

Agenda Item	10
Report No	HP/26/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Housing and Property Committee

Date: 15 December 2021

Report Title: Housing Performance Report Q2: 1 April 2021 – 30 September 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 second quarter of 2021/22 based on key performance indicators and national benchmarking information.

2. Implications

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

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

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

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

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

2.6 **Gaelic:** There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to:

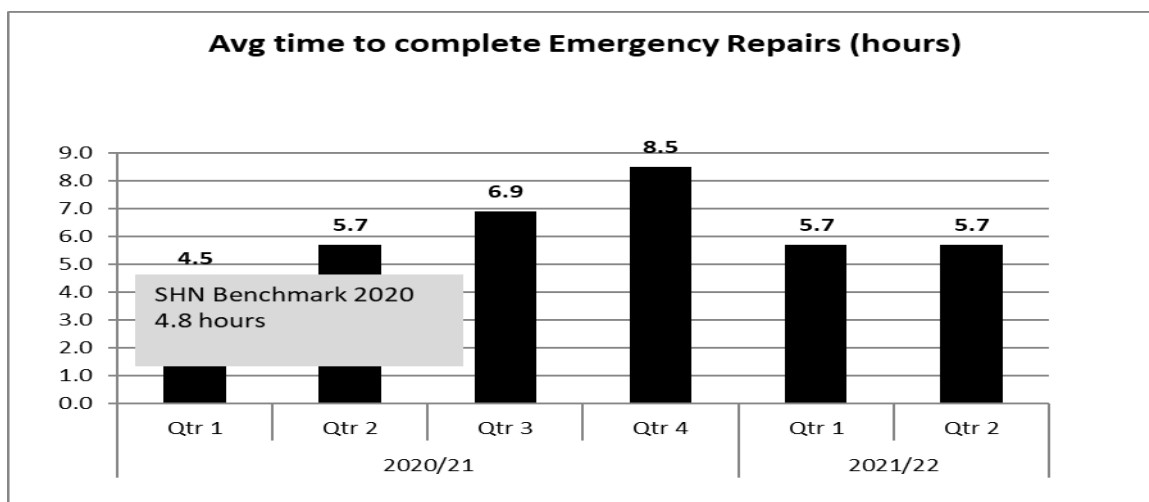
NOTE the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2021 – 30 September 2021.

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 SHR. 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 Landlords, has also been provided where available. Updated benchmark information will be available for the Q3 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 previous Committees provided information on how the Service has responded to the challenges of the pandemic 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.

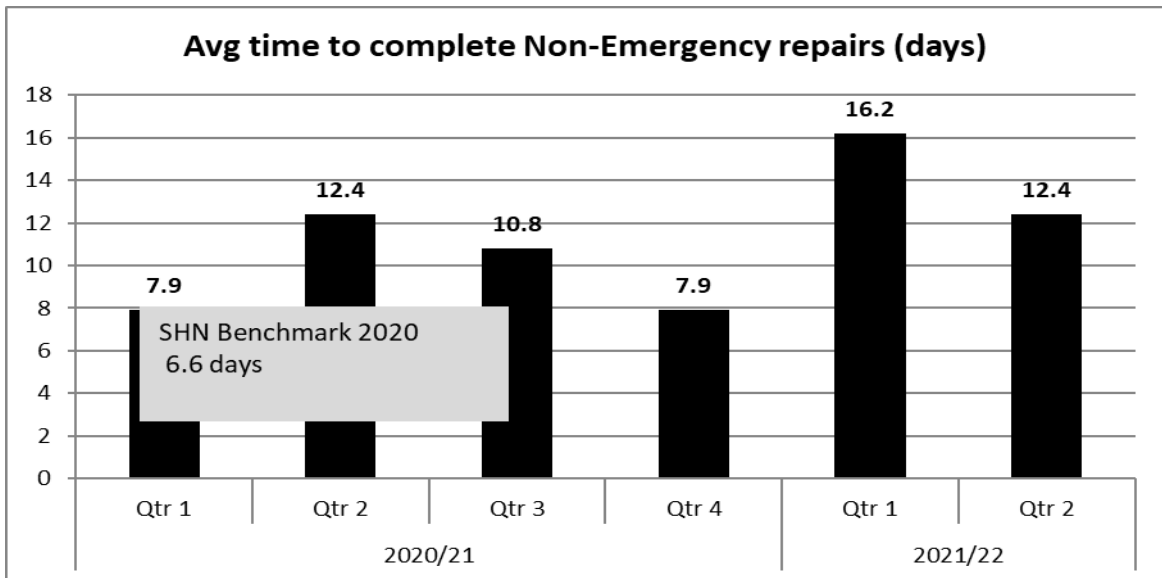
5. Housing Repairs

- 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)**
Target 14 hours
2020 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 4.8 hours



5.4 Performance on emergency repairs has remained consistent in the last quarter which reflects efforts to prioritise these repairs. 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

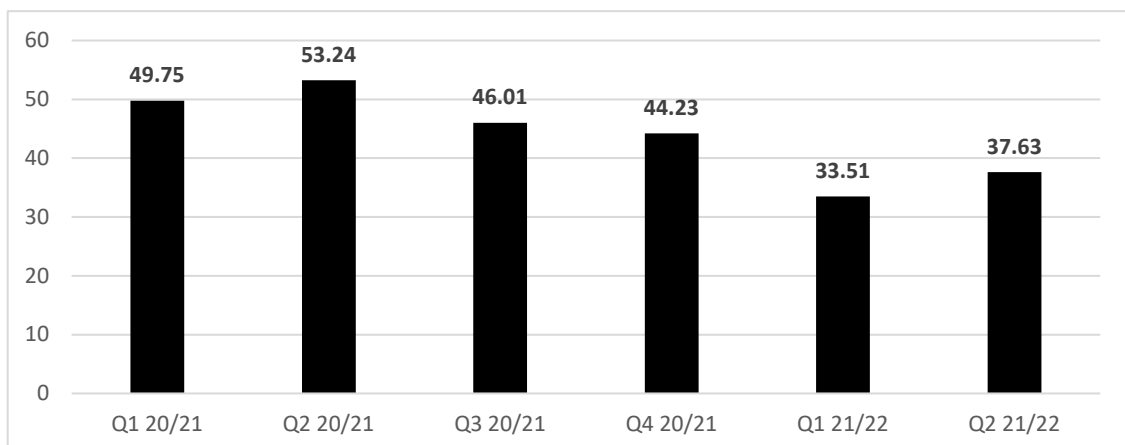


5.6 Average time to complete non-emergency repairs has improved in the last quarter. Performance so far this year has been impacted by restrictions on most non-essential repairs during the second lockdown period. Performance will continue to be impacted as trades work through the backlog of these repairs. Contractor capacity and material availability are also affecting the time taken to complete repairs.

6. Tenancy Management

6.1 Table 3 below provides information on the average re-let time.

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



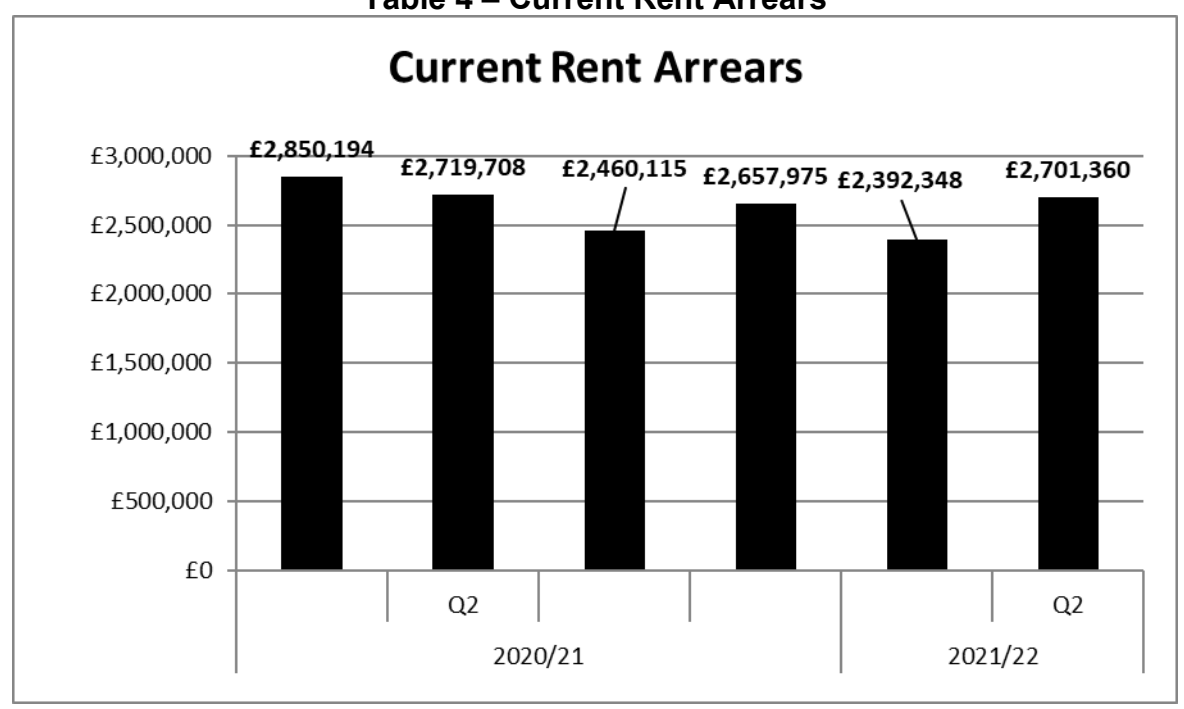
6.3 The graph shows a recovery in reletting times following the impact of the emergency on reletting activity and average reletting times. Housing allocations have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels and staff continue to offer advice and assistance to applicants seeking re-housing. There have been some issues with reporting in the year to date and work is continuing to resolve this. The Q3 report will provide further details of any adjustments required.

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

Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears



7.3 Rent arrears for Q2 are comparable for the corresponding Q2 in 2020/21.

7.4 Previous reports to Committee have detailed changes to the ways staff have delivered services during the pandemic, including different approaches to communication and engagement with tenants in arrears. Processes and correspondence have been adapted to increase tenant awareness of the support available. Home 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.

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

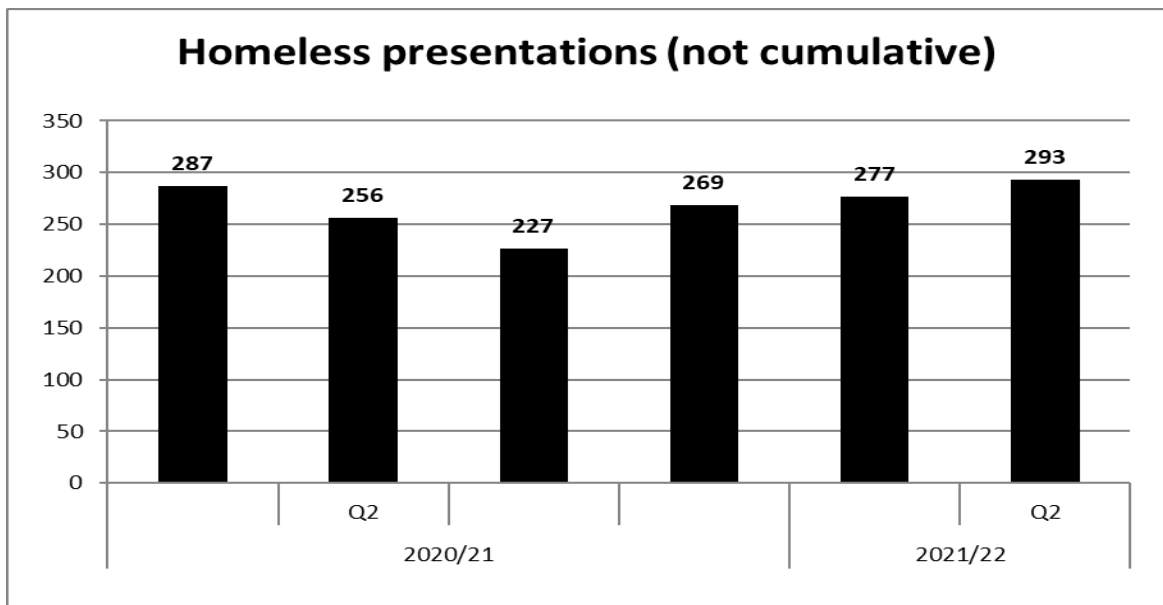
7.6 We continue to take a supportive approach to all tenants facing financial hardship at this time and officers continue to signpost tenants to partner services who can provide specialist advice relating to income maximisation and benefits uptake.

7.7 Highland has been allocated £297k in funding from the Scottish Government to establish a Tenant Grant Fund in Highland. The Fund is targeted at tenants in both the private and social rented sectors who have fallen into arrears as a direct result of the pandemic. Referrals to the Tenant Grant Fund commenced on 15 November 2021 and details of grants awarded will be submitted as part of the performance reporting for the remaining quarters of 2021/22.

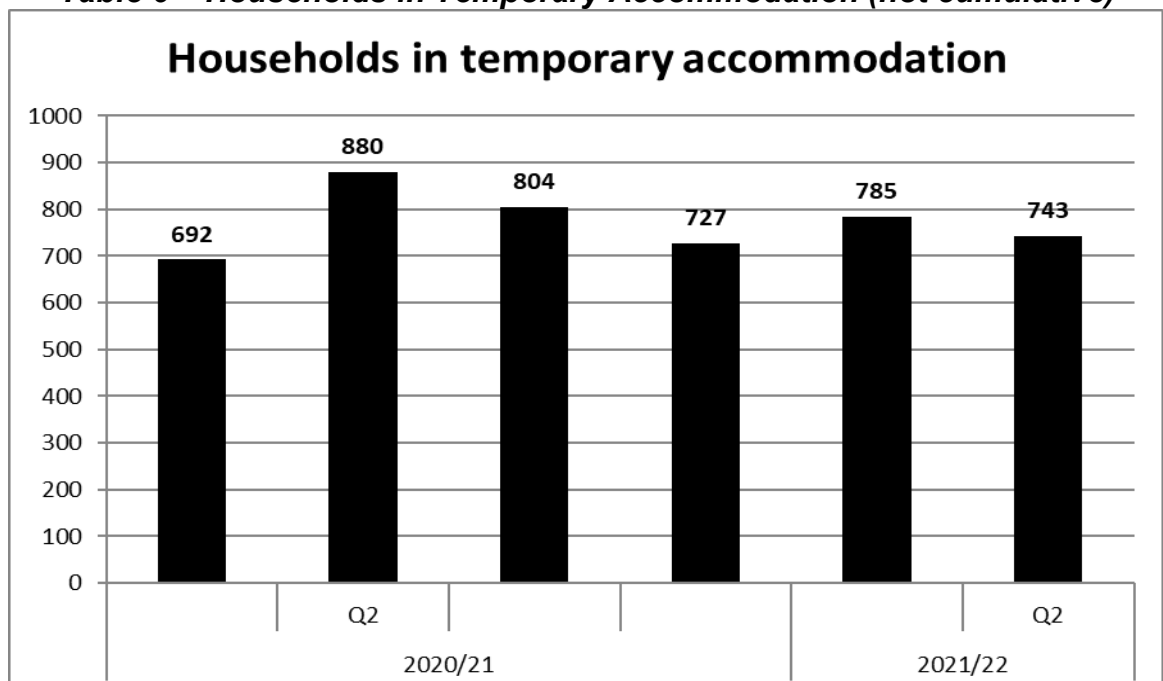
8. Homelessness

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

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



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



8.4 Homelessness pressures continue, with signs of an increase in presentations in the year to date. We have managed to stabilise the number of people in temporary accommodation but continue to face real difficulties finding permanent housing outcomes for many households. This is a continuing priority as we implement our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Housing & Property

Date: 1 December 2021

Author: David Goldie, Head of Housing and Building Maintenance;
Brian Cameron, Housing Policy & Investment Manager

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