

Finance News



Issue 52

June 2005

News and views for
everyone interested
in finance

Financial Management Review

In the last edition of 'Finance News', information was provided on the programme of work to further improve the Council's financial management arrangements in response to both the requirements of the Council and the more stringent lines of enquiry around the CPA 2005 'Use of Resources'.

The Financial Management Review Steering Group chaired by Bob Summers has now approved an outline Plan to deliver the identified improvements and work is commencing in a number of areas.

As noted in May 'Finance News', this is an ongoing programme of improvement, which will take up to two years to implement and embed.

There are some key themes to the work we are now undertaking as follows:

- A requirement to enhance the level of reporting to and scrutiny by elected Members of matters relating to the Council's budget and to secure a more joined up approach to service planning and budget planning;
- A requirement to strengthen the Council's approach to risk management and to

embed a risk based approach to decision making within the organisation;

- A requirement to develop an efficiency programme in support of both the Government's efficiency agenda and the Council's budget planning;
- A requirement to review the way the Council makes investment decisions and appraises options before making key decisions;
- A requirement to ensure that proper professional standards of financial management are embedded throughout the finance community and that all finance staff are trained and equipped to do their job; and
- A requirement to report more widely on comparative service costs and to use that information to inform Council decisions about the allocation of resources.



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Included in this issue: • CIPFA Model • Norfolk Audit Services News
• FIMS news • CHAPS - new request forms

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Spotlight on

CIPFA Financial Management Model

This model was developed and released by CIPFA last year and has been purchased by NCC.

The model is designed to enable authorities to undertake a self-assessment of the strength of financial management arrangements within their organisations over the following three management areas:

- **Securing Stewardship**
With an emphasis on control, probity, meeting regulatory requirements and accountability.
- **Supporting Performance**
Responsive to customers, efficient and effective, and with a commitment to improving performance
- **Enabling Transformation**
Strategic and customer led, future orientated, proactive in managing change and risk, outcome focused and receptive to new ideas.

This assessment is carried out via an electronic questionnaire-based survey which those taking part will be able to access via their computer.

We are preparing to run the model by the end of June as an initial pilot study with approximately thirty people taking part.

These will include members of FMG, FOG, DF Executive Board, and some other staff from services. We will then extend this to a wider survey later in the year.

This work is being undertaken principally by Adrian Thompson and Ian Skates from NAS with additional input from me. It is important that we run this model as it will give us a useful insight into areas of Financial Management which we need to improve. It is also an essential component of the Review of Financial Management Arrangements.

Further, it will also provide hard evidence to support professional judgement and the auditor's assessment in respect of our CPA score.

I hope that if you take part in the initial pilot survey that you will find it interesting, and would take this opportunity to thank you for your input.

Peter Roe
Technical Manager
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If you need this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the Department of Finance on 01603 223488 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.



Introducing . . .

New arrivals in Norfolk Audit Services

Five new arrivals have joined the NAS team. They are Jordanna McDonald, Claire Bunn, Ian Skates, Melanie Jordan and Jackie Haynes.

Jordanna

I am AAT and ACCA qualified and have been appointed as a Client Manager within the team at NAS. My client responsibilities are Norfolk County Services, pensions and cultural services.

Claire

I am a qualified ACCA accountant with 8 years experience working in practice. I started my career with PKF in 1992 and was involved in the preparation of accounts, tax returns and company audits.

Ian

I am ACCA qualified and CIMA part qualified and have been appointed Senior Auditor and my client responsibilities are for fire and project management and shared responsibility for information technology.

Melanie

I have been appointed as an Auditor within NAS and joined Norfolk County Council on the 21st March. I am looking forward to becoming part of the team and taking part in the driver development day – especially the skidpan.

Jackie

I have recently started studying for the ACCA qualification and I am now very happy to take up the position of part-time Auditor, in Norfolk Audit Services. As the Finance Officer in a school I was audited on a number of occasions and I am now looking forward to seeing things from the other side!

Norfolk Audit Services

01603 222777



L-R: IAN SKATES, MELANIE JORDAN, JORDANNA McDONALD, CLAIRE BUNN, JACKIE HAYNES

FIMS News

New on the Intranet

The FIMS Intranet site now has a navigation button to a new AP Updates page. The first item you will find on it is a link to a guide showing what is in and out of the CIS scheme.

There is also a link to a new Master Content Set form on the FIMS Forms page. The mood models showing FIMS processes are currently being updated to cover the changes since Go Live and the new versions will appear on the site within the next few weeks.

If you have any suggestions for the site please contact me.

Doris Piper 01603 638133

FIMS Help

Just a reminder that if the Service Desk is busy when you ring with a FIMS query, an alternative is to email them on servicedesk@norfolk.gov.uk.

New CHAPS Request Forms

The forms to be completed for CHAPS payments have been revised to reflect recent changes brought about by FIMS. Additional guidance and instructions have been included and the Treasury Team have also reviewed and extended the deadline to 3pm on the previous banking day, by which time the original completed CHAPS Proforma must be in their possession. This ensures they can make suitable provision for the payment.

As always, attached to each request must be all relevant supporting documentation relating to the payment, including copy invoice and written confirmation of the bank settlement details supplied by the payee (ideally on their headed paper).

It is important to note that the original invoice (or pro forma if applicable) has to be coded, batched up individually and sent to Accounts Payable with the batch header clearly marked that the payment has been made by CHAPS. Should any of the details on the CHAPS request be either incorrect or incomplete, the paperwork will be returned to the originator and the CHAPS payment rescheduled.

The cost of making a CHAPS payment is much more expensive than paying by BACS or cheque and, therefore, they should be kept to an absolute minimum. Now that payment runs are more frequent (often daily), it is felt that the number of CHAPS requests should be minimal.

Blank CHAPS request forms and further guidance are available from the Treasury Team (Bay 6, 4th Floor).

Andy Feek
Senior Treasury Officer
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Financial Management Review

One of the activities also proposed within the Improvement Plan is the operation of the CIPFA Financial Management Model across a representative sample of the finance community within the County Council. This is seen as a key provider of evidence to support our self assessment for CPA Use of Resources and will provide us with guidance on any further areas for improvement.

The model is covered in more detail on page 2 of this edition of Finance News and could I take this opportunity of thanking those who will be participating in this very important piece of work.

I will provide more detail on progress towards delivering our improvements in future editions of 'Finance News'. As ever, please feel free to email me or contact me direct should you have any questions on the Review.

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