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| Agenda Item | 7. |
| Report No | CC/20/24 |

The Highland Council

Committee: Caithness Committee

Date: 11 November 2024

Report Title: Housing Management Performance Report – 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

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 30 September 2024.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

Note the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.

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 Health and Safety - (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

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

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has set out the performance indicators that it will use in its scrutiny of landlords.
- 5.2 This report provides key performance information based on the reporting framework recommended by the SHR.
- 5.3 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
- 5.4 In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter guidance, the Rent Arrears, Anti-social Behaviour and Allocations figures are cumulative, while the Homeless Presentation figures are given for each separate quarter.
- 5.5 Scottish Housing Network (SHN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish Landlords, has also been provided where available.

6 Rent Arrears

- 6.1 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 last 5 quarters.

6.2 **Table 1 – Current Rent Arrears**

| Rent arrears | No of Houses | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 839 | £104,321 | £95,560 | £84,712 | £83,048 | £110,742 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 1205 | £148,523 | £138,363 | £131,707 | £128,885 | £165,881 |

- 6.3 Rent Arrears in quarter 4 have increased across both Caithness wards and are higher than the same quarter in the previous year.

6.4 The table below shows gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due. This percentage includes arrears that are current, former or have been written off.

6.5 **Table 2 – Gross rent arrears as a percentage of annual rent due 2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 6.86%**

| Gross Rent Arrears % | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 4.42% | 4.19% | 3.97% | 3.34% | 4.18% |
| Wick and East Caithness | 4.72% | 4.68% | 4.86% | 4.16% | 4.99% |
| Highland | 7.85% | 7.76% | 7.67% | 6.94% | 7.43% |

6.6 Gross rent arrears as a percentage of annual rent due in Caithness has increased from quarter 1, however remains significantly below the highland wide figure.

6.7 The table below shows the current arrears in Caithness split into arrears level bands. The information provided shows the total number of cases in each band and the total value of these cases.

6.8 **Table 3 – Value of current rent arrears in bands**

| | Current Arrears | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | < £500 | > £500 | > £,1000 | > £2,500 |
| | | < £1,000 | < £,2500 | |
| Thurso and Northwest Caithness | 228 | 41 | 27 | 2 |
| Wick and East Caithness | 367 | 68 | 35 | 2 |
| Total value of cases | £105,907 | £ 76,127 | £83,897 | £10,692 |

6.9 The table below provides information on formal actions taken in relation to rent arrears across Caithness.

6.10 **Table 4 – Rent actions**

| | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | |
|------------------------------|---------|----|----|---------|----|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Notice of Proceedings issued | 9 | 16 | 26 | 32 | 82 |
| Court Actions Initiated | 3 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 10 |
| Evictions Completed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

6.11 The local Housing team hold regular review meetings focusing on the highest rent arrears cases. During these meetings actions are agreed and progressed. Officers aim to take a firm but fair approach to arrears management and we are keen to support and advise people where appropriate. Some cases have progressed through the court system where unfortunately tenants have not engaged with the support offered.

7 Anti-social Behaviour

7.1 The Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator includes key information on our performance throughout the year in relation to resolving anti-social behaviour complaints. This includes the number of cases of antisocial behaviour reported within the year, and the number of cases resolved within the year.

7.2 The table below shows the number of cases reported and the percentage of cases that were resolved within the key indicator timescales.

7.3 **Table 5 – ASB cases reported/resolved
2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 94.21%**

| | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Number of ASB cases reported | 49 | 70 | 74 | 7 | 12 |
| Percentage of cases resolved | 82% | 93% | 93% | 43% | 25% |
| Highland percentage resolved | 59% | 60% | 79% | 26% | 36% |

7.4 Tackling antisocial behaviour is a key priority for the local housing team. The management of cases is often complex, involving other services and agencies. Cases that remain open continue to be actively managed by the team.

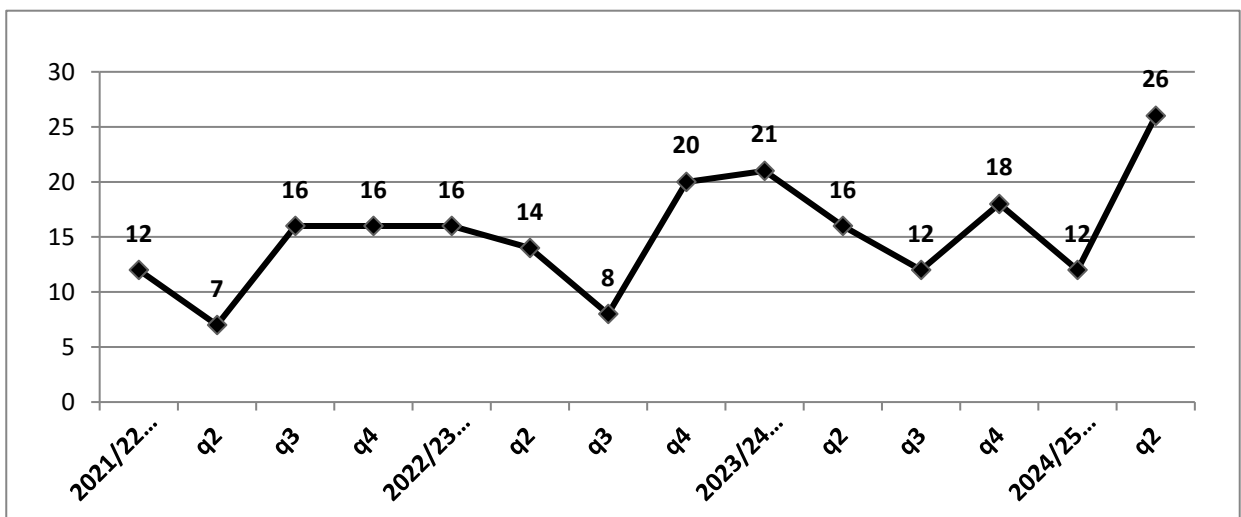
8 Homelessness

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 6 shows the number of homeless presentations received across both Caithness Wards.

8.3 There were 365 presentations across Highland at the end of quarter 2. 26 of these were in Caithness.

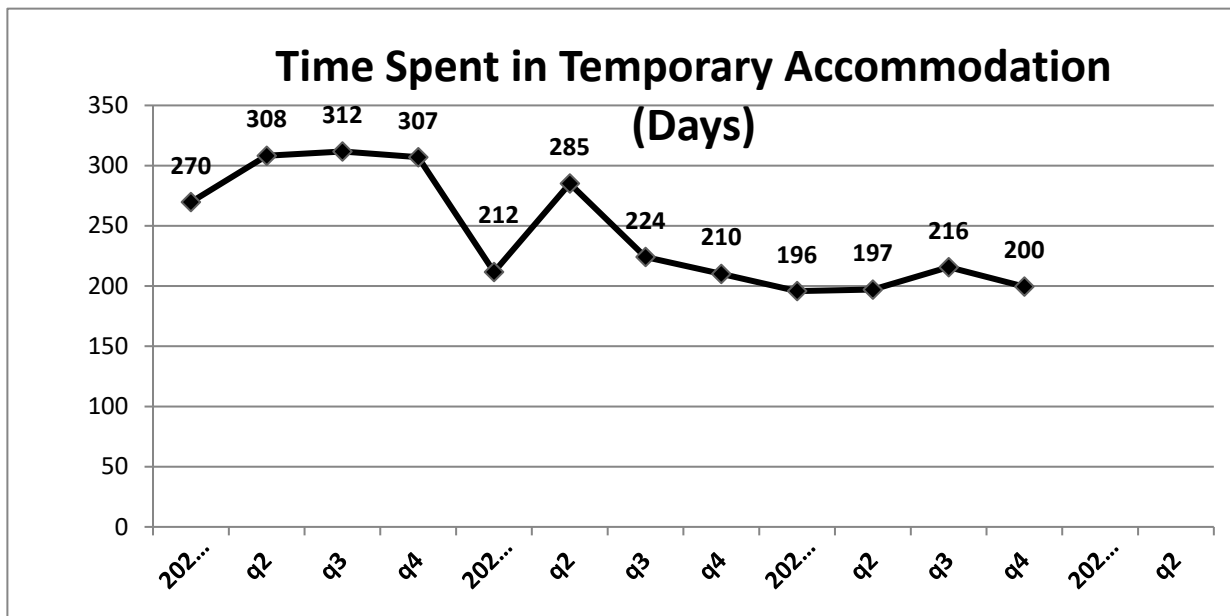
8.4 **Table 6 - Homeless Presentations**



8.5 Financial pressure on households has been a contributing factor to an increase in homeless presentations following a relationship breakdown.

8.6 Table 7 below shows the average time spent in temporary accommodation. This is a Highland wide figure. It is not possible to disaggregate this figure further.

8.7 **Table 7 – Time Spent in Temporary Accommodation
2022/23 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 233 Days**



8.8 The reduction in the length of time spent in temporary accommodation has been achieved by a strong focus on delivering permanent outcomes for homeless households across Highland.

8.9 Table 8 shows the total number of homeless applications currently open with the Caithness housing team, and the size of property required by these homeless households.

8.10 **Table 8 – Homeless Households/Property Types**

| Caithness Homeless | Size of Property Required | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Total | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed + |
| Current number of homeless households | 13 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Highland-wide | 871 | 640 | 155 | 51 | 25 |

9 Allocations

9.1 Table 9 below provides a breakdown of all lets carried out, split between homeless applicants, non-homeless applicants and transfer applicants.

9.2 **Table 9 – Number of Allocations Completed**

| Number of Allocations Completed | 2023/24 | | | 2024/25 | |
|---|---------|-----|-----|---------|----|
| | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| No. of Lets to Transfer List Applicants | 39 | 51 | 61 | 10 | 23 |
| No. of Lets to Non-Homeless Housing List Applicants | 65 | 105 | 137 | 28 | 51 |
| No. of Lets to Homeless Applicants | 22 | 33 | 46 | 7 | 21 |
| Total | 126 | 189 | 244 | 45 | 95 |

9.3 The proportion of lets to homeless applicants in Caithness is generally much lower than other areas of Highland due to the ability to achieve outcomes for applicants without the need for a homeless application.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

Date: 11 November 2024

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