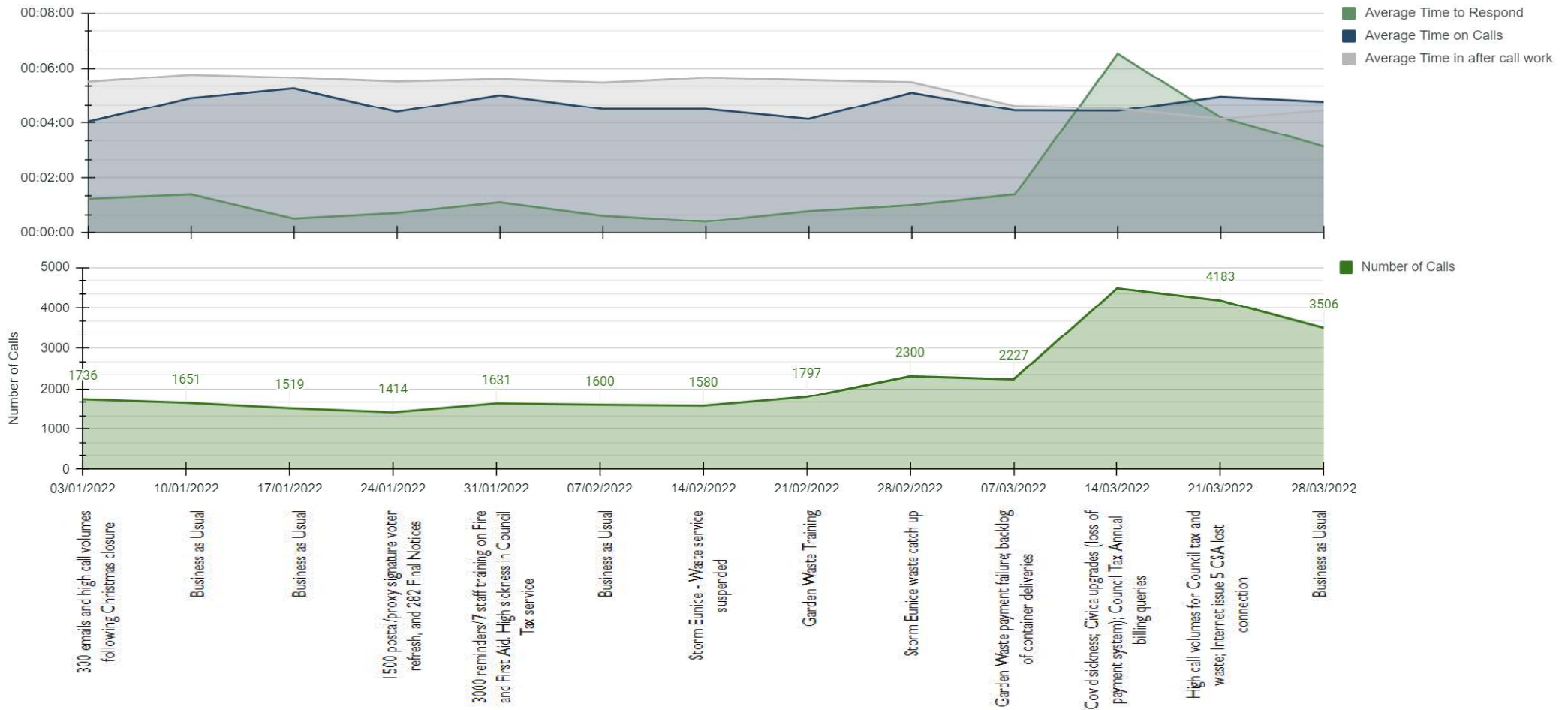




Satisfied

Customer Services Quarter 4



Service delivery can be affected by a range of factors both within the service such as staff absence and in other services such as the implementation of new software which requires advisors to be trained up; as well as mass comms sent to residents /clients such as council tax reminders, garden renewals and election registration.

There was a spike in the volume of phone calls during the last three weeks of March, which related primarily to queries about garden waste renewals and council tax annual billing. An issue with the 3D secure authentication of the Civica Payment solution resulted in a number of failed customer payments. This issue affected all Councils who are using the Civica webpay solution. The ICT team immediately flagged up the issue with the company and an interim 'fix' was rolled out shortly afterwards. Due to the

disruption caused to residents a meeting was held with senior managers from Civica and a claim for compensation has been submitted. A permanent solution will be rolled out after the summer when a new 3D secure gateway is implemented.

Council tax annual bills generated from the new system resulted in additional calls. Although the wording was identical to last year's bill, the format was slightly different. Next year's annual bills will be revised to improve clarity.

During this busy period, 12 staff in the service contracted Covid-19 including nine advisors, some advisors temporarily lost IT connectivity during one lunchtime, and Civica scheduled a software upgrade during annual billing (outside of the Council's control)

which reduced capacity in the service while increasing additional/repeat calls.

It has been acknowledged that garden waste renewals coinciding with the annual CT billing creates a spike in call volumes which can be difficult to manage; the service will be reviewing the scheduling of garden waste renewals later this year, as well as collaborating with key service areas on the comms going out to residents/businesses and building a timeline of events to better manage the demand for Customer Services.

Note: The response time, on call time, and after call time data include data for West Oxfordshire specific staff and shared staff, based on a 60% - 40% split respectively. This arrangement helps to improve resilience in the service.

Development Management Quarter 4

Average Planner
Caseload

40

TARGET 50

Average Senior
Planner Caseload

27

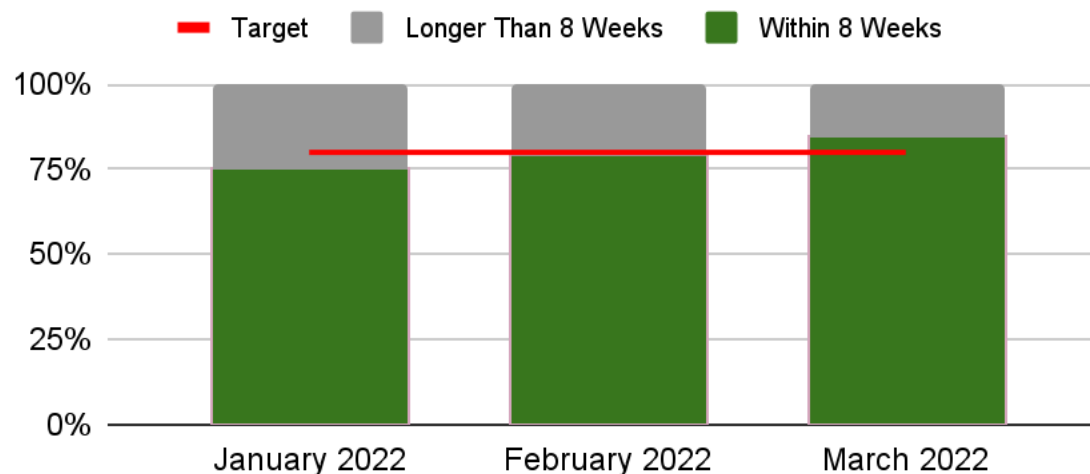
TARGET 35

Average Principal
Planner Caseload

17

TARGET 20

Planning Decisions (PS1/PS2) made within 8 weeks or agreed time (Excludes applications for discharge of conditions, pre application advice and general enquiries)



Average Cases
closed per Planner
in Quarter

49

TARGET 50

Average Cases
closed per Senior
Planner in Quarter

19

TARGET 40

Average days from
receipt to
validation

8

TARGET 7

Customer
Satisfaction



90.5%

Average Cases
closed per
Principal Planner in
Quarter

20

TARGET 25

The central bar chart shows planning determination performance is gradually improving and exceeded its target in March 2022. The team has reached full capacity with all vacant posts filled including two additional posts, which is having a positive impact on officer caseloads. This has allowed the team to revert to their intended structure, ensuring that Principal and Senior Planners caseloads have decreased as a result of not trying to cover the work of vacancies in addition to their own complex caseload. Senior Officer closure rates have been impacted by a vacancy arising at the end of Q3, which was filled in March 2022.

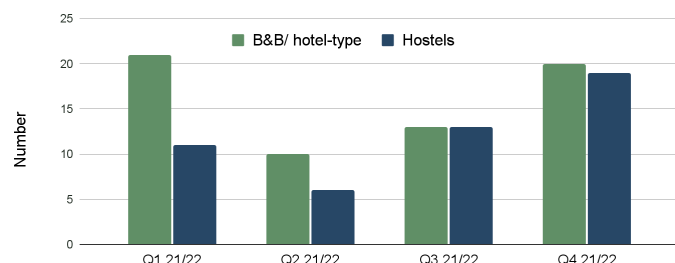
The decision to enter into a shared partnership arrangement for the technical administrative part of the service has paid dividends as nearly half of the team at West left during the first part of the quarter. The arrangements prevented the development of a large backlog of applications awaiting registration/validation. The average days from receipt to validation was impacted by a higher volume of applications in March, ending just outside of the target at eight days. It is expected to return to within seven days in the next quarter, as a result of filling vacancies in the planning admin team.



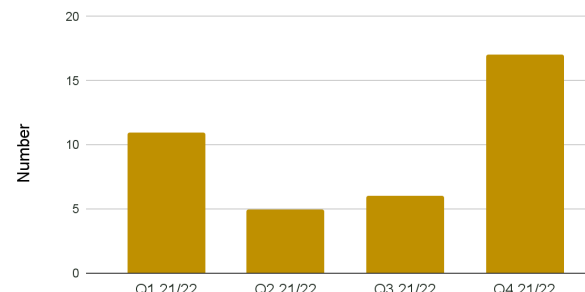
Housing Quarter 4

The Number of households in Emergency Accommodation (B&B/hotel type; and hostels owned and managed by the Council) at the end of each quarter

** 22 bed spaces available in hostels

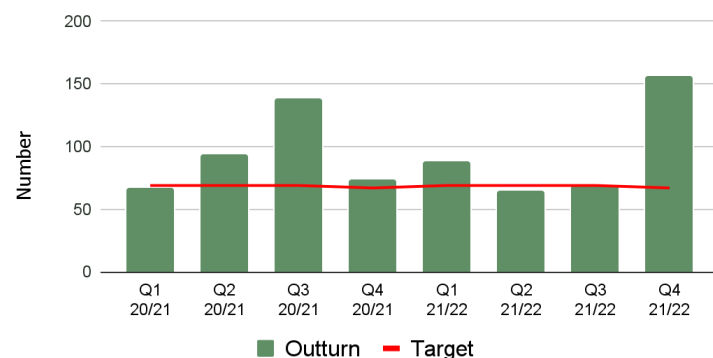


The number of successful 'move ons' from Emergency Accommodation to long term accommodation

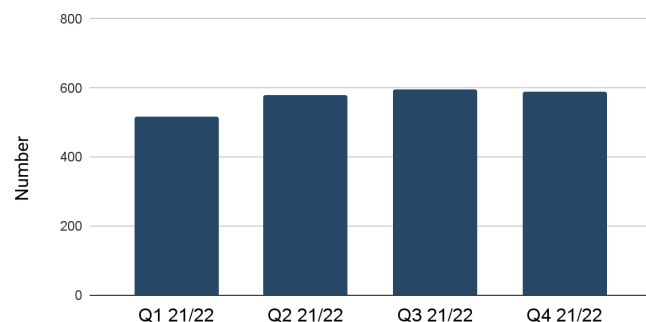


The number of affordable homes reaching practical completion

*practical completion is when the property is ready for occupation; Target is from Local Plan



The number of Long Term Empty Properties (6 months plus) in the District



The number of people contacting the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness increased in Q3 and into Q4 due to the ending of Covid related financial incentives and the new Government request to accommodate all rough sleepers under Protect and Vaccinate directive in December 2021 in response to concerns surrounding the impact of the Omicron variant.

Going forward, the Housing Team is refocusing more resources on the Prevention approach with the recruitment of specialist Complex Needs officers as well as moving people on from emergency accommodation as quickly as possible using Specialist Temporary Accommodation officers who are able to offer dedicated support and bespoke solutions.

The availability of social housing stock however remains low, partially due to prevention measures in place to assist those affected by the financial implications of Covid and the increasing cost of energy to remain in their own home. Accessing the Private Rented Sector remains difficult due to affordability.

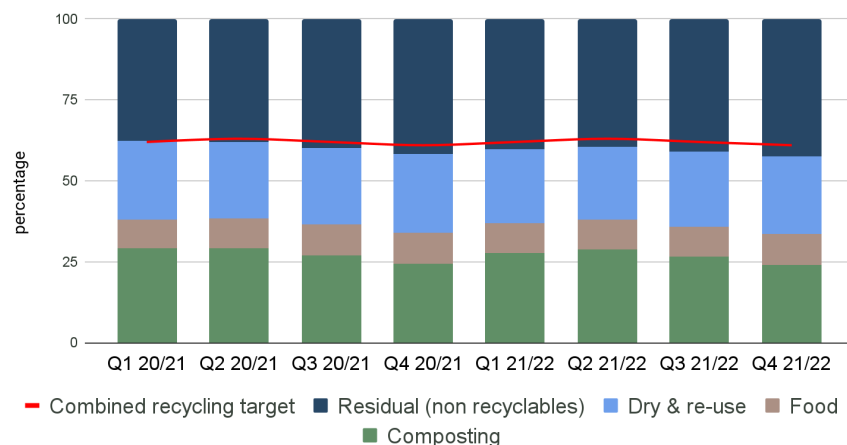
The lifting of the eviction ban on 1 October 2021 has resulted in an increase in both the number of families and domestic abuse cases approaching for assistance with their housing. During Q4, targeted provision for rough sleepers has been provided as part of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. Over the coming months, the Council will need to be mindful of potential future demand resulting from asylum dispersal and the impacts on services.

Through negotiation with developers, the Council is able to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing. 156 homes were completed for affordable rent and shared ownership making a total of 378 for the year, well ahead of the target. The success of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal schemes is becoming apparent with 80 homes completed in Q4 on the Housing 21 affordable extra care scheme at Chipping Norton. In addition, a range of proactive work is being undertaken to reduce the number of LTE properties in the District. The Council's Long Term Empty officer contacts property owners to offer advice on the options available to them, and during Q4 removed 170 properties from the LTE list, although 163 were added. A three month rolling action plan is in place to reduce the number of LTE properties

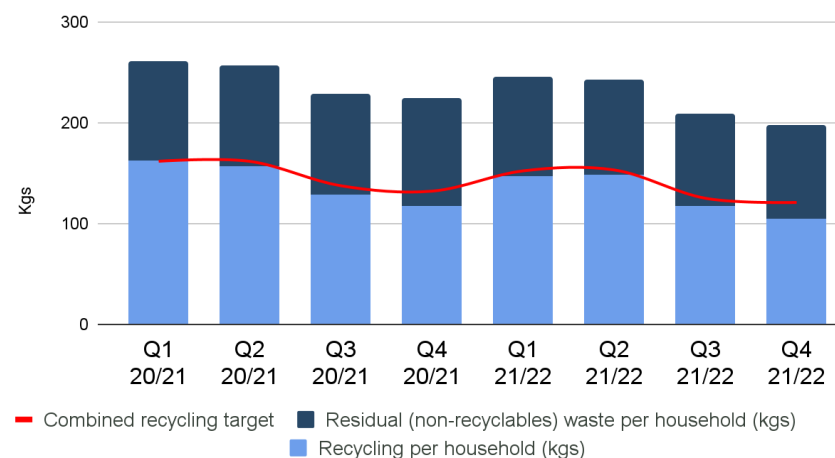


Waste and Environment Quarter 4

(Cumulative) Household waste collected composition



Household waste collected per household

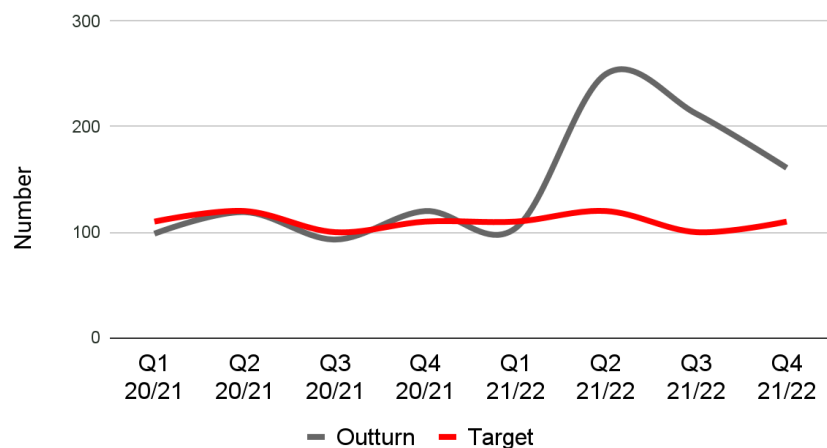


The combined recycling for 2021-22 was 57.74%, and has varied by about half a percentage point over the last three years. All recycling streams (tonnages) have fallen compared to the previous year but are still higher than the pre-Covid year, in particular for the early part of 2021-22 when restrictions were just lifting. Residual waste per household has reduced significantly over the last six months.

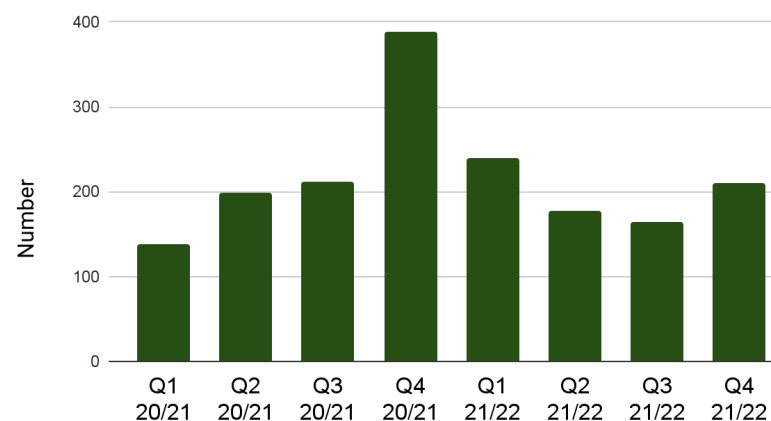
The number missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections is continuing to improve in spite of some staffing issues related to high rates of Covid-19 infection and relatively high levels of waste. The postponement of some rounds due to Storm Eunice resulted in some pockets of missed bins when rescheduled; the impact of which was reduced by the use of In-Cab technology. Further improvements are expected as crews are fully trained in the new technology and work to embed the system is taking place.

The number of fly tips peaked during the final national lockdown and have decreased which may reflect the lifting of restrictions. There was a small spike during Q4 which may relate to the 'Stay at home' message in response to the Omicron variant. As part of the budget 2022/23, Cabinet agreed to additional resources to increase enforcement activities around fly tipping and improving our response to issues raised. Work to recruit to the post has commenced.

Missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections

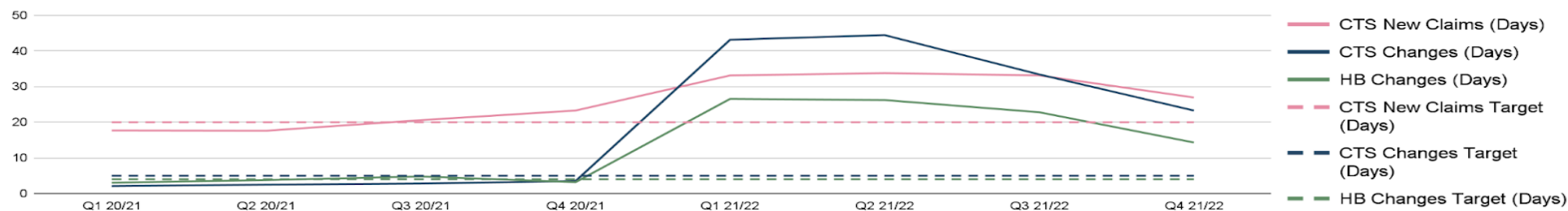


Number of flytips collected

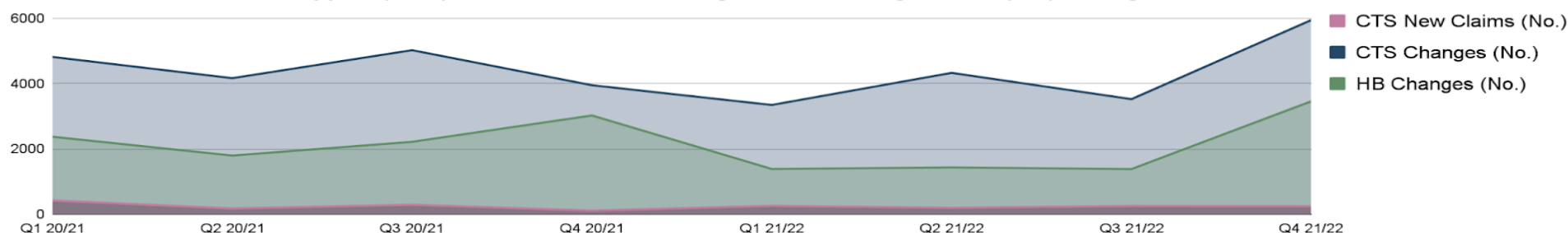


Revenues and Benefits Quarter 4

Average Processing Times For Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes



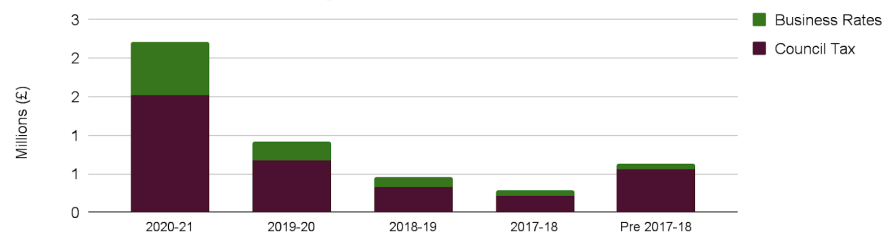
Number of Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes Assessed



21/22 Collection Rates

	Council Tax		Business Rates	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
QTR	6.1%	14%	16.3%	12%
YTD	96.3%	99%	93.4%	99%

Council Tax & Business Rates Aged Debt



Qtrly Aged Debt

% Change Council Tax

-27.2%

% Change Bus. Rates

-21.9%

Benefit processing times have improved over the last six months and early signs indicate we should see a return to more normal levels in Q1. The improvement was aided by an injection of additional resources and the resolution of a software failure following the implementation of the new benefits system. As usual, workloads increased during Q4 due to annual uprating which requires the re-assessment of every claim.

Both council tax and business rates collection rates have been depressed over the last two years due to the impact of Covid-19 on households and businesses, and the pause in recovery action (recommencing in August 2021) and delay in the re-opening of Magistrates Courts. During this time, the service has supported homeowners and businesses and encouraged them to make contact to discuss options. Government has recently announced a council tax rebate for some homeowners to help with the rising cost of living, and has made available a range of business grants throughout the pandemic including the most recent £2.27m Covid-19 additional relief; these businesses will have their business rates accounts credited which will help to reduce the debt owed in 2021-22. There is a dedicated team in place for the recovery of rates who are up to date on cases (following the pause); and reduced the previous years' council tax debt by £1.1m and business rates by £311k since the previous quarter.

WODC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

VARIANCE TO BUDGET		£k		
Service Area	Original Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp.	Variance (under) / over
Democratic and Committee Services	953	927	961	33
Environmental & Regulatory Services	479	746	432	(44)
Environmental Services	7,088	6,925	6,893	(32)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	890	899	895	(3)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,802	1,819	1,772	(48)
Land, Legal & Property	863	807	776	(31)
Leisure & Communities	2,058	2,055	1,980	(76)
Planning & Strategic Housing	712	778	720	(58)
Revenues & Housing Support	895	749	790	41
Investment Property and Retained Services	(1,871)	(1,800)	(425)	(245)
Total cost of services	13,868	13,905	14,794	(463)
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(788)	(788)	(794)	(6)
Cost of services before financing:	13,081	13,117	14,000	(469)

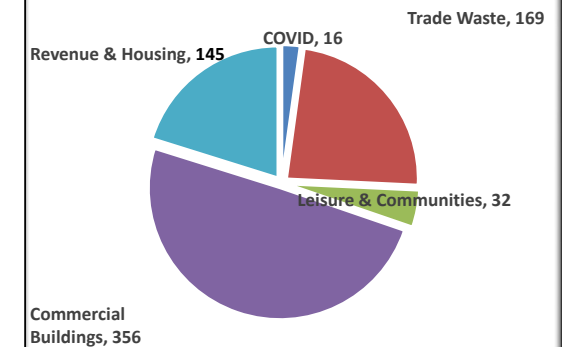
AGED DEBT SUMMARY

	Mar-22	Dec-21	Sep-21	Movement vs. prior period		
Invoices	1,241	1,244	1,356	3	0%	↓
£k	718	1,093	1,426	375	52%	↓

Aged Debt Summary:

- Q4 position has improved versus Q3 with a significant reduction in total aged debt of £375,000.
- Our aim is to bring every case to a conclusion.
- A lot of effort has been successfully put into making sure that invoices do not become overdue by proactively liaising with customers. The success of this strategy is evidenced by an increase of 25% of invoices in Payment Plans vs Q3.

AGED DEBT BY BUSINESS SERVICE



Overall Summary:

The Council faced continued pressure on income budgets in 2021/22 with in year reporting highlighting Car Parking and Land Charges. A prudent approach was taken in the 2021/22 budget with the inclusion of £1.8m of income contingencies against our Leisure Contract and Investment Properties. Investment Property rents performed above target by £249,563 aided by the purchase of additional units at Carterton Industrial Estate in Q2 and a material fall in bad debt necessitated a £212,000 reduction in Bad Debt provision.

Both of our major contractors - Publica & Ubico returned a contract refund to the Council at the end of the year, a great achievement against the backdrop of high inflation & fuel prices and the lack of agency workers, providing the Council with a benefit of £67,819 (Publica) and £137,278 (Ubico). Combined with Council Service areas controlling costs and additional grant income from the Government, the Q4 outturn position is very positive, giving the Council the opportunity to place surplus funds into earmarked reserves to offset unavoidable inflationary increases in 22/23.

