

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee

15 February 2017

Agenda Item	6
Report No	COM 3/17

Community Services Performance Report - 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016

Report by the Director of Community Services

Summary

This report provides information on how Community Services performed in relation to performance indicators to 31 December 2016.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords.
- 1.2 Further relevant Performance Indicators for Community Services, whilst not all statutory, are also provided within this report.
- 1.3 Information on the key performance indicators is set out in the report below together with benchmarking data where available.
- 1.4 Further housing performance information is available at Ward level on the Council's intranet
http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/13/members_intranet/37/ward_reporting/2

2. Complaints

- 2.1 This indicator provides information on the percentage of 1st and 2nd stage complaints, including those related to equalities issues, responded to in full in the last year. We are also required to report on the percentage of complaints upheld.
- 2.2 Complaints are recorded though the Council's corporate complaints system (netcall).
- 2.3 **Table 1**

		2016/17		
	Target	Q3	Q2	Q1
Stage 1 (5 days)	80%		25.3	45.7
Stage 2 (20 days)	80%		38.9	100

2.4 The figures for Q3 are not available at the time of writing this report. Progress has been made with the reporting facility and reports are now produced weekly by type of contact and who it has been allocated to. This is giving much better visibility and performance within the Service is being better managed.

3. Waste Management

Table 2

3.1

	2016/17				2015/16				2014/15			
	Target	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Household Waste – Collected (Tonnes)	36500	29,387	37076	36047	29166	29815	36794	35358	28199	29391	35937	36949
Household Waste – Composted %	15%	9.4	17.2	14.8	6.4	9.4	15.8	15.2	7.1	10.0	16.4	18.3
Household Waste – Recycled %	35%	31.9	31.5	32.7	32.8	32.8	31.9	32.0	32.6	32.8	32.7	32.4
Total Composted and Recycled %	50%	41.3	48.7	47.5	39.2	42.2	47.7	47.2	39.7	42.8	49.1	50.7

3.2 Due to the timing of this report it is too early in the month for us to have the full data information for Q3, so the figures provided are an estimate and should be treated as such.

3.3 The recycling rate shows a slight decrease mainly due to the less rubble and comingled material recovered during this quarter compared to the same period in 2015/16.

4. Enforcement Notices

4.1 There were 3 fixed penalty notices for littering issued during the quarter and 3 Dog Control Notices.

4.2 The number of pest control service requests increased to 125 in Q3 this year from 85 in Q3 in the previous year and the number of pest control enquiries increased from 52 to 73 compared to Q3 last year.

5. Dog Nuisance cases

Table 3

5.1

	2016/17			2015/16				2014/15			
	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Number of dog control complaints	120	143	137	167	203	246	210	189	172	252	257
Number of dogs caught	50	71	42	62	81	74	64	62	53	54	57

5.2 The number of stray dogs dealt with during the quarter was significantly down on the same period in 15/16 – i.e.50 compared to 71 in Q3 of 2015/16. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of overall dog related complaints – down to 120 compared to 203 in Q3 last year. The number of Dog Control Notices issued also decreased significantly from 7 in Q3 of 15/16 to 3 for Q3 this year.

6. Grounds Maintenance and Public Convenience Cleaning

Table 4

2016/2017										
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Total	
	No Inspected	% Failed	No Inspected	% Failed	No Inspected	% Failed			No Inspected	% Failed
Grounds	720	51.52	638	59.71	80	33.75	–	–	1438	54.17
PC's	25	40.00	41	63.41	29	79.30	–	–	95	62.10

6.1 The information detailed in **Appendix 1** shows the percentage of inspections which have been carried out and the percentage where standards have not been met. If the standards are not met within those timescales then financial penalties are incurred. Officers are working closely with service providers to ensure compliance is achieved.

6.2 The results of the inspections are distorted due to inspections being driven by enquiries/complaints regarding service standards, particularly on one contractor, rather than an inspection regime which will randomly sample the entire work area. This will be addressed for the new cutting season.

7. Road defects (potholes)

7.1 The following data is taken from the Roads and Transport asset management database. The figures relate to the number of pothole repair instructions and not the total number of potholes encountered; a single instruction can be raised for multiple potholes. Note that the response time for an instruction created within a specific quarter may roll into another quarter. A table of the response times is contained in **Appendix 2**. Some instructions may be completed but have not yet been closed off in the asset management system.

7.2 The following table shows the number of pothole instructions per defect response category for quarter 3 as at 31/12/16.

Table 5	2016/17 – Qtr 3					
	Defect Response Category					
	Total	1	2H	2M	2L	3
Number of pothole instructions created	214	1	29	114	65	5
Total no. instructions completed	207	1	31	80	89	6

7.3 The following table shows the total number of instructions for each quarter.

Table 6	2016/17			2015/16			
	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr1
Number of pothole instructions created	214	476	1221	1089	737	503	1380
Number of pothole instructions completed	207	260	926	712	815	281	580

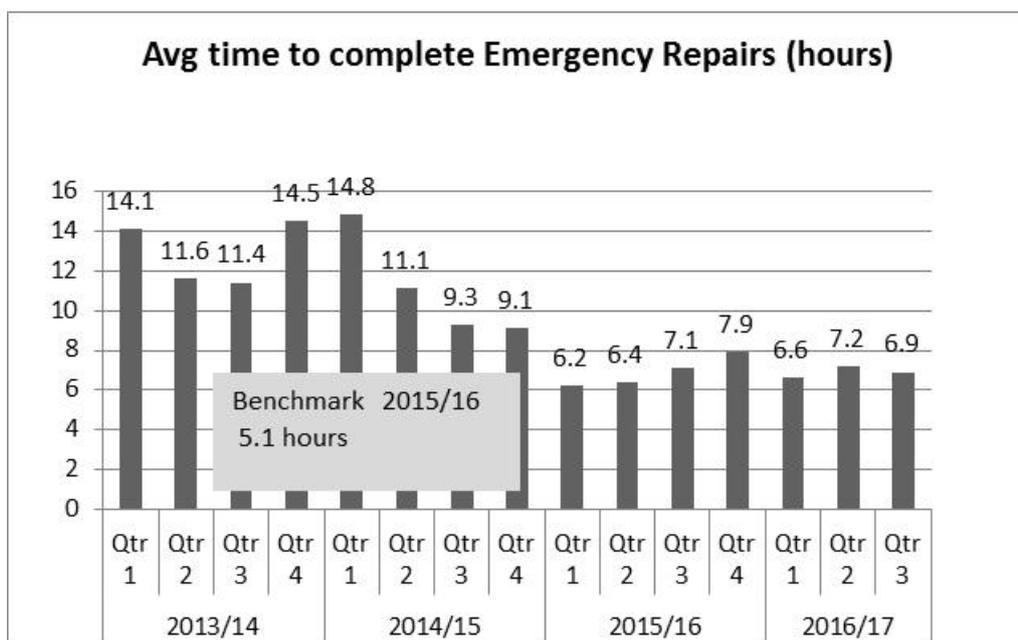
7.4 There has been a decrease in the number of pothole instructions raised in quarter 3 of 2016/17. The Service has invested in spray injection technology by purchasing a specialised vehicle to effect a more durable pothole repair. However, it is too early to establish if this is the reason for the reduction in pothole instructions created. The Service is encouraging reporting of potholes by members of the public, through the Service Centre and on-line.

8. Housing Repairs

8.1 The key current indicators for measuring repairs performance are considered to be the average time taken to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs.

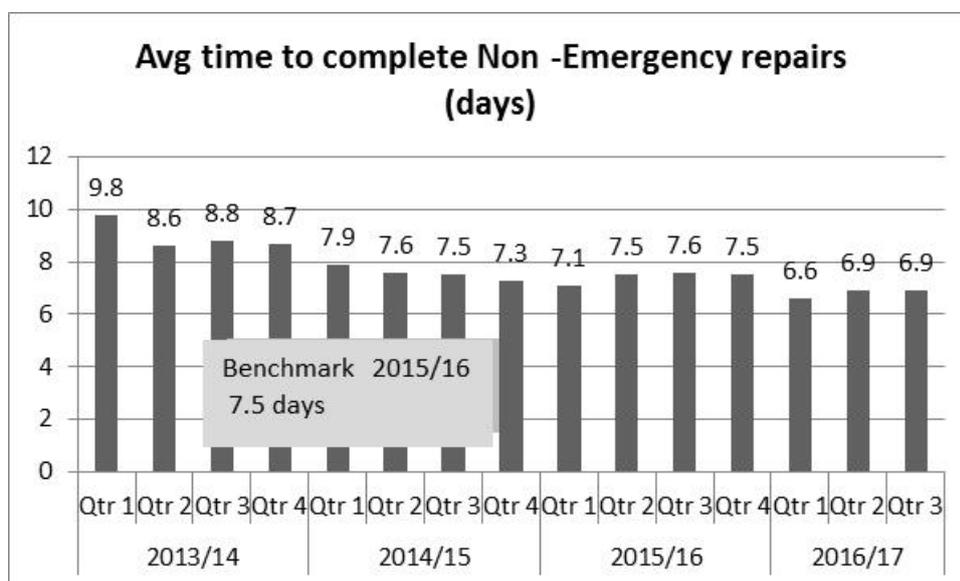
8.2 Table 7 details performance on the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and Table 8 details the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Both graphs contain national benchmark figures for these indicators based on published 2014/15 figures.

8.3 **Table 7 – Average time to complete Emergency Repairs (Target 14 hours)**



8.4 Performance on emergency repairs remains within the Highland target.

8.5 **Table 8 – Average time to complete Non-Emergency Repairs (Target 8 days)**

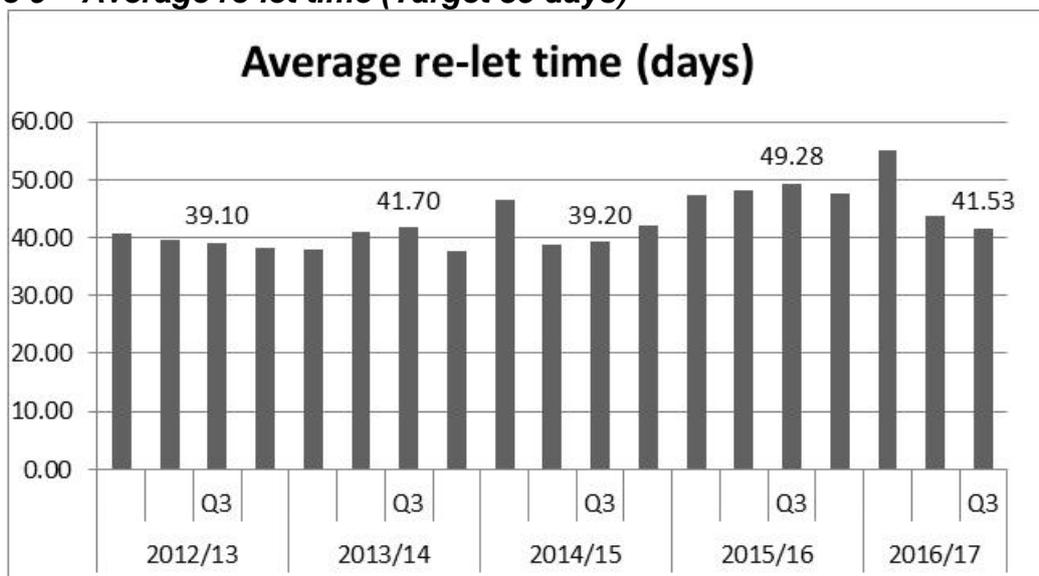


8.6 Average performance on non-emergency repairs remains within the target timescales.

9. Tenancy Management

9.1 Table 9 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.

9.2 **Table 9 – Average re-let time (Target 35 days)**



9.3 We have seen a reduction in the average reletting time in the last quarter, and performance is better than for the same quarter in the previous year. Improving reletting times continues to be a key priority for local housing teams.

10. Rent Arrears

10.1 The key performance indicator for rent arrears is considered to be the value of current arrears. Table 10 below provides information on current rent arrears going back 5 years and shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in previous years.

Table 10 – Current Rent Arrears



10.2 Although rent arrears have reduced in the last quarter this reflects a seasonal trend associated with the 2 ‘charge free’ weeks that fall each Christmas. As previously, we are seeing a gradual increase in rent arrears. This does reflect a national trend and there are likely to be a number of external factors involved, such as the impact of welfare reform. We are currently undertaking a more detailed analysis of rent arrears and it is intended to review current policy and practice to inform consideration of actions that could help reduce arrears.

- 10.3 Some further work has been undertaken since the last report on the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears. At the 31 December 2016, the Council was aware of 854 households who had claimed Universal Credit (UC). Of those 435 were "Live Service" cases and 419 were "Full Service" cases. "Live Service" cases are those serviced by Wick, Invergordon, Dingwall, Fort William and Portree Jobcentres. Claims can only be made by single, childless jobseekers who meet strict 'gateway conditions'. "Full Service" cases are for all working age claimants, and this was introduced in the Inverness Jobcentre catchment area on 29 June 2016. Claimants claiming Full Service UC are required to have an online account to manage and maintain their claim. This includes interactions with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) staffs at the job centre and service centres.
- 10.4 Currently 697 households (82% of those in receipt of Universal Credit) are in arrears with their rent. The cumulative rent arrears of all the affected households are £704,347. This figure includes £231,119 attributable to Live Service and £473,227 to Full Service. Since September 2016 the overall rent arrears for UC case has increased from £387,040 to £704,347, an increase of £317,307 (82%). Currently, the average rent arrear of a mainstream household in receipt of Universal Credit is £687 for Live Service cases and £908 for Full Service cases. This is around 2.9 and 3.8 times higher respectively than the average rent arrear of £239 per household for all other tenancies.
- 10.5 In December 2016, East Lothian Council, Scotland's other Full Service site, reported that 82% of their known UC cases were in rent arrears with an average rent arrear of £898 per household. These figures are comparable to those obtained through research undertaken for social landlords in England, which shows that 86% of Universal Credit claimants have accumulated rent arrears; with the average arrears increasing from £321 to £616 (this figure relates primarily to "Live Service" UC).
- 10.6 Under Live Service UC it is possible to monitor the receipt of direct payments of rent to landlords (known as APA payments). However, changes to the DWP's administrative processes for direct payments in Full Service UC means that it is becoming increasingly difficult to monitor payments and manage arrears without extensive manual intervention. All direct rent payments to landlords are now made in monthly batches through the DWP's Third Party Deductions process rather than by individual BACS payments to rent accounts.
- 10.7 In addition to the changes to direct payments, the DWP have indicated that they have introduced a standard measure within their Full Service UC procedures in relation to the timescale in which a payment will be made to landlords. A claimant will get their first UC payment around 6 weeks after they have made a claim for Universal Credit. A direct payment to landlords is made after this. In practice the minimum time to pay a landlord is 38 days after the claim was made and the maximum is 72 days (10 weeks). This will significantly impact on the level of rent arrears.
- 10.9 Another major concern is the removal of the housing element of Universal Credit for claimants aged 21 or under from April 2017. Subject to some exemptions any 18-21 year old who makes a new claim for Full Service Universal Credit from 1 April 2017 will not have any housing costs included in their assessment. This means they will not receive any benefit to cover their rent. There are currently 234 Housing Benefit claimants aged 18-21 in Highland.

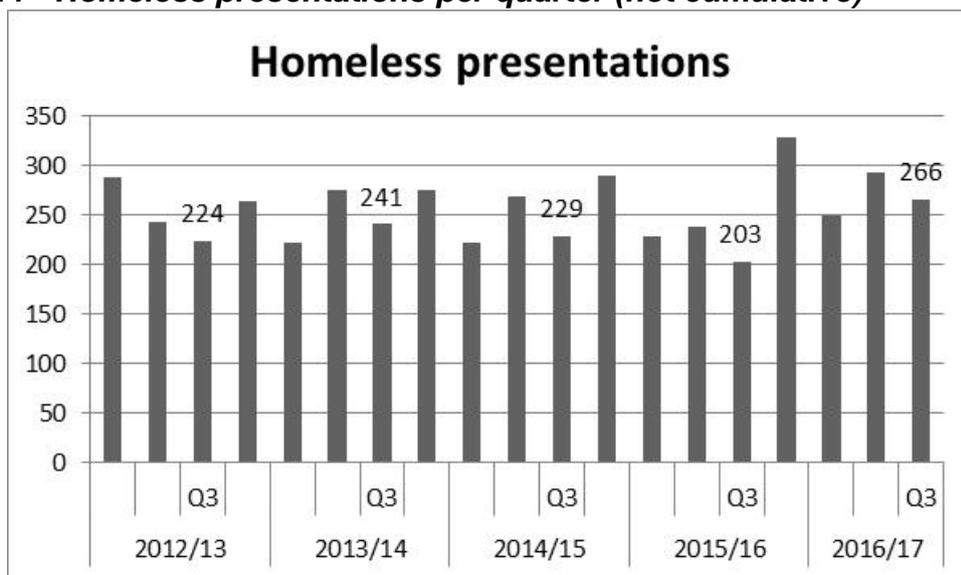
10.10 In future, the new social security powers devolved to Scottish Government will allow claimants on full service Universal Credit the option to receive Universal Credit payment twice monthly payments rather than monthly and allow the rent element of the payment to be paid directly to their landlord. Once legislation is in place this change will hopefully mitigate some of the impacts of the current Universal Credit system.

10.11 We have set up a staff working group to look at the impact that Full Service UC is having on rent arrears with a view to identifying changes to policies and procedures that will help mitigate the impacts. This will include the management of rent arrears and potential changes to IT systems. Reports on the impact of Universal Credit on Council housing rent arrears and any housing policy changes required will be reported to future Community Services Committees for consideration.

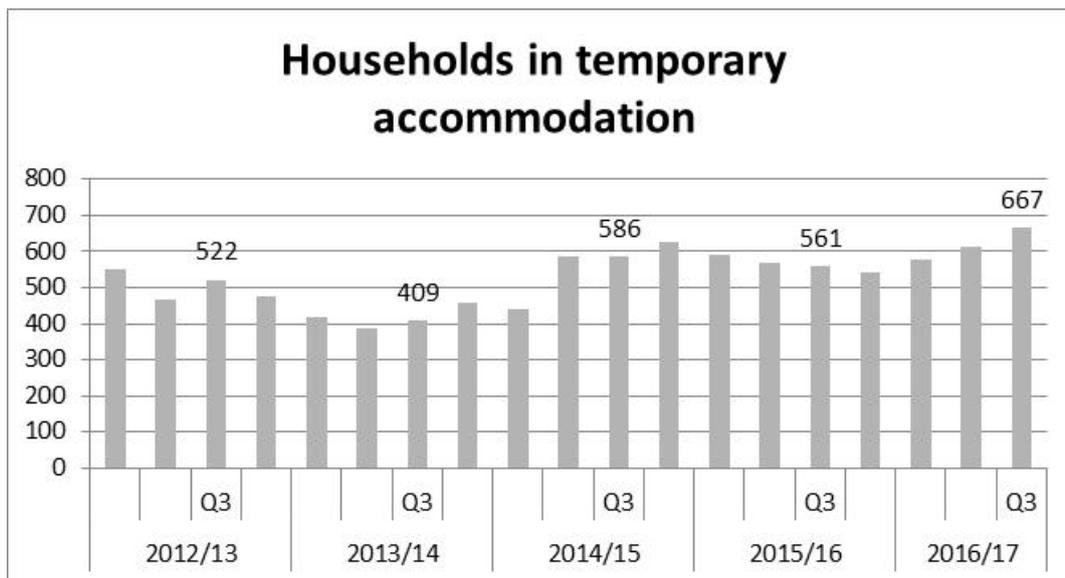
11. Homelessness

11.1 Performance information on homelessness is noted in tables 11 and 12 and additional information regarding temporary accommodation is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Table 11 - Homeless presentations per quarter (not cumulative)



11.2 **Table 12 – Households in Temporary Accommodation (not cumulative)**



11.3 Homeless presentations have dropped in the last quarter, but the overall trend is relatively stable over the last 3 years. We are seeing an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, and this is largely as a result of the lack of housing to make offers of permanent accommodation. A number of initiatives are in place to improve our services to homeless households, and these are subject to separate regular reports to Committee.

12. Staff Absence

12.1 Table 13 records performance against the absence target for the Service. Work is on-going to develop targets that are reflective of each part of the Service and focus on improvements and savings related to reduction in absence.

Staff absence details are not available at the time of writing the report.

Table 13

Target – average days lost/employee	2015/16			2014/15			
	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
2.5 days		2.9	2.8	3.6	2.7	3	3

12.2 The age profile across the Service is high, and combined with a high proportion of manual workers, reducing the absence rate remains challenging.

12.3 The Community Service's Workforce Planning Action Plan has an action to improve attendance management (an update on our Workforce Planning Action Plan will be presented to the November committee). Managers have undertaken specific training in attendance management with the objective of dealing more effectively with attendance issues.

13. Implications

13.1 Resources

There are resource implications arising from the need to set up new performance monitoring systems relating to Scottish Housing Charter Performance Indicators. This will be managed within the current HRA budget.

13.2 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.

13.3 Equality, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Rural, Risk and Gaelic

There are no other known specific equality, climate change/carbon clever, rural or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the information provided on Community Services performance from 1 April to 31 December 2016.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 17 January 2017

Author: Caroline Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources

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

Appendix 1

Highland-Wide Wards 1-22	2016-17 Quarter 3							
	Total No. of Insp.	Pass Insp.	Fail Insp	Pass Rate (%)	Remedial Notices issued	Default Notices Issued	Notices addressed within time	% Notices addressed within time
Grounds – Contracted Grass Cutting (ISS)	62	49	13	79%	13	0	6	46
Grounds – Contracted Grass Cutting (Golders)	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-
Grounds – Contracted Grass (DLO)	12	4	8	33%	8	0	1	13%
Grounds – Retained Grass Cutting	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-
Grounds – SLA Work	6	0	6	0%	6	0	0	0%
PCs – Contracted Cleaning	29	6	23	21%	8	15	7	30%
PCs – Highland Comfort Schemes	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-
PCs – In-House Cleaning	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-

Defect Response Category

The table below states the response times used for road defects recorded in the asset management system.

Category	Description	Response
1	Immediate / imminent hazard or risk of short term structural deterioration.	Immediate action to protect public if necessary. At least temporary repair within 24 hours ⁽¹⁾ .
2H	High level of hazard or risk.	7 days
2M	Medium level of hazard or risk.	21 days
2L	Low level of hazard or risk.	42 days
3	Negligible impact	Annual planned work as resources permit.

Note (1): 24 hours will be interpreted as the end of the following day.

The risk matrix in the table below is derived from the national guidance ‘Well-maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management’, which is used to determine the level of risk for category 2 defects. Inspectors use their training and experience to determine which category a defect should be given.

Impact: the extent of damage likely to be caused should the risk become an incident.

Probability: the likelihood of users encountering the risk.

Probability	Low	Medium	High
Impact			
Negligible	2L	2L	2L
Low	2L	2M	2M
Noticeable	2M	2H	2H
High	2M	2H	1