

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	4
Report No	HP/15/25

Committee: Housing and Property

Date: 21 May 2025

Report Title: Housing Performance Report: 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on how the Housing Service has performed over the financial year 2024/25 up to 31 March 2025 based on key performance indicators and national benchmarking information.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **scrutinise** and **note** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

3 Implications

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

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

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

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no implications arising from this report.

3.5 **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 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 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

5.3 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.

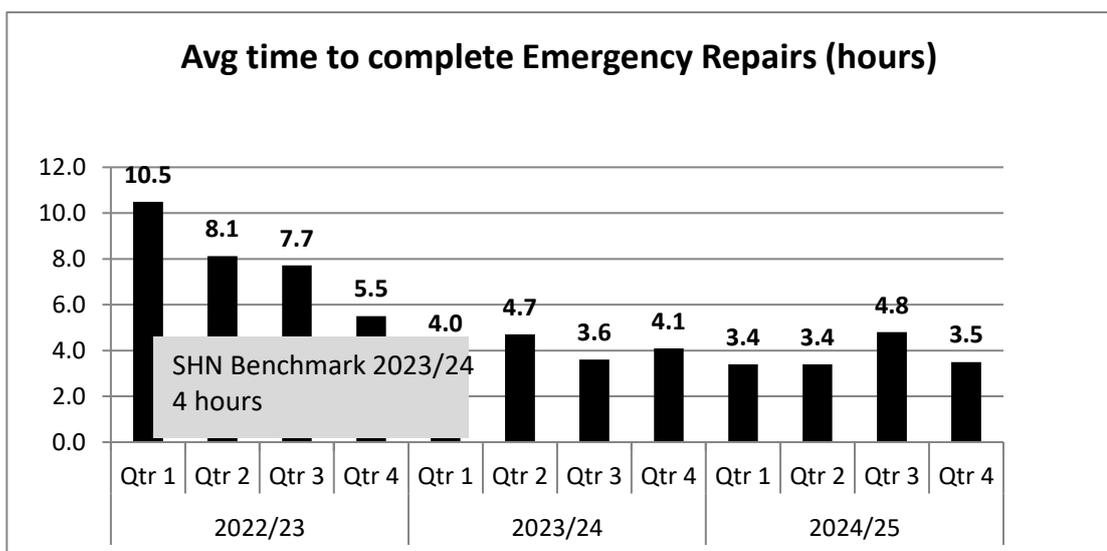
5.4 Scottish Housing Network (SHN) benchmark information, derived from the performance of all Scottish Landlords, has also been provided.

6 Housing Repairs

6.1 The key indicators for measuring repairs performance are the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and non-emergency repairs.

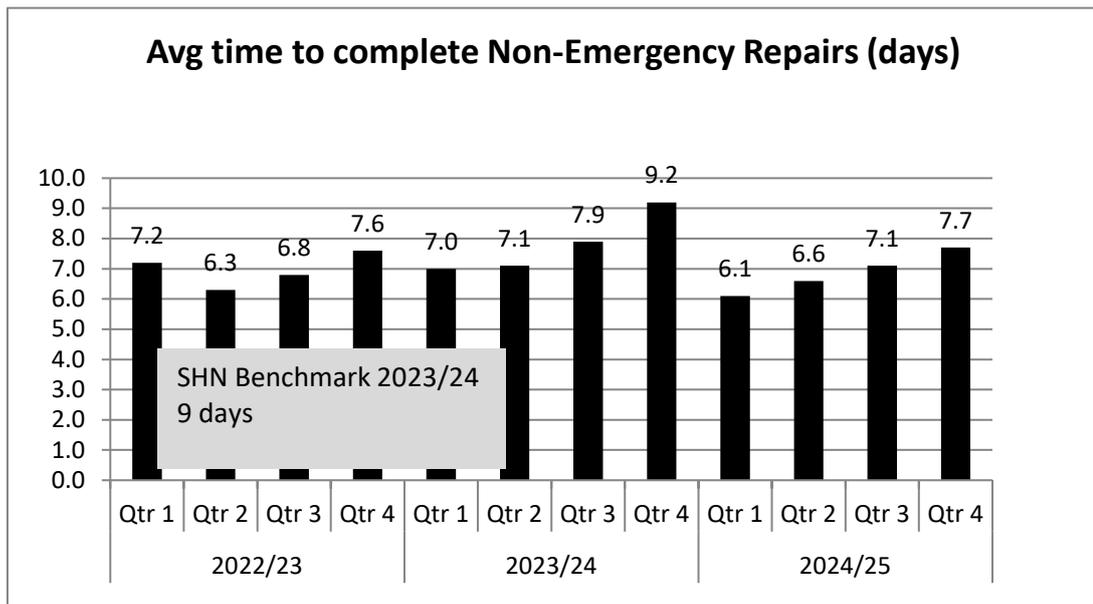
6.2 Table 1 details performance on the average time taken to complete emergency repairs and Table 2 details the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Both graphs contain national benchmark figures for these indicators based on published 2023/24 figures. Highland geography needs to be considered when comparing the Highland figures for the national benchmark on completing repairs.

6.3 **Table 1: Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)**
Target 12 hours
2023/24 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 4.0 hours



6.4 Performance on emergency repairs has improved significantly in the last two years, improvement which has been sustained. The time taken to complete emergency repairs in the last quarter has decreased to 3.5 hours, below the SHN benchmark.

6.5 **Table 2: Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (days)**
Target 8.9 days
2023/24 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 9.0 days



6.6 Average time to complete non-emergency repairs is 7.7 hours and continues to be significantly below the national benchmarking average.

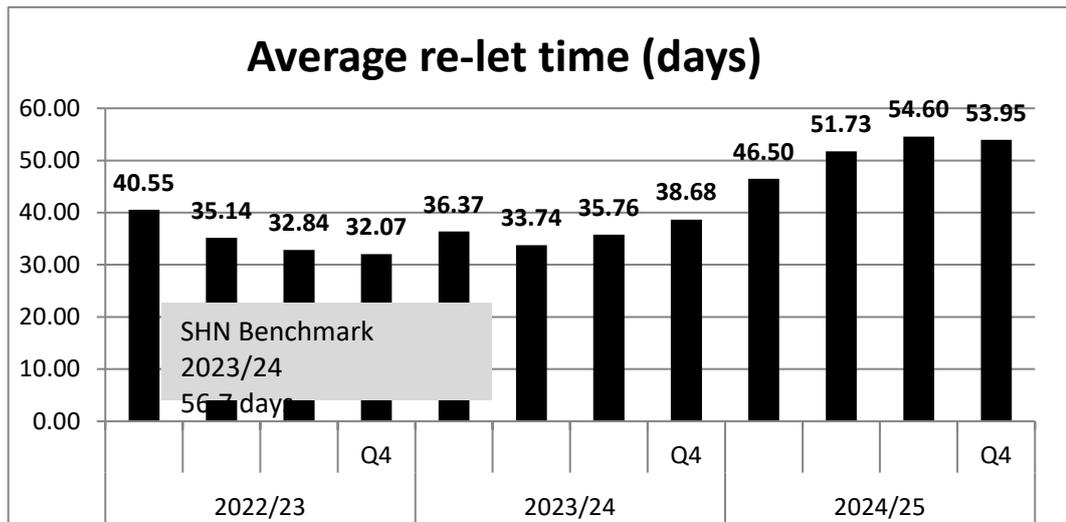
6.7 Progress also continues to be made in terms of tackling the backlog of low priority repairs, such as external pathways, gutters, gates, and fences. Some of these repairs were delayed in 2023/24 because of budget pressures and there were 1,500 outstanding as at 31 March 2024. In comparison, there were 223 of these low priority repairs outstanding as at 31 March 2025. The increased repairs budget in 2024/25 allowed more of these to be released and the 2025/26 repairs budget will allow for low priority repairs to be delivered during 2025/26.

7 Tenancy Management

7.1 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.

7.2

**Table 3: Average re-let time (days) Target 55.6 days
2023/24 SHN Benchmark (Group) – 56.7 days**



7.3 Re-letting times have decreased for Quarter 4 and performance continues to compare favourably with the national benchmarking figures.

7.4 The Scottish Housing Network has indicated that the overall local authority average for 2023/24 has increased further to 73 days. As with the situation nationally, Highland is experiencing delays with utility companies in terms of clearing meter debt and installing new gas and electric meters. These issues have been discussed at a national level by the Scottish Government and utility companies. In Highland, there have also been significant challenges in terms of contractor capacity to carry out major refurbishment works at the void stage.

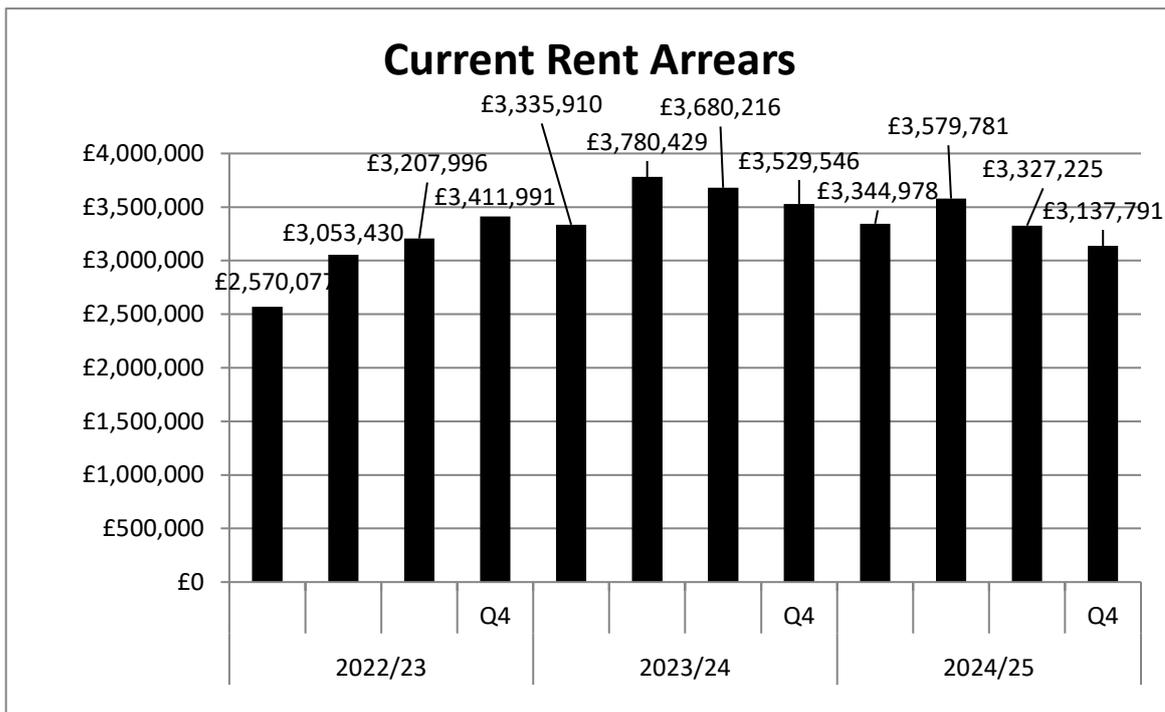
7.5 An internal review into how re-let times can be improved is ongoing. Any improvement in performance is likely, however, to have a negative impact on the time taken to complete non-emergency repairs if tradespersons are redeployed to complete re-let works. Similarly, expenditure on sub-contractors is likely to increase if the priority is to re-let properties quicker.

7.6 The review will ensure that these factors are taken into account, along with issues such as void rental loss and targeting re-let works in areas of greatest housing demand.

8 Rent Arrears

8.1 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.

Table 4 – Current Rent Arrears



8.3 Rent arrears for Quarter 4 have decreased from Quarter 3 and are also significantly lower than for the comparative quarter in both 2022/23 and 2023/24. The management of rent arrears remains a priority with robust case reviewing and monitoring arrangements in place. There is a continued focus on arrears prevention work through close working with the Highland Council Welfare Team and agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

8.4 Local Housing teams hold regular review meetings focusing on the highest rent arrears cases, and actions are instigated and progressed through these meetings. 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.

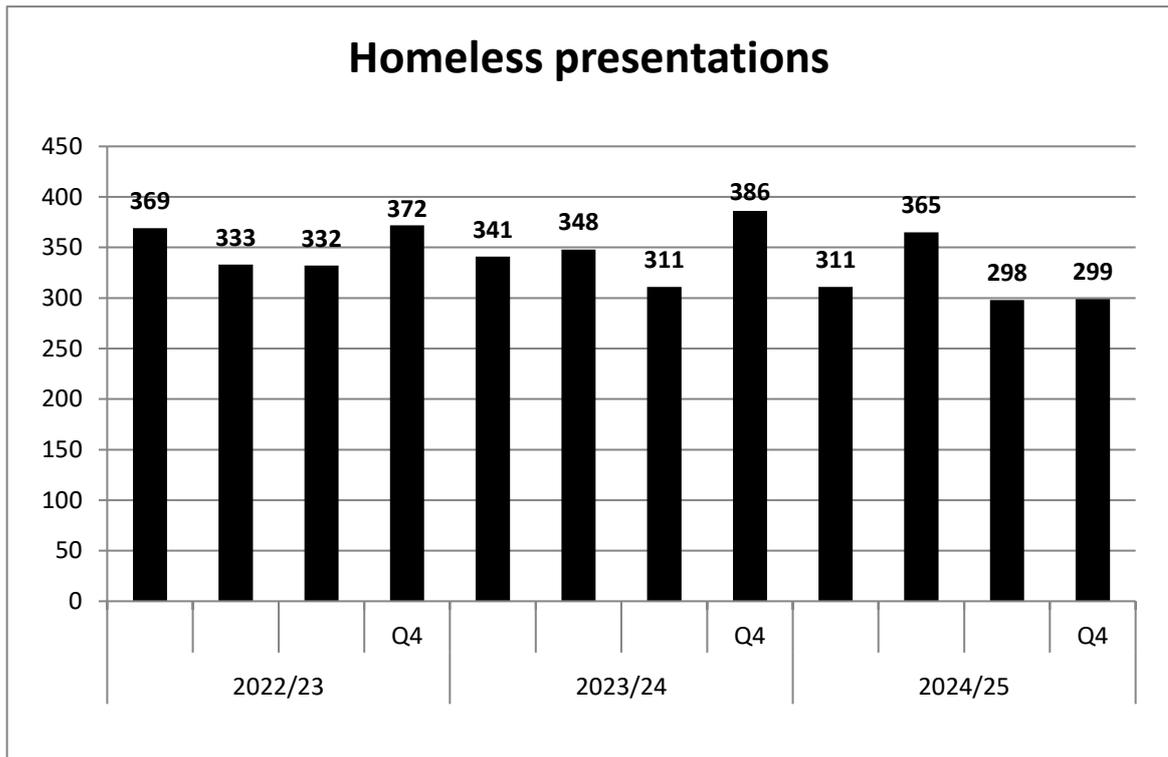
8.5 Rent arrears performance is being reported to the current Area Committee cycle, and this includes information at a local level on the level of arrears cases. The overall picture is encouraging and shows that most tenants are paying their rent and the number of high-level arrears cases across Highland have significantly fallen.

9 Homelessness

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

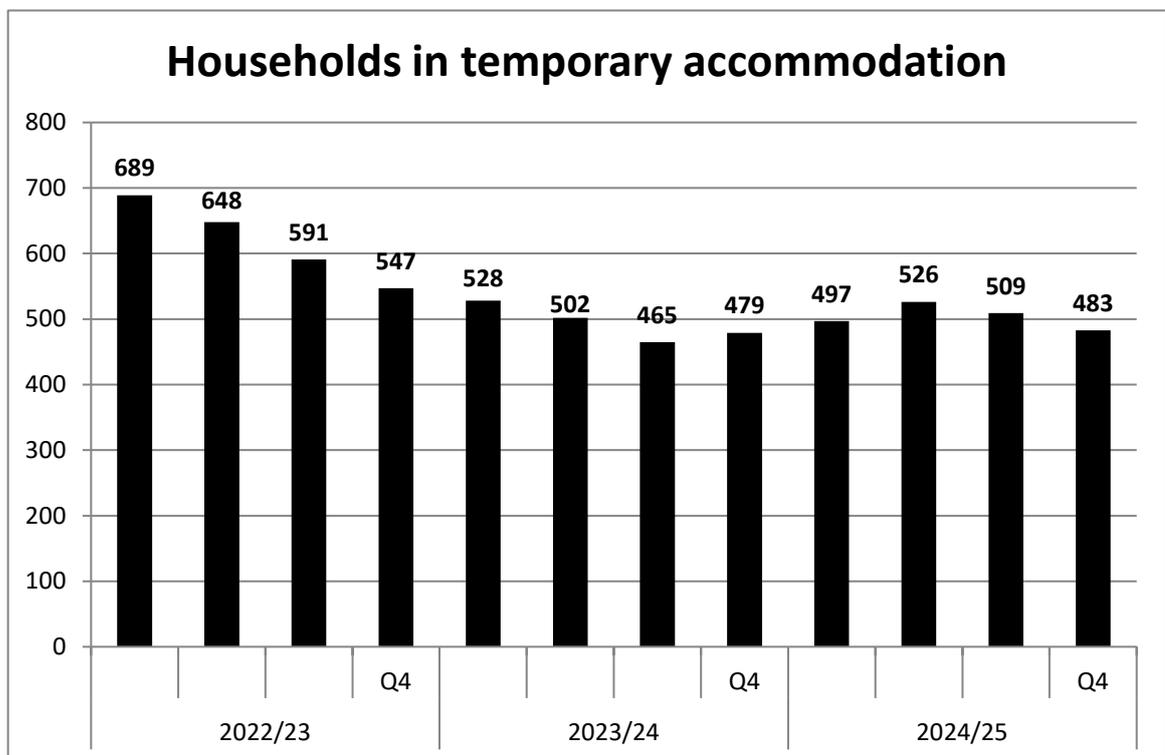
9.2

Table 5 - Homeless presentations per quarter



9.3

Table 6 – Households in Temporary Accommodation



9.4 Table 5 (above) shows that numbers of homeless presentations have remained relatively static since the previous quarter and are at a 3-year low.

9.5 The decrease in homelessness presentations in 2024/25 is partly a result of successful homeless prevention, including supporting households to move into mid-market rentals and providing financial assistance using the Council’s Rent Deposit Scheme.

- 9.6 The number of homeless households recorded as living in temporary accommodation has also decreased significantly from the previous quarter. Highland continues to focus on achieving permanent outcomes for homeless households and this is reflected in the percentage of lets to homeless households. This detail will be reported in the Highland Housing Register Annual Allocations Report to August Committee.
- 9.7 The positive performance of Highland in mitigating homelessness and in achieving permanent housing outcomes was acknowledged by the Scottish Housing Regulator during their 6-monthly engagement visit in January 2025.
- 9.8 The age range of homeless applicants and the reason for homelessness is included in **Appendix 1** of this report. It should be noted that the format of the information is based on Scottish Government reporting criteria.
- 9.9 The current and future challenges presented by homelessness - and Highland performance on mitigating homelessness and supporting homeless households - is detailed in a separate report to this Committee.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 22 April 2025

Author: Brian Cameron, Strategic Lead - Housing and Building Maintenance

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

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Main reason given by household for homeless presentation by age range (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

**Main reason given by household for homeless presentation by age range
(1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025)**

Main Reason for Homelessness	16-17	18-25	26-59	Over 60	Total
Asked to leave the accommodation	12	100	158	19	289
Discharged from prison/hospital/care or other setting		7	49	2	58
Emergency such as fire/flooding/storm or Environmental Health Order			9		9
Fleeing violence from outwith the home (i.e. violence from a neighbour)		1	20	1	22
Forced division and sale of matrimonial home			8	4	12
Harassment or other non-violence actions	1	1	12	3	17
Loss of service/ tied accommodation		13	47	10	70
Non-Violent Dispute at home (i.e. relationship breakdown)	3	64	257	17	341
Other action by landlord	1	4	74	19	98
Other reason	1	11	52	12	76
Other reason for loss of accommodation	1	16	66	15	98
Over-crowding	2	17	12	1	32
Rent or Mortgage Arrears		3	42	8	53
Terminated their accommodation (i.e. ended their tenancy)		1	10	3	14
Violent dispute or abuse from within the home	4	26	129	9	158
Total:	25	264	945	123	1,357