



# Joint Committee Performance Report

## July 2021



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# All Partner Councils Combined



Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	£ 51,853,578	£ 70,348,599	£ -	£ -	●
Target	£ 48,450,483	£ 65,292,208	£ 164,457,225	£ 206,288,251	●
2020/21	£ 40,382,156	£ 52,622,012	£ 109,252,556	£ 151,680,832	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£206,288,251</b>	●

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	£138,277,607	£182,846,147	£0	£0	●
Target	£135,996,887	£180,334,180	£403,621,187	£475,114,297	●
2020/21	£127,454,324	£168,298,594	£337,359,826	£454,493,276	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£475,114,297</b>	●

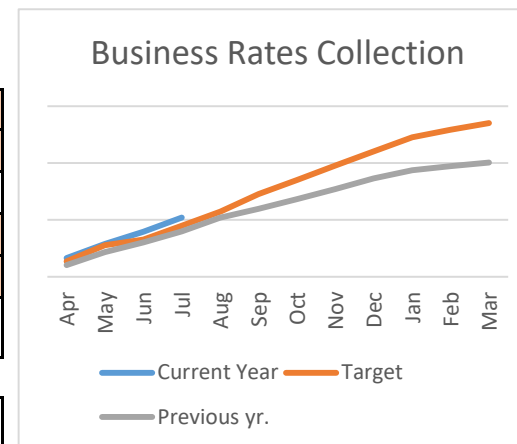
Number of Electronic Forms Received					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	14,052	19,994	0	0	●
2020/21	12,089	15,734	37,184	55,159	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>55159</b>	●

Fraud and Compliance	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	Yr Target
Single Person Discount Fraud	£501,867	£635,106	£0	£0	£500,000
Local Council Tax Support	£35,778	£43,650	£0	£0	£150,000
Tenancy Fraud	£195,720	£195,720	£0	£0	£400,000
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£112,776	£177,799	£0	£0	£250,000
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£846,141</b>	<b>£1,052,274</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£1,300,000</b>

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 7,948,881	£ 10,414,888	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 6,522,632	£ 8,963,723	£ 22,059,422	£ 27,034,111	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 207,992	£ 284,383	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 6,046,513	£ 7,995,602	£ 17,330,233	£ 20,092,010	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£ 27,034,111</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

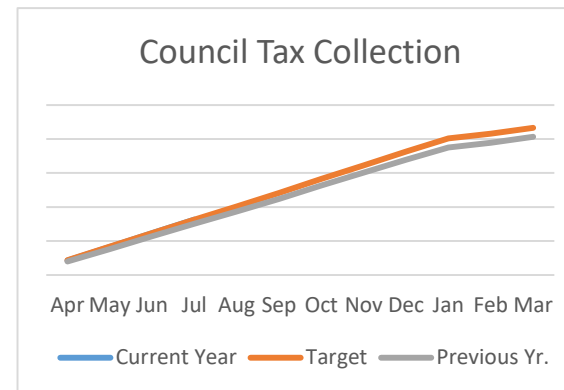
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £600.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £9565.67. Not including Direct Payments.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection						
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4		
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 24,672,337	£ 32,635,303	£ -	£ -		●
<b>Target</b>	£ 24,656,445	£ 32,572,998	£ 72,611,966	£ 86,608,060		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 236,148	£ 327,864	£ -	£ -		
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 22,830,485	£ 30,112,686	£ 67,828,605	£ 81,338,654		●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£86,608,060</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the Council Tax Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection on target for the current financial year. In the last financial year formal recovery proceedings were delayed and some customers made extended arrangements into this financial year. We will continue to monitor the effect this may have on current year collection.

Further recovery action in 21/22 has resulted in collection of £38,396.27.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £208921.35. Not including Direct Payments

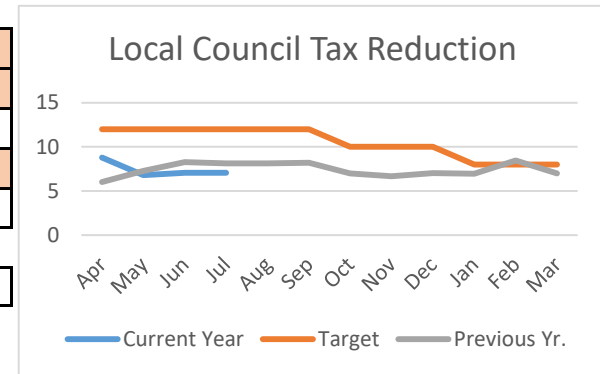
Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £387,828.64 debt.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

### Days to process Local Council Tax Support

	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	7.08	7.07	0.00	0.00	●
<b>Target</b>	12	12	10	8	
<b>2020/21</b>	8.26	8.13	7.04	6.98	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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#### Description

This indicator measures the average year to date number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

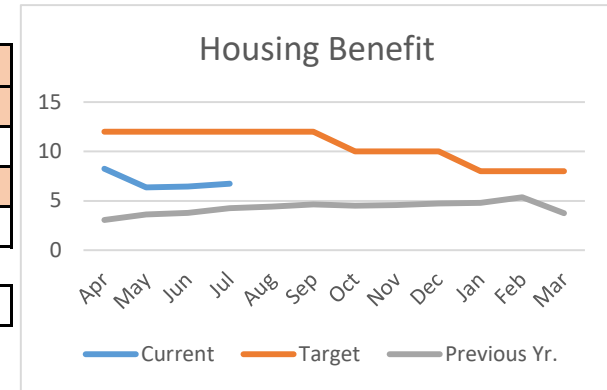
#### Narrative

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	6.45	6.73	0.00	0.00	●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2020/21	3.77	4.24	4.72	3.74	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

**Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team continue to proactively seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

A close working relationship with both Planning Enforcement has resulted in a number of positive outcomes.

More recent discussions with the extended Housing Team has resulted in positive moves and greater planned collaboration

The team continue to work closely with County in the management of the Fraud Hub in Norfolk. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income. Funding from Norfolk county continues to support Single Person Discount Reviews.

The team continue to work with both the Covid Grants Team and NNDR in post assurance business rates grants and further investigation and enquiries

	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£129,085	£163,691	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£2,516	£3,568	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£6,820	£36,844	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£138,422</b>	<b>£204,103</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>





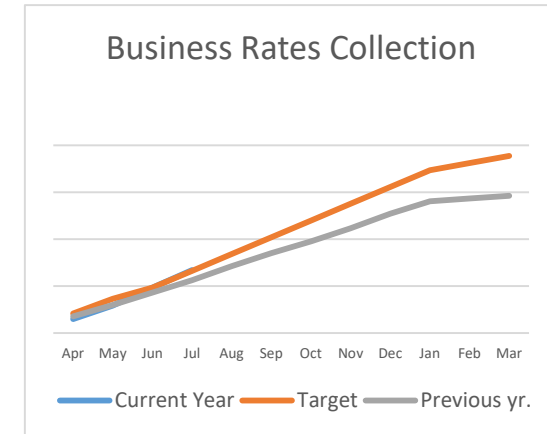
# Performance Information July 2021



## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	£ 4,854,955	£ 6,707,456	£ -	£ -	●
Target	£ 4,850,561	£ 6,633,327	£ 15,552,925	£ 18,870,377	
Refunds	£ 215,059	£ 235,957	£ -	£ -	
2020/21	£ 4,321,819	£ 5,637,270	£ 12,702,067	£ 14,622,123	●

<b>Full Year Target</b>	<b>£18,870,377</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £19,457.00.

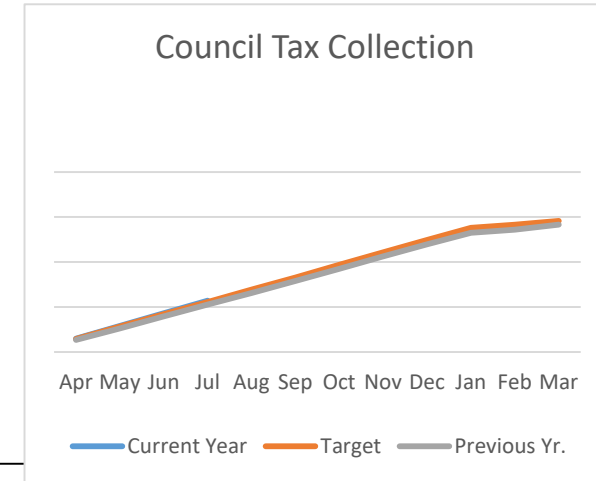
Enforcement action in 21/22 has resulted in collection of ££8,925.43. Not including Direct Payments



## Council Tax



Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 17,191,094	£ 22,822,507	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 16,766,400	£ 22,261,427	£ 49,781,334	£ 58,281,818	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 192,547	£ 254,910	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 15,859,812	£ 21,045,367	£ 47,847,998	£ 56,630,706	●
<b>Year End Target</b>		<b>£ 58,281,818</b>	●		



**Description**

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the Council Tax Collection Fund against the actual collection.

**Narrative**

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £26,059.47.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £126811.51. Not including Direct Payments.

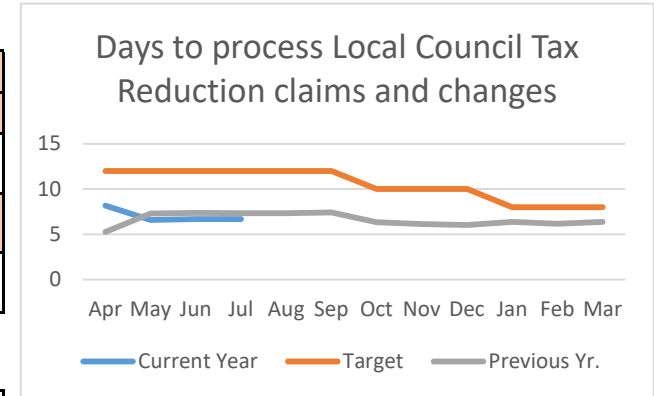
Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £317,920.82 debt.



## Local Council Tax Reduction



Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	6.68	6.67	0.00	0.00	●
<b>Target</b>	12	12	10	8	
<b>2020/21</b>	7.37	7.32	6.03	6.36	●



<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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**Description**

**This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.**

**Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

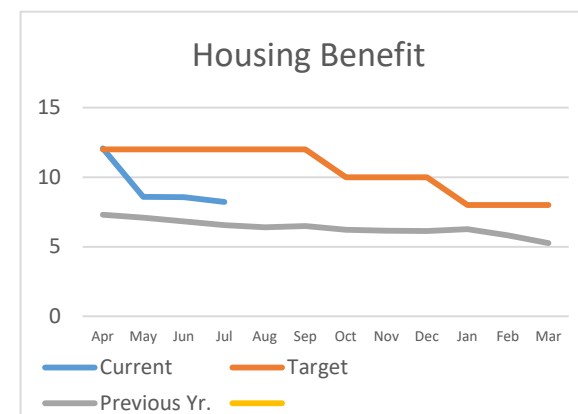


## Housing Benefit



Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	8.57	8.22	0.00	0.00	●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2020/21	6.82	6.55	6.14	5.26	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.



## Fraud and Compliance



### **Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The review of newly awarded Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes.

The team are working with the largest Social Housing provider in the authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

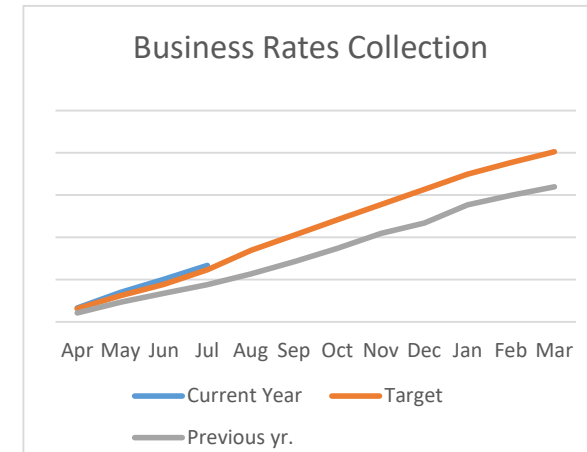
The team continue working with Cambridgeshire County in setting up the Fraud Hub in Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income. Ongoing discussions relating to the business case continue having been delayed due to Covid 19 activities. A presentation of the NFI Fraud Hub has now taken place to assess the software requirement to data match. Once operating this will align the work of the fraud team across the partnership.

	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£51,848	£53,680	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£927	£927	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£93,000	£93,000	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£58,291	£78,366	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£204,065</b>	<b>£225,973</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 20,107,177	£ 26,715,627	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 17,758,942	£ 24,684,865	£ 62,660,988	£ 80,506,639	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 467,003	£ 947,257	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 13,586,679	£ 17,630,581	£ 46,751,882	£ 63,912,082	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>80,506,639</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

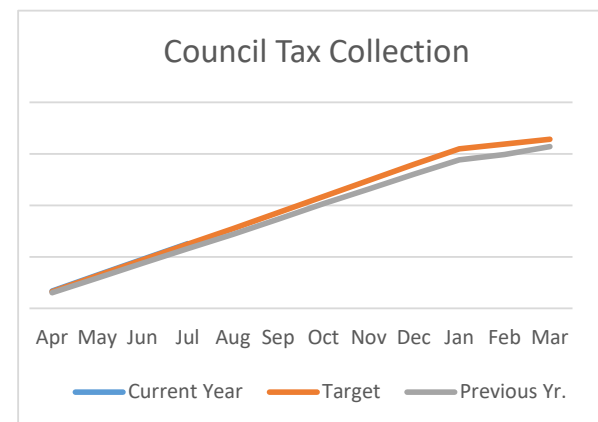
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £22,612.66.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £33,482.86. Not including Direct Payments.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 47,659,907	£ 62,846,002	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 46,989,812	£ 62,318,242	£ 139,808,907	£ 164,143,078	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 523,435	£ 729,640	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 43,986,884	£ 57,939,652	£ 130,268,131	£ 157,025,532	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>164,143,078</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the Council Tax Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year. In the last financial year formal recovery proceedings were delayed and some customers made extended arrangements into this financial year. We will continue to monitor the effect this may have on current year collection.

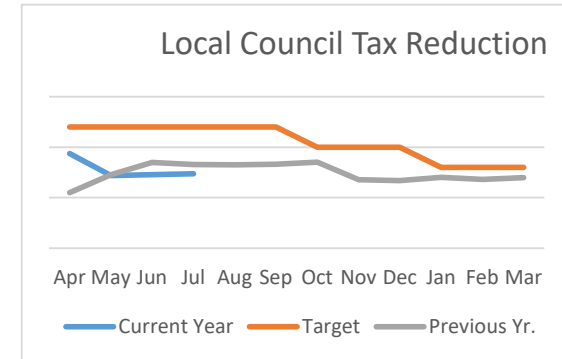
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £52,689.80.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £300,091.49. Not including Direct Payments

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	7.27	7.37	0.00	0.00	●
<b>Target</b>	12	12	10	8	
<b>2020/21</b>	8.49	8.28	6.70	6.98	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

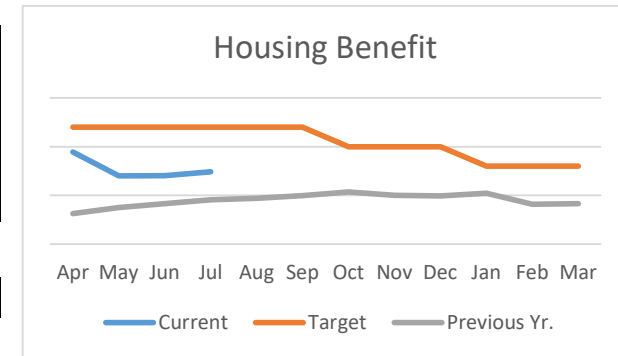
This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.



## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	7.03	7.42	0.00	0.00	●
<b>Target</b>	12	12	10	8	
<b>2020/21</b>	4.16	4.56	4.95	4.14	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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**Description**

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

**Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

### **Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The reviews of NFI SPD matches and newly awarded Single Person Discounts continue to provide very positive outcomes.

The team work closely with the East Suffolk Corporate Fraud Team and ensure the transfer of fraud referrals across the teams.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

Work within the NFI SPD review process continues to provide a number of positive outcomes.

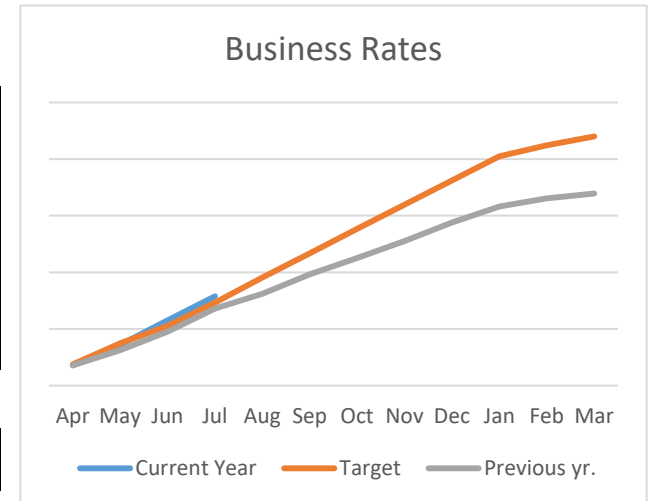
	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Jul-21</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Single Person Discount Fraud	£124,407	£176,010	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£8,793	£13,717	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£1,676	£3,040	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£134,876</b>	<b>£192,767</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

# Performance Information July 2021

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 5,750,467	£ 7,885,927	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 5,252,660	£ 7,349,233	£ 18,106,158	£ 21,998,313	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 291,391	£ 402,730	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 4,752,965	£ 6,799,531	£ 14,405,039	£ 16,956,825	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	£21,998,313	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

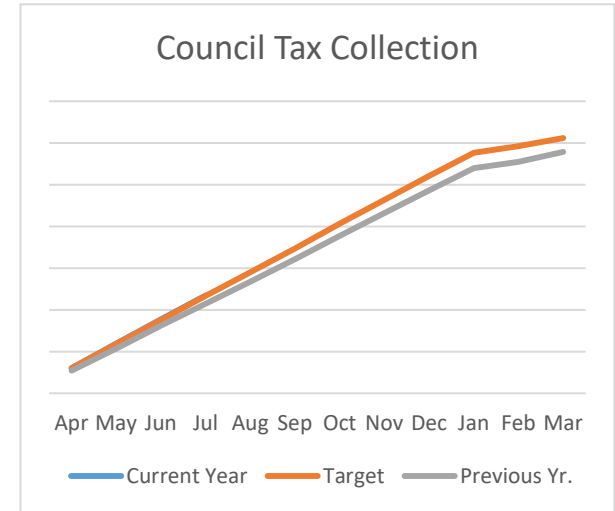
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £29,194.00.

Enforcement action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £14,801.76. Not including Direct Payments

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 17,701,900	£ 23,454,913	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 17,551,558	£ 23,351,957	£ 52,062,693	£ 61,172,317	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 213,560	£ 300,755	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 16,234,901	£ 21,477,928	£ 48,651,700	£ 57,863,955	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£61,172,317</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the Council Tax Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year. In the last financial year formal recovery proceedings were delayed and some customers made extended arrangements into this financial year. We will continue to monitor the effect this may have on current year collection.

Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £5,752.

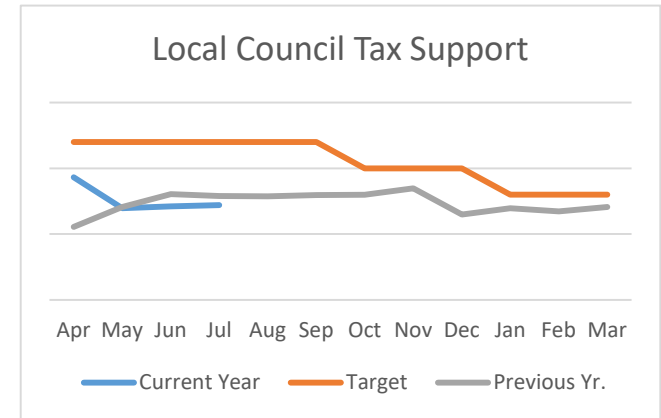
Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £207,242.27 Not including Direct Payments.

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £383,743.21 debt.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	7.11	7.21	0.00	0.00	●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2020/21	8.03	7.90	6.49	7.06	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	8	●
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### **Description**

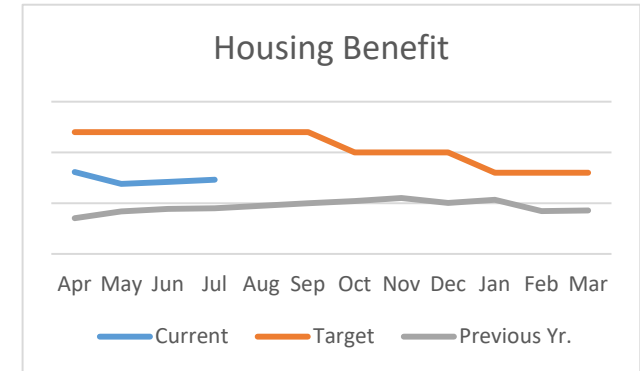
**This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.**

### **Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	7.09	7.32	0.00	0.00	●
<b>Target</b>	12	12	10	8	
<b>2020/21</b>	4.43	4.50	5.01	4.28	●
<b>Year End Target</b>			8		●



**Description**

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

**Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

## Fraud and Compliance

### **Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The review of newly awarded Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

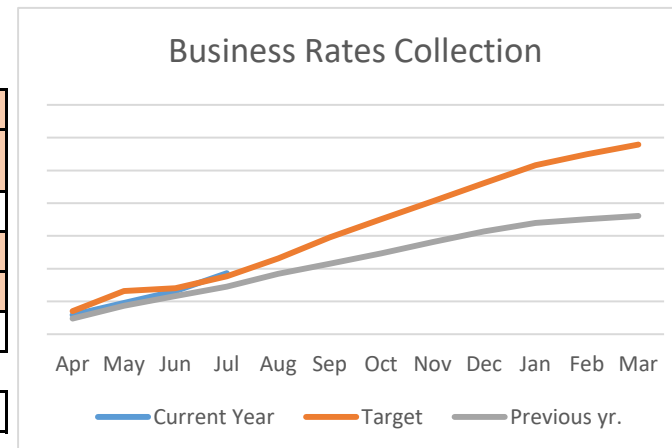
The team continue working with Cambridgeshire County in setting up the Fraud Hub in Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income. Ongoing discussions relating to the business case continue having been delayed due to Covid 19 activities. A presentation of the NFI Fraud Hub has recently taken place to assess the software requirement to data match. Once operating this will align the work of the fraud team across the partnership.

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Jul-21</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Single Person Discount Fraud	£72,811	£82,651	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£16,333	£16,333	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£93,000	£93,000	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£33,838	£47,397	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£215,982</b>	<b>£239,381</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4		
2021/22	£ 13,192,098	£ 18,624,701	£ -	£ -	●	
Target	£ 14,065,688	£ 17,661,060	£ 46,077,732	£ 57,878,811		
Refunds	£ 460,862	£ 667,857	£ -	£ -		
2020/21	£ 11,674,180	£ 14,559,028	£ 31,404,393	£ 36,097,792	●	

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>57,878,811</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target. The issue of bills for premises that were receiving Expanded Retail Relief has effected the pattern of collection with the net collectable debt increasing significantly in June due to the instalments commencing in July. This has been compounded by some companies declining the relief which again impacts on the net collectable debt and instalments are only now due.

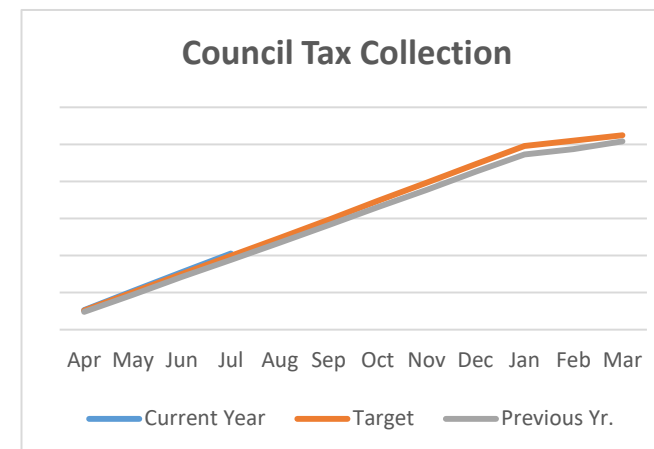
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £42,994.49.

Enforcement action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £18,334.18. Not including Direct Payments.



Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
<b>2021/22</b>	£ 31,052,369	£ 41,087,423	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 30,032,672	£ 39,829,556	£ 89,356,287	£ 104,909,024	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 335,028	£ 450,948	£ -	£ -	
<b>2020/21</b>	£ 28,542,242	£ 37,722,961	£ 85,229,464	£ 101,634,429	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>104,909,024</b>	●
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**Description**

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the Council Tax Collection Fund against the actual collection.

**Narrative**

Collection is on target for the current financial year. In the last financial year formal recovery proceedings were delayed and some customers made extended arrangements into this financial year. We will continue to monitor the effect this may have on current year collection.

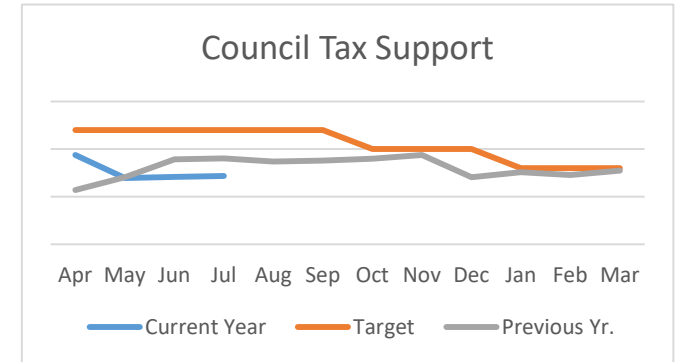
Further recovery action in 2021/22 has resulted in collection of £34,980.91.

Enforcement action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £233,957.32. Not including Direct Payments

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £519,436.79 debt.

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	7.07	7.17	0.00	0.00	●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2020/21	8.91	9.04	7.04	7.73	●

Year End Target	8	●
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**Description**

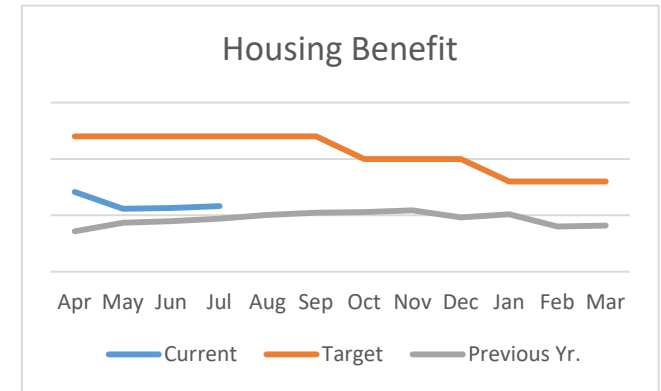
This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

**Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4	
2021/22	5.66	5.82	0.00	0.00	●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2020/21	4.47	4.70	4.82	4.10	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>	●
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**Description**

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

**Narrative**

This indicator has been met for this period and is expected to achieve year end target, subject to potential demand growth due to the economic impacts of the easing of Covid-19 funding schemes later in the year.

**Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team work closely with the Housing Option Team and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges. The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error. A closer working relationship with Planning Enforcement, Public Health and Housing and Economic Development has had a positive effect. The team continue to assist in post assurance of businesses entitled to the NNDR government business rates grant scheme. The team continue to work closely with the Internal Audit team to carry out the assurance work.

The NFI SPD review process and SPD New awards continue to provide positive outcomes.

	Q1	Jul-21	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£123,716	£159,074	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£7,209	£9,105	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£9,720	£9,720	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£12,152	£12,152	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£152,797</b>	<b>£190,051</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

# Service Updates as at July 2021



## **Enforcement**

Enforcement visits are continuing with all the necessary personal protective equipment and risk assessment in place. Collection has continued to rise back to near normal levels. We continue to try and engage with customers offering long term payment arrangements and assisting customers where possible.

Parking cases for West Suffolk and East Suffolk are coming through to Enforcement with positive results on collection.

This year we collected in July £383,262.49 compared to £227,543.66 at the same point last year.

## **Further Recovery**

Our total collection so far this year is £383,698 which is £167,441 more than for the same point last year. We are not yet back to the same levels of collection we had in 2019, as it will take a while for momentum to build up and collection from the actions taken to be realised. The team are working towards it and seeing excellent results.

### **Non-Domestic Rates**

Work is progressing to commence the Reviews of reductions; this has been delayed due to an issue with the e-forms test system which is currently not available to us to finalise the documentation.

Work volumes are stable, and progress has been made to reduce the aged processes so that a higher volume of work is completed within targeted deadlines.

Work is due to commence on the new QA procedures over the next month which will allow us to identify training needs and inconsistencies in processing.

### **Council Tax**

Demand for council tax billing continues at very high levels due to Covid-19, in particular the high number of people moving to take advantage of the extended stamp duty holiday, this year we have seen a 60% increase in people moving. However, outstanding work continues to be below the peaks previously seen which is testament to our project to introduce the generic Council Tax Billing Officer role, which provides a resilient team who have been able to switch between billing and benefits to help cope with ever changing workloads and priorities during the pandemic, providing increased flexibility to the use of our resources, along with maximising automation functionality.

In the last financial year formal recovery proceedings were delayed and some customers made extended arrangements into this financial year. This may impact on current year collection, we will monitor the situation closely.

The amount of recovery work remains significant as we pick up the recovery that was delayed from last year. Call volumes in excess of 4000 per month illustrate the response and engagement from the public and how the team can negotiate identifying vulnerability and tailoring recovery actions where appropriate.

Data files for all 5 Councils will be sent to Cabinet Office on 6th August for data matching with HMRC and DWP to allow us to pursue attachment of earnings and deductions of benefits where people have not provided information or entered into payment arrangements.

Courts continue to be virtual hearings, apart from Yarmouth Court. This is as long as there are no customers wishing to attend. Attendees have to book to attend the court due to restrictions. At point of contact we can usually deal with any issues, resulting in no need for court attendance.

This will save court officers many hours a month in travel and court delays.

## **Benefits**

Both Council Tax Support and Benefits performance has achieved targets, despite the increased demand attributed to COVID-19 and the usual increased demand generated by issuing annual Council Tax bills and uprating notifications.

We continue to see increases in demand, in particular we are seeing increases in change of addresses as people take advantage of the extended stamp duty holiday and low interest rates. We continue to utilise generically trained staff to focus resource where it is most needed.

The Track & Trace Self Isolation payment scheme has been extended to 30th September with additional Government funding. The scheme has been extended to include provision for parents to apply for a payment when their school age children are required to self-isolate .

## **ARP Systems and Digital**

Work is progressing with Capita to review their Digital product working with other LA's to provide feedback from a wider group of Capita users. We are working with a large Unitary Council where we are sharing our knowledge and experiences, this will be beneficial for ARP in the future.

Work volumes with both System admin and EDMS have been quite high, but through working with the project Manager we are making a strong plan of priorities so we can ensure that resources can meet expectations and demands.

## **Fraud and Compliance**

With Covid 19 restrictions having been reduced the Fraud Team have again reviewed the work of the visiting officers, to comply with local authority guidance. The team are now visiting all domestic and business premises except for occupied domestic properties. The Visiting Officers are still being supplied with relevant Personal Protective Equipment for visits. Desk based Fraud and Compliance work continues as usual, with all the Fraud Team able to fully work from home.

There has been some recent progression with the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub and continued discussion with East Camb's DC and Fenland DC for the business case to extend the Fraud and Compliance work for the two partners. If approved this would align the Fraud and Compliance work currently being carried out for other partners of the Anglia Revenues Partnership as indicated in the fraud savings on the quarterly performance report. This work has again consistently seen savings outweighing the costs of the work in the areas of Local Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts particularly, over several years. Norfolk County Council and now Suffolk County Council have committed to continue providing funding until March 2022. Norfolk County Council have additionally funded one Council Tax compliance Officer for 2021/2022 to continue Single Person Discount reviews for Norwich City Council and any additional work identified through the Norfolk Fraud Hub.

We are still unable to interview customers under caution on a face-to-face basis and continue to interview customers by letter and a process and procedure has been set up to enable this. Sanctions and prosecutions continue to be conducted using this process. However, we are now looking to identify interview rooms to enable safe interviews to be conducted under the guidance of the Health and Safety Teams.

Joint working with the DWP is now part of further ongoing discussions we are now working with the Norwich DWP Fraud team on joint investigations and interviews are now likely to recommence in September 2021.

The Fraud and Compliance Team have yet again had an exceptional start to the new financial year in terms of Fraud identified within the partnership.

An ongoing project within the Visiting Team is Total Mobile and agile working electronic method of raising and conducting Council Tax inspections. This is now fully functional across the partnership and we are now looking to include Empty Business Rate Properties as part of the electronic notification in September 2021.

An electronic method of recording and monitoring new build residential properties is operating in East Suffolk only and is now being incrementally rolled out across the partnership with all system modules being aligned. This system is currently being implemented in the Breckland Council area.

## **Better Customer Journeys Programme**

We continue to realise several projects which affect and improve customer experience, for example service response with automation and/or streamlined processes, making self-service the customer-preferred option or continuing to pressure suppliers to improve their product quality.

Council Tax change of address automation was launched with Fenland in July and will now be rolled out in Breckland, East Camb's, East Suffolk and West Suffolk in August. The new approach allows us to auto-index >90% of transactions which will help increase our speed of response. Additionally for Benefits and Council Tax Billing, we are improving NNDR eForms and Recovery interactions. The Telsolutions product is in place for our Enforcement Agency and is already generating returns in terms of successful contact; development for Recovery, Further Recovery and Council Tax Billing is ongoing.

On a council-specific basis, we're supporting Breckland's customer portal replacement project and their chatbot deployment. Along with the customer service group we are facilitating demonstrations, to begin evaluating the quality and potential of partners portal integration to revenues and benefits systems; we will use this to inform our product improvement conversations with Capita.