

Agenda Item	8
Report No	HP/23/23

The Highland Council

Committee: Housing & Property Committee

Date: 9 November 2023

Report Title: Housing Performance Report: 1 April 2023 – 30 June 2023

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Housing & Property

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on how the Housing Service has performed in 2023/24 to 30 June based on key performance indicators and national benchmarking information.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **NOTE** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2023-30 June 2023

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, Rural and Island)** - 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 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** -There are no H&S implications arising from this report.

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

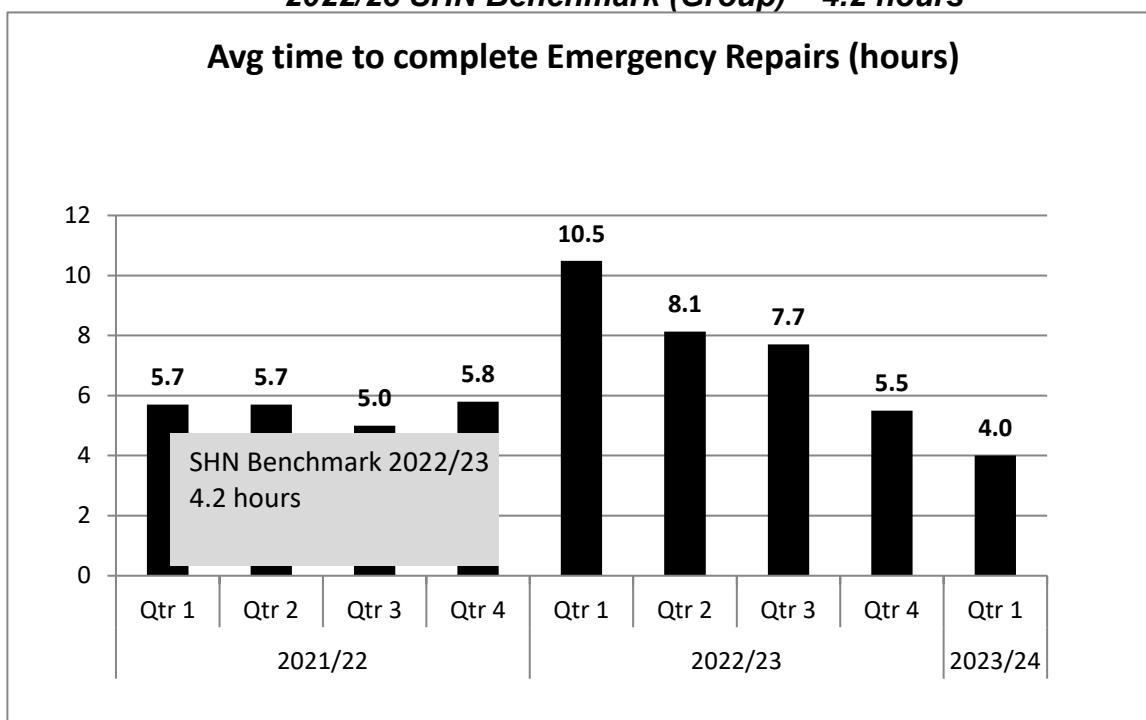
4. Background

- 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 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 future reporting and indications are that it will demonstrate the impact of the pandemic on performance across Scotland.

5. Housing Repairs

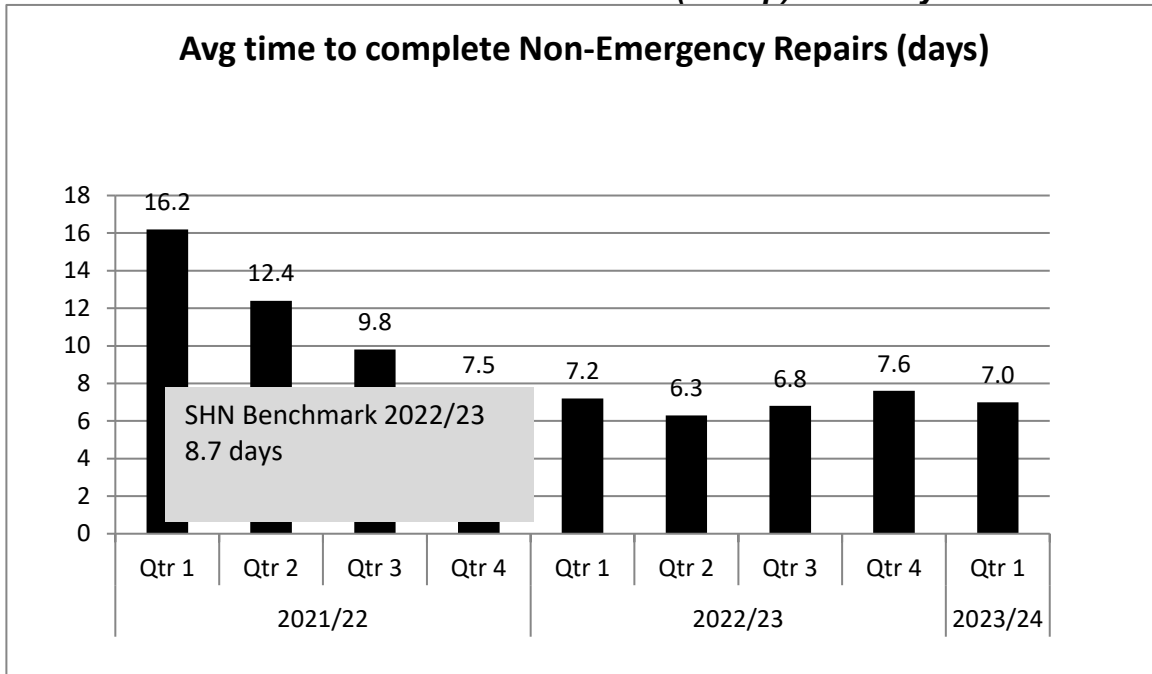
- 5.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are the average time taken to complete Emergency repairs and Non-emergency repairs.
- 5.2 Table 1 details performance on the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and Table 2 details the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Both graphs contain national benchmark figures for these indicators based on published 2022/23 figures.

5.3 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**
Target 12 hours
2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 4.2 hours



5.4 The time taken to complete emergency repairs in the last quarter has decreased which reflects ongoing efforts to prioritise emergency 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
2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 8.7 days



5.6 Average time to complete non-emergency repairs has decreased and remains well below the national benchmark average.

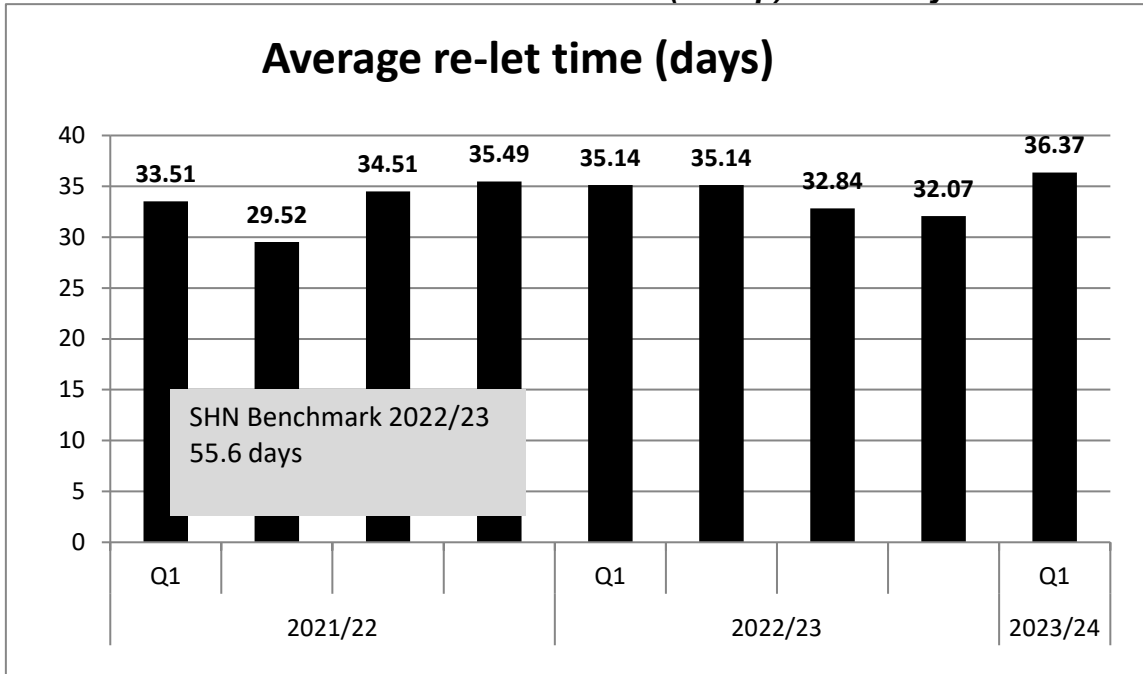
5.7 The Housing Revenue Monitoring Report submitted to August Committee, referred to the overspend on the repairs budget in 2022/2023. It also identified existing and future management actions to minimise repairs spend to ensure this is within budget in 2023/2024. The Monitoring Report to this Committee provides an update on the repairs budget expenditure to the end of Q2.

5.8 The budget controls are likely to have an impact on performance against non-emergency repairs later in 2023/24, as inevitably some of these works will be delayed ensuring best value for money is achieved. Any impact will be reported as part of future quarterly reporting to Committee.

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 3a: Average re-let time (days) Target 35 days
2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 51.6 days**



6.3 Performance on reletting times continues to compare very favourably with the national benchmarking figures.

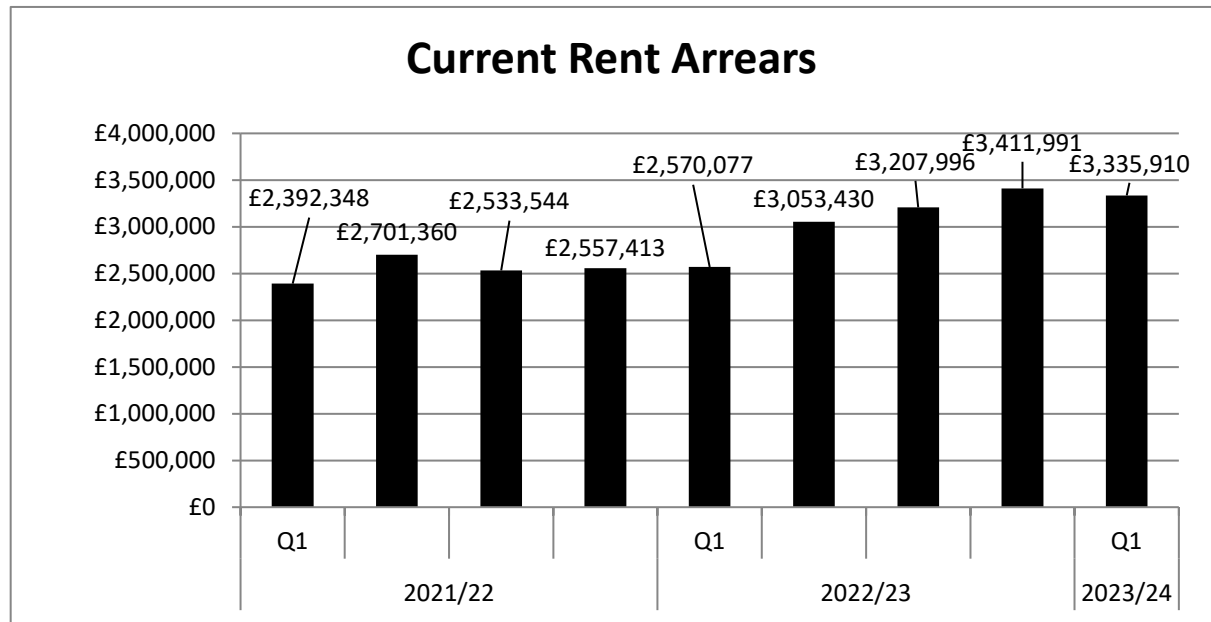
6.4 As indicated at section 5 above, our relet performance will be impacted by the financial controls in place for 2023/2024. Local teams will ensure that reletting takes place as quickly as possible, but that this is within the context of achieving best value.

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 quarter 1 have decreased from quarter 4 of the previous year but they remain high compared to the same quarter in previous years. This is related to the Cost of Living Crisis which has increased the number of tenants in arrears. 5,520 tenants were in arrears at the end of quarter 4 2022/23 owing £3,411,991. This has decreased to 4,912 tenants at the end of quarter 1 2023/24 owing £3,335,910. It should be noted that of the 4,912 tenants in arrears at the end of quarter 1, 1105 owed less than the average weeks rent of £85 and 335 owed less than £20.

7.4 The Cost of Living (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Government on 6 October 2022. This has temporarily suspended evictions in most circumstances, although social landlords are still able to evict where tenants have been found responsible for ongoing anti-social behaviour and where tenants are in arrears of over £2,250. The legislation has now been extended to 31 March 2024.

7.5 All high-level arrears cases are under regular review. It should be noted that at the end of quarter 1 2023/24, there were 350 arrears cases over £2,250 with a combined arrears total of £1,282,861. This compares with 235 cases over £2,250 in quarter 1 2022/23 with a combined arrears total of £807,034.

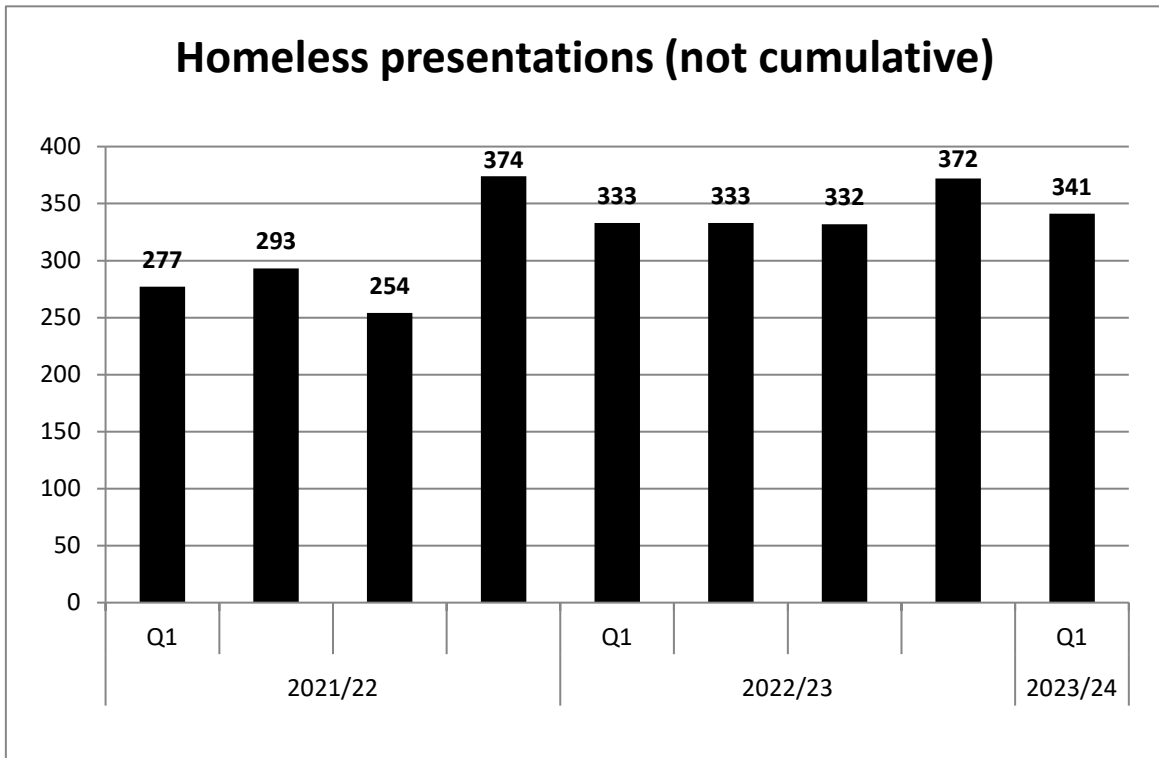
7.6 Most of our tenants remain willing to responsibly manage their rent accounts. Officers continue to be supportive and sympathetic to all tenants facing financial hardship at this time and officers continue to signpost tenants to partner services who can provide specialist advice relating to income maximisation and benefits uptake.

7.7 The Review of our Rent Arrears Management Policy was reported to November 2022 Committee and Members noted the advice and assistance that is in place to help tenants manage their rent accounts.

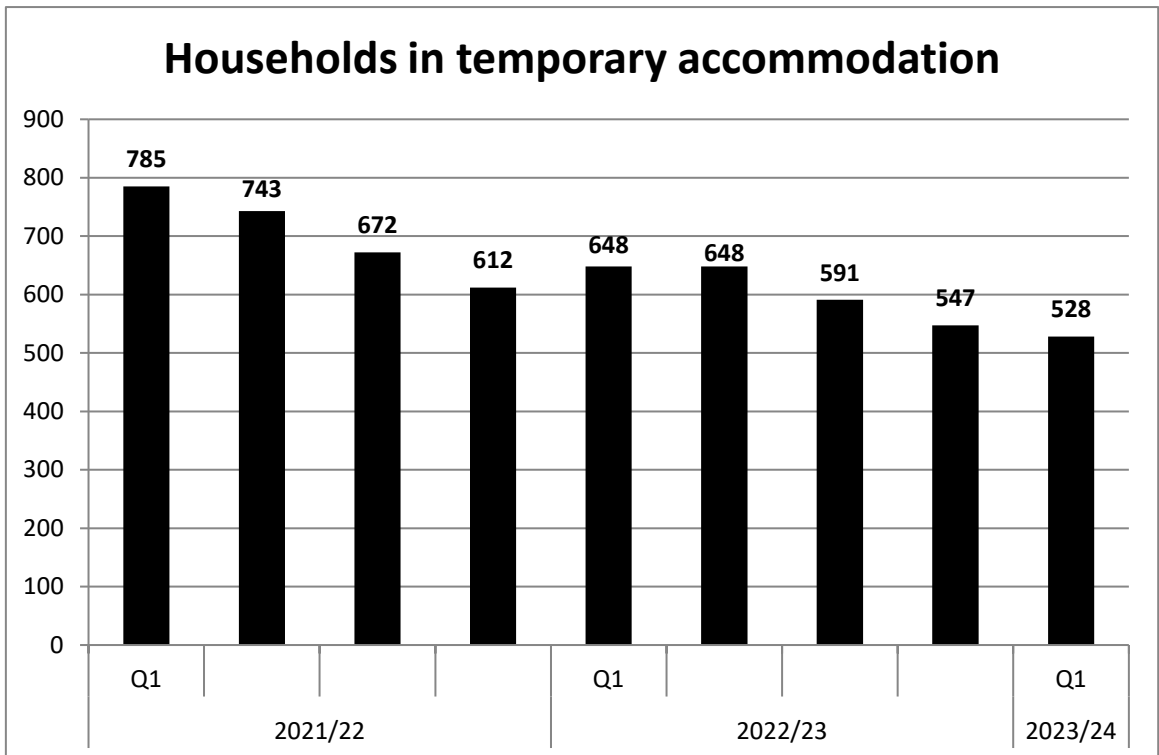
8. Homelessness

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 Table 5 (above) shows that numbers of homeless presentations have decreased since the previous quarter but still remain high in comparison to previous years. This reflects national trends with local authorities experiencing a rise in homeless presentations.

- 8.5 This increase in homeless presentations partly reflects the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis with households struggling with mortgage and private rental payments. While the extension to the Cost of Living Act has protected private tenants from eviction, many households have reported continuing difficulties with accessing the private rented sector both in terms of affordability and supply.
- 8.6 Highland remains committed to homeless prevention and our approach will be reviewed as part of the Scottish Government's new prevention duties which they intend to implement in 2023/24.
- 8.7 The number of homeless households recorded as living in temporary accommodation has however continued to reduce as a result of an increase in clients receiving a permanent tenancy.
- 8.8 Detail on lets to homeless applicants is referred to in the report to this Committee on the performance of the Highland Housing Register in 2022/23.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Housing & Property

Date: 5 October 2023

Author: Brian Cameron, Interim Head of Housing and Building Maintenance

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