

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	PEO 09/17

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** People

**Date:** 23 August 2017

**Report Title:** Community Services Performance Report  
– 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017

**Report By:** Director of Community Services

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on housing performance up to 30 June 2017.

### 2. Recommendations

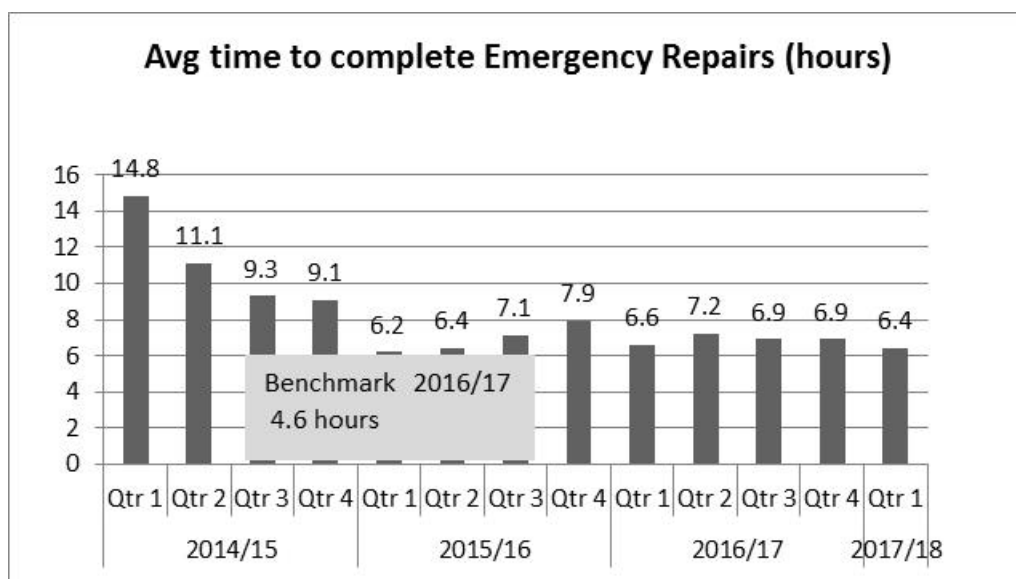
2.1 Members are invited to note the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords.
- 3.2 This report provides key performance information based on the reporting framework recommended by the SHR. Local Committees consider regular housing performance reports in a similar format.
- 3.3 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)
- 3.4 In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter guidance, the Repairs, Tenancy Management and Rent Arrears figures are cumulative, while the Homeless Presentations figures are given for each separate quarter.
- 3.5 Scottish Quality Network (SQN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish Landlords, has also been provided where available.

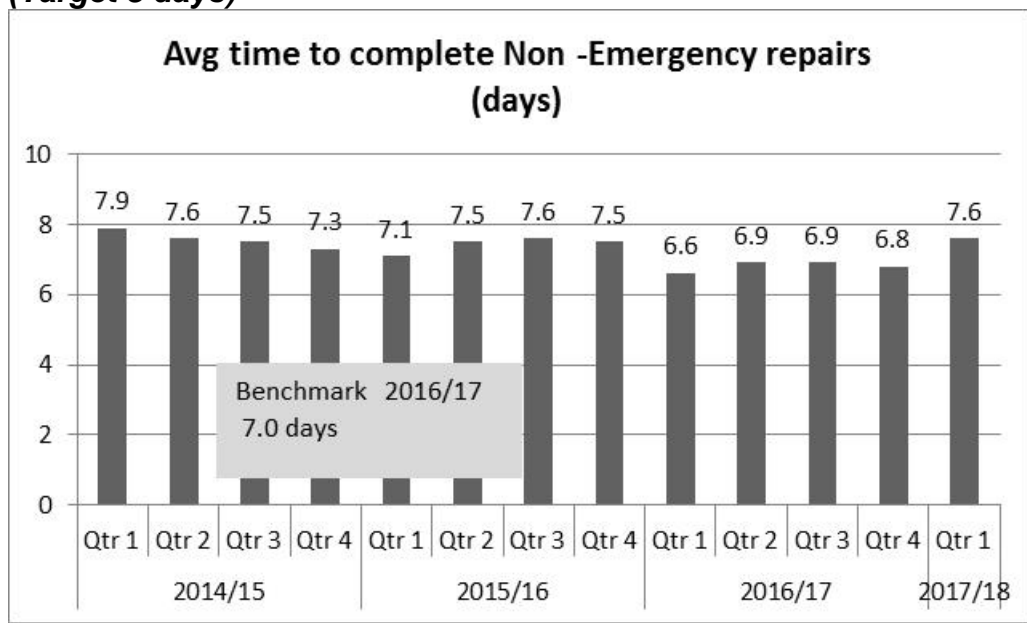
### 4. Housing Repairs

- 4.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are considered to be the average time taken to complete Emergency repairs and Non-emergency repairs.
- 4.2 Table 1 details performance on the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and Table 2 details the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Both graphs contain national benchmark figures for these indicators based on published 2015/16 figures.
- 4.3 **Table 1: Average time to complete Emergency Repairs (Target 14 hours)**



- 4.4 Performance on emergency repairs remains within the Highland target.

4.6 **Table 2 – Average time to complete Non-Emergency Repairs (Target 8 days)**

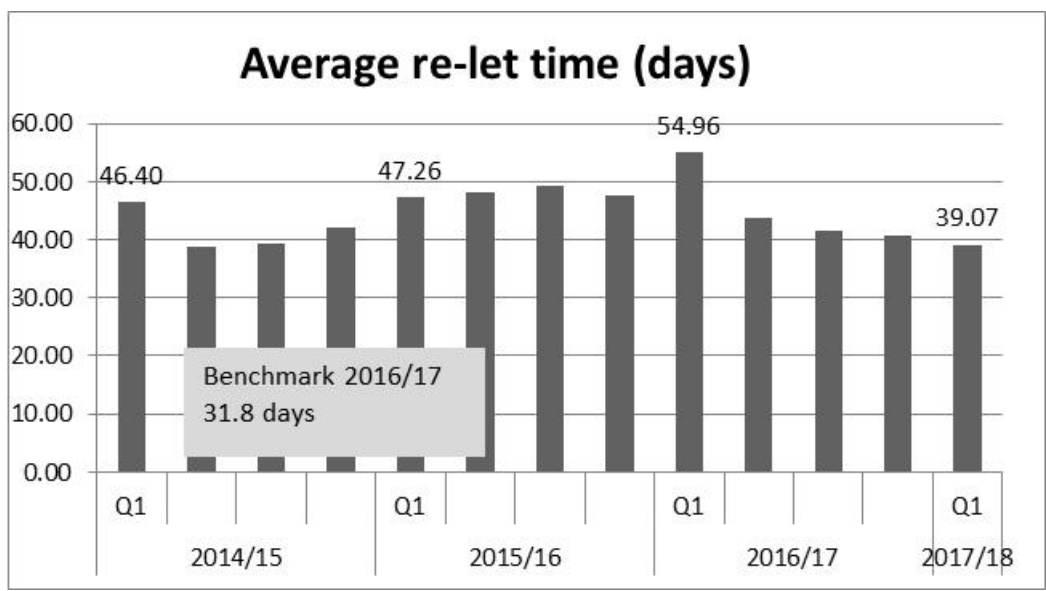


4.7 Average performance on non-emergency repairs remains within the target timescales.

5. **Tenancy Management**

5.1 Table 3 below provides information on the average re-let time showing the trend back 3 years and highlighting the same quarter in previous years for comparison.

5.2 **Table 3 – Average re-let time (Target 35 days)**



5.3 There has been a continuous improvement in average re-letting times over the last year, although performance remains above our Highland target.

5.4 There are continuing issues with low demand for housing in some areas of Caithness and Sutherland, which has a disproportionate impact on overall performance on re-letting empty homes. We operate a different approach to allocating housing within Caithness, where a “choice based letting policy” applies. Within Caithness, local Members also agreed an approach for selective disposal of vacant property last year

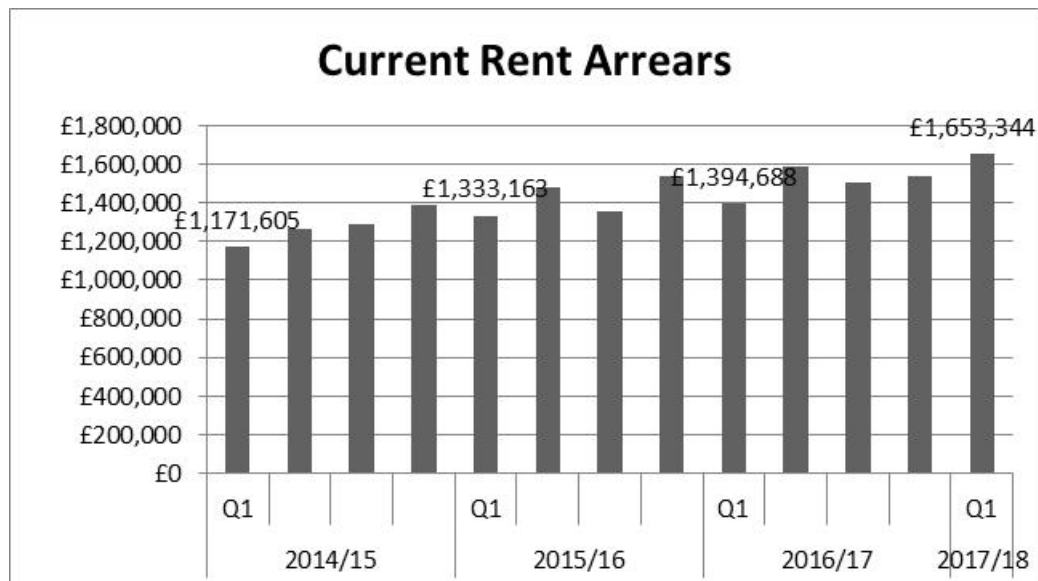
which has resulted in the open market sale of selected flats in Wick where there was no local demand for these properties.

5.5 Improving re-letting times continues to be a key priority for local housing teams.

## 6. Rent Arrears

6.1 The key performance indicator for rent arrears is considered to be the value of current arrears. Table 4 below provides information on current rent arrears going back 3 years and shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in previous years.

6.2 **Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears**



6.3 As previously reported, there continues to be an overall increase in rent arrears, particularly for households affected by the impacts of Welfare Reform. Analysis of rent arrears between March 2017 and June 2017 shows that for mainstream tenants the rent arrears for known Universal Credit cases has increased from £527,896 to £633,331, an increase of £105,435 (20%). This represents 38% of the overall rent arrears due. Currently 77% of the known 1,078 mainstream cases are in arrears, with an average value of arrears of £764 per household. The average rent arrears for Universal Credit cases is around 3 times more than that of a tenant in receipt of Housing Benefit. This increase is attributable, in the main, to the 6-10 week delay in the first Universal Credit payment being made.

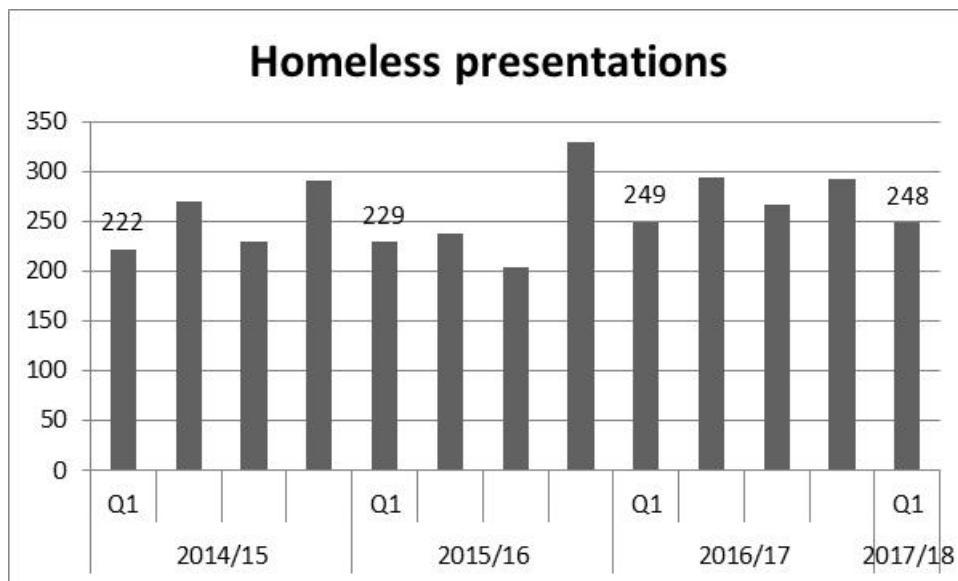
6.4 The impact of Universal Credit on temporary accommodation is an increasing concern. Although the UK Government has announced its intention to exempt some emergency temporary accommodation from Universal Credit and reinstate housing benefit, the timescale and details are yet to be announced.

6.5 There is increasing evidence, both at a local and national level, that the housing element of Universal Credit is not working for tenants or landlords. The increase in rent arrears associated with Universal is a personal cost to tenants, but also creates significant pressure on Council budgets. The best solution to this would be removing the housing element from Universal Credit altogether and reinstating all housing cost support through the housing benefit system.

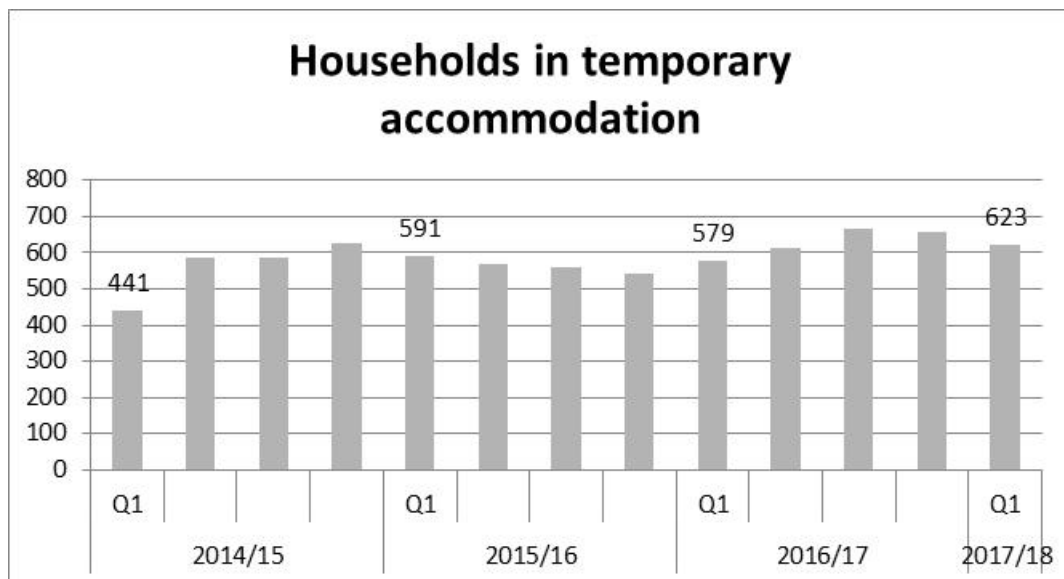
## 7 Homelessness

7.1 Performance information on homelessness is noted in tables 5 and 6.

7.2 **Table 5 - Homeless presentations per quarter (not cumulative)**



7.3 **Table 6 – Households in Temporary Accommodation (not cumulative)**



7.4 We are continuing to see high levels of homeless presentations, together with a gradual increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. High numbers of households in temporary accommodation are largely a result of the lack of housing to make offers of permanent accommodation. These issues are most acute in Inverness.

## 8. Implications

8.1 Resource: There are no resource implications arising from this report.

8.2 Legal: There are no legal implications arising from this report.

- 8.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): There are no equality implications arising from this report.
- 8.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: There are no climate change/Carbon Clever implications arising from this report.
- 8.5 Risk: There are no implications arising from this report.
- 8.6 Gaelic: There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 10 August 2017

Author: David Goldie Head of Housing and Building Maintenance

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