

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	CC/14/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Caithness Committee

Date: 29 August 2017

Report Title: Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017

Report By: Report by the Director of Community Services

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators up to 30 June 2017.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider 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. Information on other performance indicators for housing management is presented in tabular format at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The information presented in this report for quarter 1 has been amended to reflect the new Council Ward boundaries. 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
- 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 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 The average length of time taken to complete Emergency repairs is calculated in hours.
- 4.3 Caithness continues to perform well in regards to responses to emergency repairs and are within the target of 14 hours.

4.4 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**
Target 14 hours
2015/16 SQN Benchmark – 5.1 hours

	No of Houses	2017/18 Q1
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	852	2.8
Wick and East Caithness	1232	3
Highland	13954	6.4

	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Thurso	7.6	7.6	7.2	6.3	3.5	5.6	8.0	7	6.1	5.2	4.9	4.8
Wick	6.1	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.7	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.8	4.2	3.9
Landward Caithness	7.3	6.4	7.1	6.4	3.7	3.8	4.8	5.1	4.3	4.6	5	4.8
Highland	14.8	11.1	9.3	9.1	6.2	6.9	7.1	7.9	6.6	7.2	6.9	6.9

- 4.5 Non-emergency repairs are measured in working days, with a target of 8 days. In the first quarter of 2017/18 performance has exceeded the target. This is being investigated by the Repairs Manager, and every effort will be made to improve future performance.

4.6 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**
Target 8 days
2015/16 SQN Benchmark – 7.5 days

	No of Houses	2017/18 Q1
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	852	8.4
Wick and East Caithness	1232	10.2
Highland	13954	7.6

	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Thurso	5.7	6.2	6.2	6.4	4.9	5.7	6.0	7	6.6	7.7	7.7	7.5
Wick	5	5.9	5.8	6.2	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.8	5.7	6	6.2	6.6
Landward Caithness	5.4	6.2	6.3	6.7	5.1	5.2	5.7	6.2	5.3	6.5	7.1	7.2
Highland	7.5	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.5	6.6	6.9	6.9	6.8

4.7 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.

5 Tenancy Management

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

5.2 **Table 3 : Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days**
2015/16 SQN Benchmark – 35.4 days

	2015/16 Q1	2016/17 Q1		No of Houses	No of Relets	2017/18 Q1
Thurso	62.92	49.05	Thurso and Northwest Caithness	852	41	45.85
Wick	95.58	112.83	Wick and East Caithness	1232	69	83.17
Landward Caithness	54.35	52.14	Highland	13954	389	39.07
Highland	47.26	49.32				

5.3 The re-let times for Thurso, Wick and Landward Caithness remain challenging due to lack of demand and some properties continue to lie empty for significant periods of time. With the exception of one bedroom properties, which are always in demand, we are seeing a reduction in demand across all other types of property. We are now into our second year of the Choice-based Lettings initiative in Caithness which has certainly played a significant role in reducing re-let times in Wick.

5.4 Four properties in Wick which were identified as being surplus to requirement were marketed for sale. Unfortunately we have been informed that the buyer has been unable to complete on the sale. The properties will be re-marketed.

6 Rent Arrears

6.1 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 three years. It should be noted that due to the recent changes to Caithness Wards, the Q1 arrears figures below now include landward Caithness. The Highland wide current arrears figure is £1,501,827.

6.2 **Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears**

	2015/16	2016/17		No of Houses	2017/18
	Q1	Q1			Q1
Thurso	33409	27889	Thurso and Northwest Caithness	586	43133
Wick	63627	68261	Wick and East Caithness	930	82912
Landward Caithness	28617	27535			

6.3 The Caithness team continue to maintain a robust approach to maximising rental income. However, the challenges will increase as many more tenants are migrated to Universal Credit. A negative impact on rent payments is likely to be seen due to extended timescales for payment of benefits as set by the DWP. The recent establishment of a Rent Arrears Working Group aims to review current policy and procedure to ensure that the impact of welfare reform on rental income is minimised.

7 Homelessness

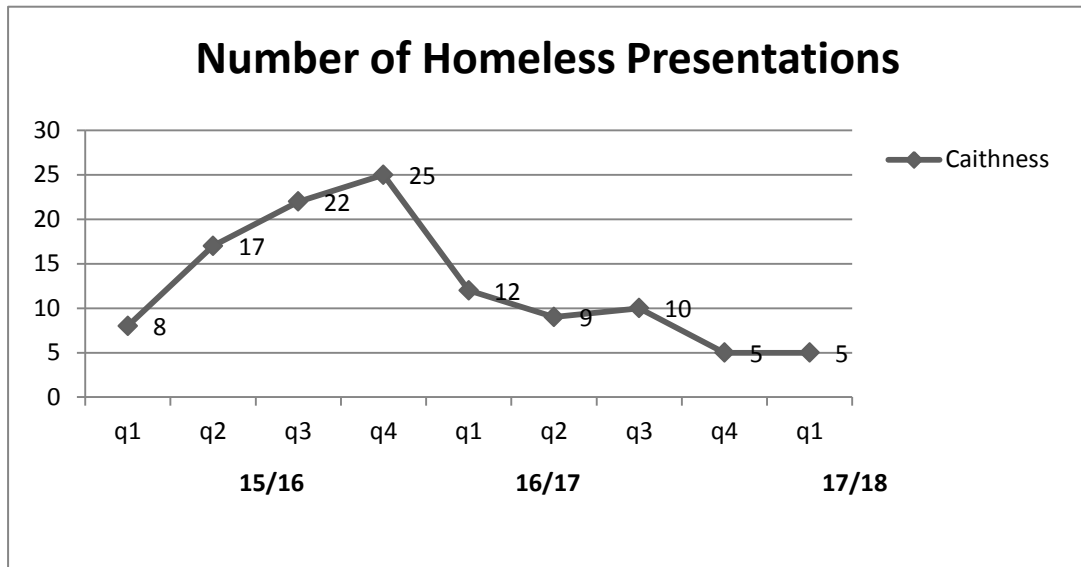
7.1 Performance information on homelessness is not collected as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter return, however a number of indicators have been agreed for reporting to Local Committees.

7.2 Table 5 shows the number of homeless presentations received by local area charting the same quarter in previous years. Homeless presentations in Caithness remain steady having significantly reduced over the last couple of years primarily due to healthy availability of housing in Caithness and also because of increased resources applied to the housing options approach.

7.3 There were 248 presentations across Highland at the end of Quarter 1 2017.

7.4

Table 5 - Homeless presentations



7.5 The HRA Capital Programme 2017/18 was approved at Community Services Committee in November 2016. A report showing progress to date against the programme will be reported to the Caithness Local Committee on 29 August. Members have been issued with a separate briefing on the HRA Capital programme and a report will be submitted for November's Caithness Committee.

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

8.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 21 August 2017

Author: Jim Holden, Housing Manager North

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

APPENDIX 1

SPI 15/16	16/17	Scottish Average	Target	2017/18	2016/17			
				Qtr 1	Qtr 4	Qtr 3	Qtr 2	Qtr 1
Reactive repairs carried out first time - Caithness	AMBER	90.7	92	91.95	97.44	97.21	97.18	96.38
Repairs appointments kept - Caithness	RED	95.9	95	87.77	89.61	90.17	90.35	86.26
Rent collected as % of rent due - Caithness		99.6		101.73	99.33	99.45	99.44	101.30
Gross rent arrears as % of rent due - Caithness		5.1		4.04	4.18	4.46	4.70	4.36
% rent loss through voids - Caithness		0.9		4.58	3.27	4.52	4.44	7.04
ASB Cases reported and resolved - Caithness		87.2		43.75	95.77	94.79	80.11	50.45
% of new tenancies sustained for more than a year - Caithness	RED	88.8	90	84.59	85.12	84.79	85.45	81.50
Tenancy offers refused - Caithness	GREEN	36.3	38	48.39	48.75	52.60	55.50	56.25
% of lettable houses becoming vacant - Caithness	AMBER	8.5	8.9	10.32	15.83	14.56	14.11	14.97
% households requiring temp/eme accomm who receive offer - Caithness	GREEN		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.00
Ave time in temp/eme accomm Caithness				26.17	20.89	19.74	16.17	11.62