI 15/16  | 15/16 | Scottish Average | Target | 2015/16 |       |       | 2014/15 |       |
|--|-------|------------------|--------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|  |       |                  |        | Qtr3    | Qtr2  | Qtr1  | Qtr4    | Qtr3  |
| Ave time to complete emergency repairs (hours) - Caithness           | Green | 5.9              | 14     | 5.3     | 4.7   | 4.2   | 5.7     | 6.2   |
| Ave time to complete non emergency repairs (days) - Caithness        | Green | 7.9              | 8      | 5.6     | 5.3   | 5.1   | 6.4     | 6.1   |
| Reactive repairs carried out first time - Caithness                  | Green | 90.2             | 92     | 96.4    | 96.9  | 97.3  | 96.3    | 96.1  |
| Repairs appointments kept - Caithness                                | Amber | 92.4             | 95     | 94.8    | 95.6  | 96.2  | 91.8    | 94.0  |
| Rent collected as % of rent due - Caithness                          | Green | 99.5             | 99     | 100.7   | 100.3 | 102.4 | 99.1    | 99.9  |
| Gross rent arrears as % of rent due - Caithness                      | Green | 5.3              | 5      | 3.5     | 3.6   | 3.5   | 3.3     | 3.4   |
| % rent loss through voids - Caithness                                | Amber | 1.1              | 1      | 4.1     | 4.6   | 6.6   | 2.3     | 2.5   |
| % court actions which resulted in eviction - Caithness               | Red   | 14.7             | 10     | 31.7    | 42.3  | 54.5  | 12.2    | 12.9  |
| ASB Cases reported and resolved - Caithness                          | Green | 83.2             | 85     | 94.9    | 75.9  | 41.3  | 77.4    | 72.4  |
| Ave time taken to re-let - Caithness                                 | Red   | 36.9             | 35     | 95.5    | 90.3  | 77.7  | 74.0    | 70.0  |
| % of new tenancies sustained for more than a year - Caithness        | Red   | 88.8             | 90     | 77.7    | 76.0  | 76.7  | 76.2    | 77.2  |
| Tenancy offers refused - Caithness                                   |       | 42               |        | 46.5    | 47.1  | 37.3  | 49.8    | 51.4  |
| % of lettable houses becoming vacant - Caithness                     | Red   | 8.9              | 0      | 14.6    | 14.0  | 13.8  | 13.3    | 13.9  |
| No of housing options cases opened Caithness                         | Green |                  | 20     | 20.0    | 16.0  | 7.0   |         |       |
| No of housing options cases closed Caithness                         | Green |                  | 19     | 19.0    | 44.0  | 6.0   |         |       |
| Homelessness - Presentations received in period Caithness            |       |                  |        | 22.0    | 17.0  | 8.0   | 18.0    | 7.0   |
| % households requiring temp/eme accomm who receive offer - Caithness | Green |                  | 100    | 100.0   | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0   | 100.0 |
| % temp/eme accomm offers refused Caithness                           |       |                  |        | 10.7    | 10.5  | 0.0   | 26.9    | 6.3   |
| Ave time in temp/eme accomm (weeks)                                  |       |                  |        | 12.9    | 9.2   | 11.4  | 11.3    | 9.1   |