

Agenda Item	10
Report No	HP/19/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Housing and Property Committee

Date: 30 September 2021

Report Title: Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on how the Housing Service has performed in the first quarter of 2020/22 based on key performance indicators and national benchmarking information.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

Note the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021.

3. Implications

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

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

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

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

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

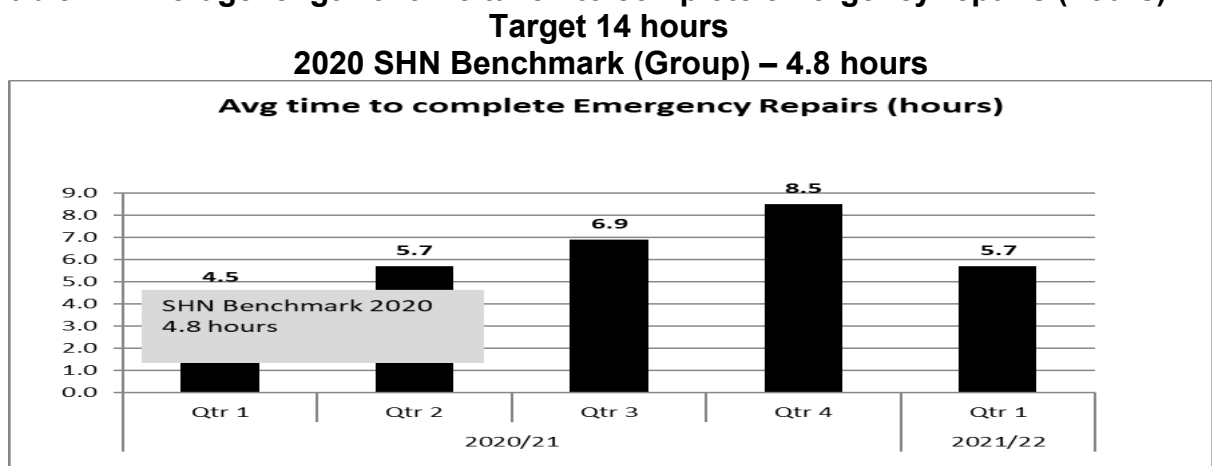
3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

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 performance information based on the reporting framework recommended by the Scottish Housing Regulator. 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
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Scottish Housing Network (SHN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish registered social landlords, has also been provided where available. Updated benchmark information will be available for the Q2 reporting and indications are that it will demonstrate the impact of the pandemic on performance across Scotland.
- 4.5 The Coronavirus pandemic has continued to impact on how services are delivered. The Housing Performance Report to the previous Committee provided information on how the Service has responded to these challenges and in particular to the lockdown restrictions. The Service is continuing to adhere to the Scottish Government guidelines in regard to the delivery of services to clients and more details are provided at each section of this report.

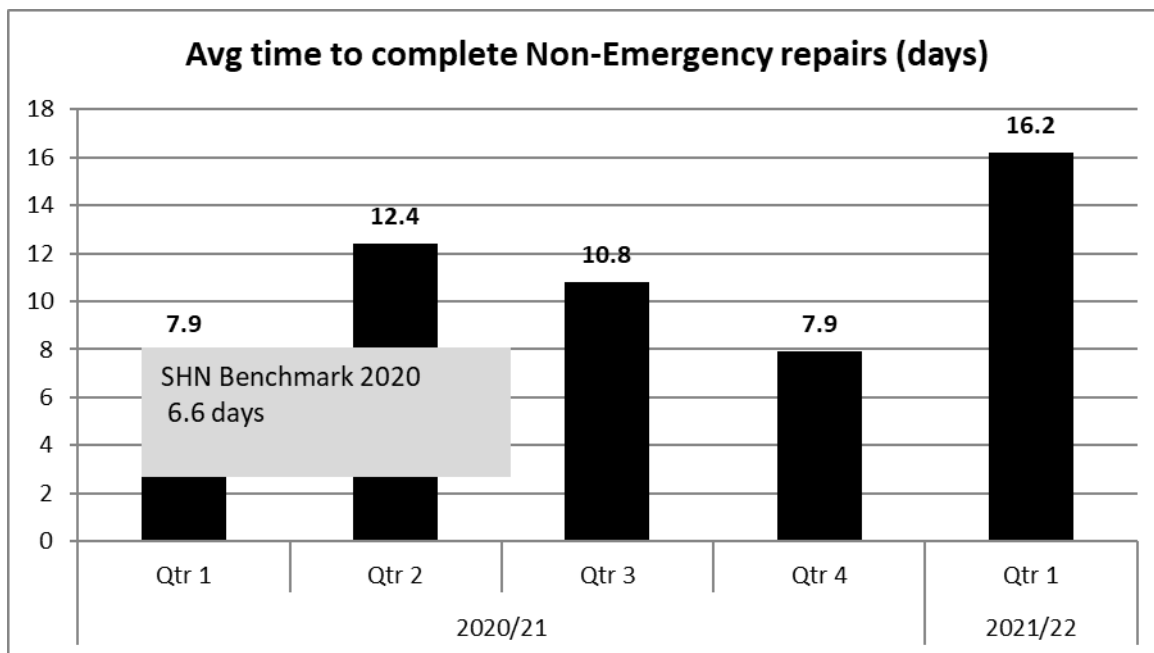
5. Housing Repairs

- 5.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are the average time taken to complete Emergency repairs and Non-emergency repairs.
- 5.2 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 2019/20 figures.
- 5.3 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**



5.4 Performance on emergency repairs has improved in the last quarter which reflects efforts to prioritise these repairs despite the restrictions on carrying out work in the second lockdown period. Highland geography needs to be considered when comparing the Highland figure for the national benchmark on completing emergency repairs.

5.5 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**
Target 8 days
2020 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 6.6 days

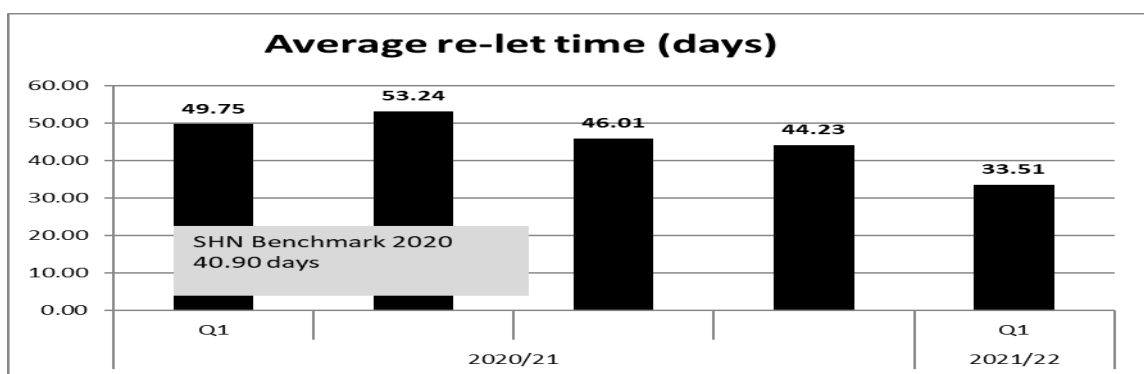


5.6 Average time to complete non-emergency repairs has increased as a result of the suspension of most non-essential repairs during the second lockdown period. Performance will continue to be impacted as trades work through the backlog of these repairs.

6. Tenancy Management

6.1 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.

6.2 **Table 3 : Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days**
2020 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 40.90 days

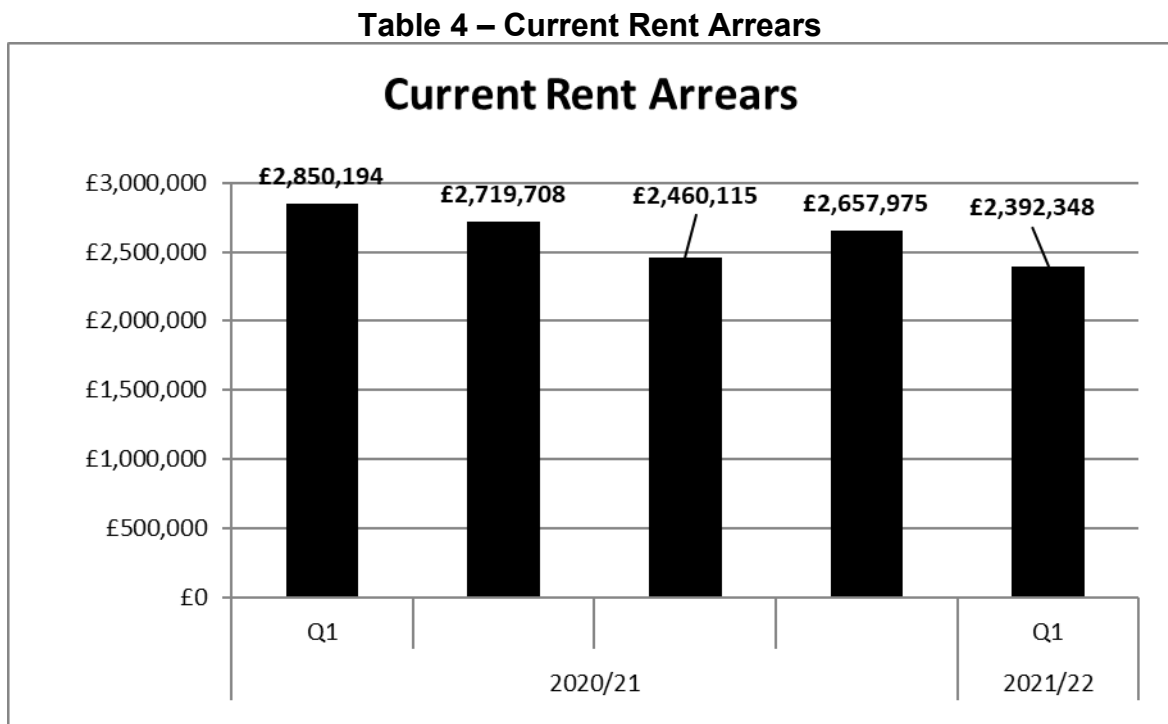


- 6.3 Performance on reletting times has improved in the last quarter.
- 6.4 The graph shows the clear impact of the emergency on reletting activity and average reletting times in earlier quarterly periods. In line with national guidance, housing allocations during the lockdown period were happening at a greatly reduced level and were focused on homeless clients and other high needs cases.
- 6.5 With the easing of restrictions, allocations have largely returned to normal levels and officers continue to offer advice and assistance to applicants seeking re-housing.

7. Rent Arrears

7.1 The key performance indicator for rent arrears is the value of current arrears. Table 4 below provides information on current rent arrears and shows the comparative figure for the same quarter in the previous year

7.2



- 7.3 Rent arrears have reduced since the previous quarter. Previous reports to Committee have detailed the efforts of officers during the pandemic to provide a full service in relation to rent arrears and to adapt communication and engagement with tenants to help them maintain rent payments and to seek support required. Processes and correspondence have been adapted to increase tenant awareness of the support available to them during the pandemic.
- 7.4 With the easing of restrictions, visits to tenants in arrears have resumed, allowing officers to further progress arrears cases where face-to-face communication is crucial to resolving rent arrears issues. Officers are also reporting progress in individual cases with Universal Credit claims being processed more quickly than before, and this has contributed to the reduction in rent arrears.

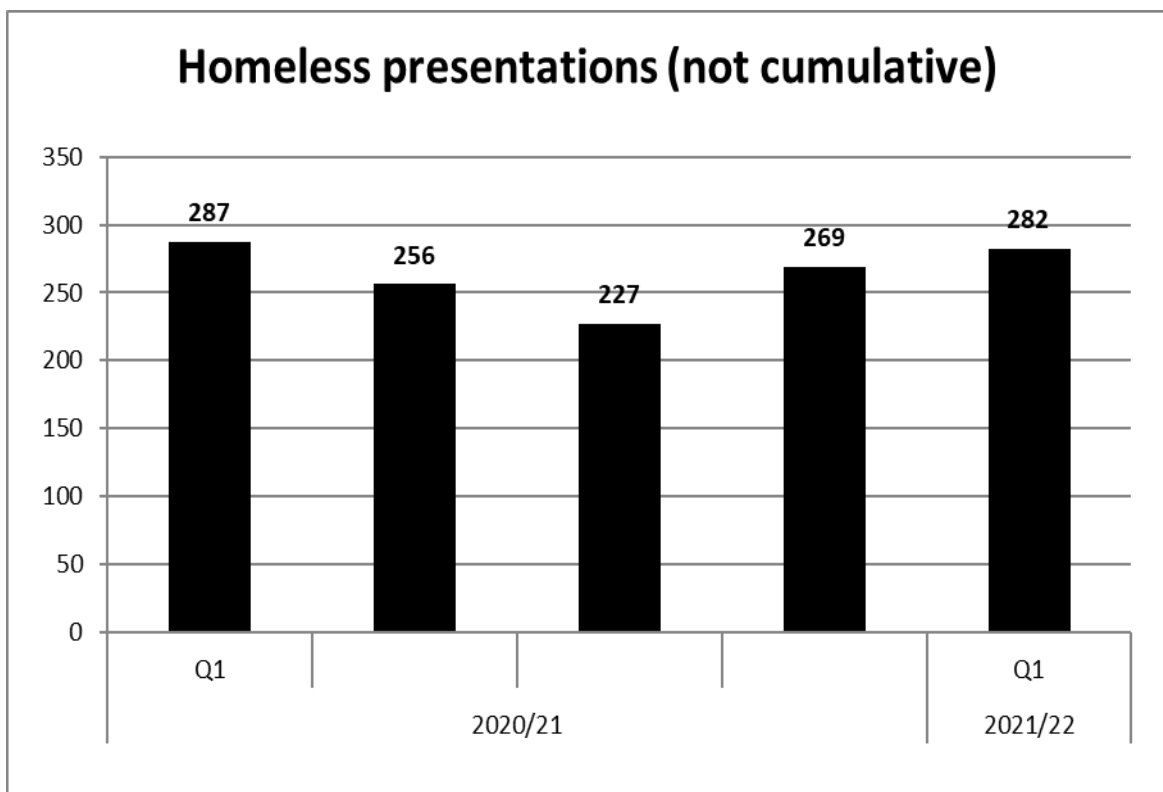
7.5 Under the emergency coronavirus legislation, there has been an extension to the notice period required to be given to tenants before landlords can start legal action to obtain an order for eviction. In line with this, Highland has not progressed any rent arrears cases to court during the emergency and the extended notice period will continue until 31 March 2022.

7.6 Officers remain supportive and sympathetic to all tenants facing financial hardship at this time and continue to signpost tenants to other services who can provide specialist advice relating to income maximisation and benefits uptake where needed.

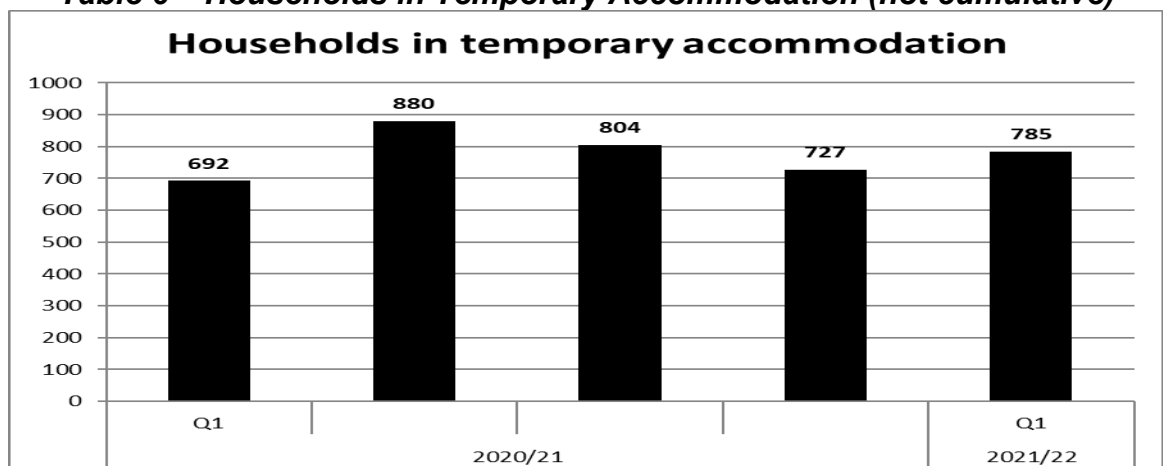
8. Homelessness

8.1 Performance information on homelessness is noted in tables 5 and 6 (below).

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



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



8.4 Table 5 (above) shows that numbers of homeless presentations are largely similar to the same quarter of 2020-21. The number of households in temporary accommodation remains high and reflects the continued difficulty in moving clients to permanent tenancies at this time.

9. Complaints and correspondence performance

9.1 Table 7 below provides information on performance against complaints, freedom of information requests and MSP enquiries. This demonstrates the volume of formal complaints and enquiries that the service is dealing with. Staff are dealing with much larger numbers of service requests and enquiries on a day-to-day basis which do not form part of formal reporting. Given the nature and volume of business involved in housing services the proportion of formal complaints received is relatively low. As well as complaints some tenants and housing customers also take the time to contact us to compliment staff or thank us for the services they have received. Information on compliments received is also provided below.

9.2 Following completion of stage 2 complaints customers are advised that they can contact the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman if they are not satisfied with the way the Council has dealt with their case. There have been no complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman to date in 2021-22.

Table 7 – Complaint and Enquiry Performance

Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 1 Average Response Time (Days)	Stage 2	Stage 2 Average Response Time (Days)
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2020)	29	17	12	25
Q2 (Jul-Sep 2020)	75	11	23	23
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2020)	62	8	34	27
Q4 (Jan – Mar 2021)	44	9	32	19
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2021)	48	7	20	16

FOIs	Number Logged	Number now closed
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2020)	13	13
Q2 (Jul-Sep 2020)	39	39
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2020)	24	23
Q4 (Jan – Mar 2021)	31	31
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2021)	19	19

MP/MSP Enquiries	Number Logged	Number now closed
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2020)	55	55

Q2 (Jul-Sep 2020)	94	94
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2020)	89	89
Q4 (Jan – Mar 2021)	64	62
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2021)	57	57

	Compliments
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2020)	6
Q2 (Jul-Sep 2020)	12
Q3 (Oct-Dec 2020)	13
Q4 (Jan – Mar 2021)	12
Q1 (Apr-Jun 2021)	10

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

Date: 13 September 2021

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