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| Agenda Item | 6. |
| Report No | CC/04/19 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Caithness Committee

Date: 20 February 2019

Report Title: Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018

Report By: 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 31 December 2018.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018.

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 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 Performance on emergency repairs has continued to improve in Quarter 3 and is within the target of 14 hours in both Wards. Increased performance on emergency repairs remain a priority for the service.

- 4.4 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**
Target 14 hours
2017/18 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 5.3 hours

| | No of Houses | 2017/18 | | | | 2018/19 | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 846 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 10.7 | 5.1 | 4.6 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 1208 | 3 | 3 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 9.8 | 8.2 | 7.1 |
| Highland | 14060 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 6.4 |

- 4.5 Non-emergency repairs are measured in working days, with a Highland target of 8 days. Performance continued to improve in Quarter 3. We are working hard to improve on this performance and non-emergency repairs remain a priority for the service.

4.6 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**
Target 8 days
2017/18 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 6.9 days

| | No of Houses | 2017/18 | | | | 2018/19 | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 846 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 9.2 | 8.6 | 9.9 | 9.4 | 8.7 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 1208 | 10.2 | 9.1 | 9.3 | 7.9 | 8.9 | 8.3 | 8.1 |
| Highland | 14060 | 7.6 | 7.3 | 7.9 | 7.4 | 8.0 | 7.6 | 7.5 |

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**
2017/18 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 38.2 days

| | No of Houses | No of Relets | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | Q3 | Q3 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 846 | 119 | 55.88 | 39.32 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 1208 | 147 | 75.65 | 50.05 |
| Highland | 14060 | 987 | 39.97 | 31.48 |

5.3 The Choice-Based Lettings scheme and a concerted effort by the local team has resulted in improved performance however the re-let times for all parts of Caithness continue to exceed the Highland target largely due to low demand county wide. In particular, some flatted properties remain un-let for significant periods of time. The high number of re-lets in Caithness continues to present challenges.

6 Rent Arrears

6.1 A key indicator for rent arrears is the value of current rent arrears. The table below shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in the previous three years. The Highland-wide total arrears figure at the end of Q3 was £2,356,981

6.2

Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears

| | No of Houses | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| | | Q3 | Q3 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 846 | 51436 | 66130 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 1208 | 96690 | 149762 |

6.3 The Caithness Housing team continues to maintain a robust approach to rent arrears management however the Quarter 3 figure has increased by £67,766 from the same period in 2017/18. As previously reported, the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears continues to be of concern and is being closely monitored.

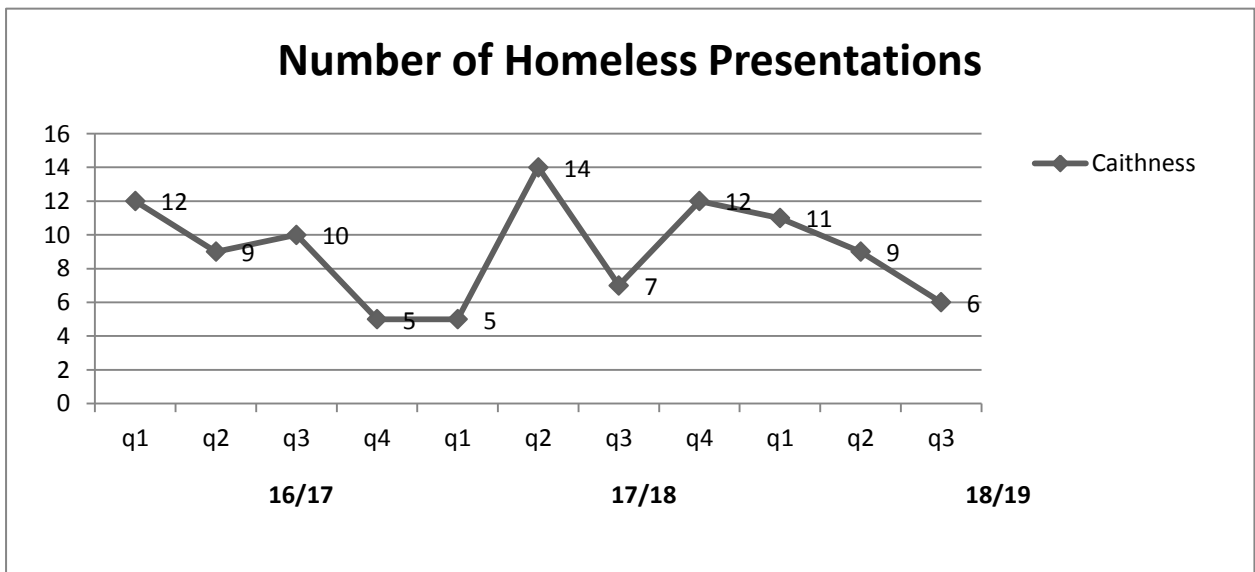
7 Homelessness

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. Housing options advice services continues to provide a key role in homelessness prevention work in Caithness. It is an approach which combines assessing a person’s legal rights to a home with a broader look at all the possible options open to them which could include perhaps renting privately, support to stay where they are and home ownership. Applicants are given clear, impartial advice, the aim being to empower them to make the choice that is right for them.

7.3 There were 258 presentations across Highland at the end of Quarter 3 2018.

7.4 **Table 5 - Homeless presentations**



8 HRA Capital Programme

8.1 Updates on the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme will continue to be provided separately through ward briefings.

9 Implications

- 9.1 Resource – There are no resource implications arising from this report.
- 9.2 Legal - There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 9.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - There are no community implications arising from this report.
- 9.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - There are no climate change/Carbon Clever implications arising from this report.
- 9.5 Risk – Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.
- 9.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 20 February 2019

Authors: Margaret Ross, Principal Housing Officer
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Background Papers: Scottish Housing Regulator: The Scottish Social Housing
Charter: Indicators and Context Information

APPENDIX 1

| SPI 18/19 | 18/19 | Scottish Average | Target | 2018/19 | | | 2017/18 | |
|--|-------|------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| | | | | Qtr 3 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 1 | Qtr 4 | Qtr 3 |
| Reactive repairs carried out first time - Caithness | GREEN | 92.23 | 92 | 93.45 | 92.78 | 91.68 | 94.41 | 93.71 |
| Repairs appointments kept - Caithness | AMBER | 95.45 | 95 | 92.14 | 91.81 | 92.38 | 91.24 | 89.62 |
| Rent collected as % of rent due - Caithness | AMBER | 99.38 | 99 | 98.16 | 98.04 | 99.35 | 98.19 | 98.46 |
| Gross rent arrears as % of rent due - Caithness | GREEN | 5.41 | 5 | 4.54 | 4.43 | 3.93 | 3.79 | 3.74 |
| % rent loss through voids - Caithness | RED | 0.85 | 1 | 2.4 | 3.96 | 5.11 | 3.46 | 4.15 |
| % of new tenancies sustained for more than a year - Caithness | RED | 88.66 | 90 | 80.59 | 78.95 | 80.60 | 82.97 | 82.21 |
| Tenancy offers refused - Caithness | AMBER | 35.86 | 38 | 39.8 | 39.00 | 37.80 | 42.23 | 44.12 |
| % of lettable houses becoming vacant - Caithness | AMBER | 8.6 | 8.9 | 11.54 | 11.64 | 12.06 | 11.15 | 10.56 |
| % households requiring temp/eme accomm who receive offer Caithness | GREEN | | 100 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |
| Ave time in temp/eme accomm Caithness | | | | | 21.38 | 24.42 | 24.68 | 23.97 |