

Agenda Item	<b>11.</b>
Report No	<b>CC/13/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Caithness Committee

**Date:** 22nd April 2021

**Report Title:** Housing Performance Report – 1st April 2020 to 31st December 2020

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

### 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 31st December 2020

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to consider the information provided on housing performance in the period 1st April 2020 to 31st December 2020

### 3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - There are no resource implications arising from this report.

3.2 **Legal** - There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - There are no equality implications arising from this report.

3.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever** - There are no climate change/Carbon Clever implications arising from this report.

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

3.6 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

## 4 Background

4.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords.

4.2 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**.

4.3 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)

4.4 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.

4.5 Scottish Housing Network (SHN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish Landlords, has also been provided where available.

## 5 Repairs

5.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are considered to be the average time taken to complete Emergency repairs and Non-emergency repairs.

5.2 The average length of time taken to complete Emergency repairs is calculated in hours.

5.3 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**  
**Target 14 hours**  
**2019/20 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 4.8 hours**

EME	No of Houses	2019/20				2020/21		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	845	3.8	4.8	6.7	7.0	5.2	5.5	7.2
Wick and East Caithness	1205	4.9	5.4	6.1	5.9	8.4	8.8	8.8
<b>Highland</b>	<b>14296</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>

5.4 Emergency repairs response times have slightly increased in one ward in Quarter 3 with the other remaining static. Performance remains within the target of 14hrs. Emergency repairs remain a priority for this service.

5.5 Non-emergency repairs are measured in working days.

5.6 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**  
**Target 8 days**  
**2019/20 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 6.6 days**

NON-EME	No of Houses	2019/20				2020/21		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	845	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.8	3.3	8.2	7.9
Wick and East Caithness	1205	5.8	5.6	5.8	6.0	4.2	7.1	7.4
<b>Highland</b>	<b>14296</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>

5.7 Performance in non-emergency repairs has shown a slight increase in one ward. Non-emergency repairs performance is within target of 8 days. There is likely to be an ongoing impact on performance with some delays still being experienced in material supply and restrictions still in place on non-essential work.

5.8 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.

## 6 Tenancy Management

6.1 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.

6.2 **Table 3: Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days**  
**2019/20 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 40.9 days**

Avg relet time	No of Houses	No of relets	2019/20				2020/21		
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	845	57	37.58	47.81	46.13	45.91	36.44	69.25	59.39
Wick and East Caithness	1205	83	57.42	49.27	48.19	52.91	63.38	89.20	79.08
<b>Highland</b>	<b>14296</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>36.00</b>	<b>34.60</b>	<b>32.89</b>	<b>35.77</b>	<b>45.86</b>	<b>53.24</b>	<b>46.01</b>

6.3 While there has been some improvement in re-let times in Q3, regrettably performance has exceeded the 35-day target in both Caithness wards. Re-let numbers remained high during this quarter and COVID-19 restrictions on working practices, coupled with supply chain issues continued to impact re-let times, as did the continuing impact of low demand and hard to let properties.

## 7 Rent Arrears

7.1 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.

7.2 **Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears**

Rent arrears	No of Houses	2019/20				2020/21		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	845	63,791	80,988	65,341	75,333	99,029	91,806	77,533
Wick and East Caithness	1205	143,880	162,270	122,508	150,628	179,178	156,532	126,463

7.3 Although rent arrears in Q3 have decreased in both wards, managing rent arrears remained a significant challenge in Q4 and will continue to do so throughout 2021/2, because of the economic impact of the Pandemic.

Although under emergency Scottish Government legislation in response to the pandemic, the notice period for taking Court action has been extended and no evictions are taking place in Scotland, tenants have an ongoing responsibility to pay rent. The Housing team has been flexible when dealing with tenants facing financial difficulties and used a range of methods, including signposting tenants to sources of financial support to ensure that rent debt is prioritised.

## 8 Homelessness

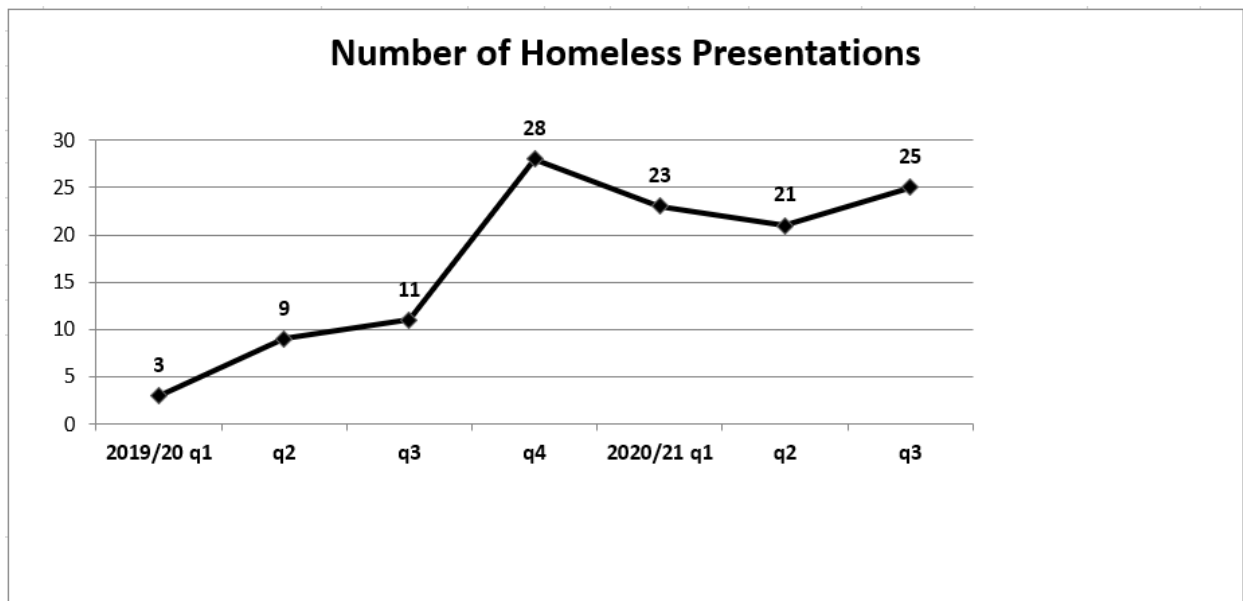
8.1 Performance information on homelessness is not collected as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter return, however a number of indicators have been agreed for reporting to Local Committees.

8.2 Table 5 shows the number of homeless presentations received. There have been higher levels of homelessness in Caithness over the last year, partly reflecting changes to national legislation and guidance on assessing and responding to homelessness. These changes have resulted in an increase in homeless presentations and we expect this trend to continue.

8.3 There were 227 presentations across Highland at the end of Q3 2020.

8.4

**Table 5 - Homeless Presentations**



## 9 HRA Capital Programme

9.1 An update on the HRA Capital Programme is being provided separately to Members for consideration at Ward Business Meetings.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

Date: 7th April 2021

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