

# Finance News



News and views for  
everyone interested  
in finance

Issue 58

May 2006

## Hethel Engineering Centre opens for business

The Hethel Engineering Centre, an exciting new venture undertaken by Norfolk County Council with partners from both the private and public sectors to support engineering in the county, is now officially open.

The Centre provides:

- A state of the art training facility to help provide employers with a highly skilled workforce.
- Workshop and office space to meet the needs of growing engineering companies
- The opportunity for businesses to hire high-spec equipment that they would not otherwise be able to afford



NPS Ltd oversaw the construction of the Centre, which was built on land provided by Lotus Cars. The interior fittings are of a high standard, while the smart exterior, capped off by a striking ornamental bridge, demonstrates that new buildings do not have to be dull. The fixed price nature of the contract meant that the budget was not exceeded.

Brian Allerton has been the main financial lead on this project, responsible for both the preparation and review of the business case and the design and installation of a financial management process. The use of an accounting package (Quickbooks) means that the day-to-day finances can be managed on site with information transferred to FIMS as required.

The chief executive of the Centre, Bill Williams, has been working to bring in business and earlier this year the first tenants took residence of a suite of offices and workshops.

It is worth noting that the Centre has conference facilities so if you are looking for a location for meetings or conferences, this could be the place for you. If you are interested please contact Jane Millbank (01953 859100) ([Jmillbank@Hethelcentre.com](mailto:Jmillbank@Hethelcentre.com)) for further details, alternatively visit the web-site [www.hethelcentre.com](http://www.hethelcentre.com)

**John Holland** 01603 222807

*Featured inside:*    Taxing times    • More news from Cultural Services    • Finance and Risk Management Training courses    • Annual financial timetable    • ORACLE alerts  
• Invoice or payment queries    • Well-Being for you and your team

# Taxing times

## Capital Project + New Income Streams = Potential VAT Problems



Does your service have new income streams from charges to the public or other non County Council bodies?

Have you recently undertaken, or are you about to undertake, capital projects with a view to charging people for the use of the premises, or delivering other services for which you will charge?

Have you spoken to the tax team in the Department of Finance about these plans? It's not too late to talk to us now!

### What's the problem?

When we undertake a big capital project, we may pay and reclaim a lot of VAT. We may then get income from goods or services delivered from the new or refurbished premises; it may be that we do not charge VAT on those goods or services because they are VAT exempt.

In certain circumstances, the VAT we have reclaimed on capital projects like this could have to be repaid - as much as £2.5m or more a year. This would be an extra cash cost to the Council and would require savings elsewhere to fund it.

including those related to services it provides which are VAT exempt. The rule is that the total VAT reclaimed must include no more than 5% related to inputs which have been used to deliver VAT exempt goods and services.

- If the 5% limit were to be exceeded, NCC would have to pay back all the VAT reclaimed that relates to the exempt goods and services it delivers. In the past, NCC has stayed well within the 5% limit.
- If NCC continues to get more income from services which are VAT exempt, the 5% limit may be exceeded. We would then need to repay at least £2.5m of VAT.

### What can we do about it?

We need to control, as much as we can, how many of the goods and services we deliver that are classified as "exempt supplies". An early (or even late!) approach to the tax team gives us an opportunity to advise you on changes you can make to your project or service to make sure the goods and services you deliver do not qualify as VAT exempt.

### The science bit . . .

- An organisation can reclaim the VAT it pays when purchasing goods and services. VAT is normally only reclaimable if those inputs are then used to deliver goods or services which are themselves subject to VAT.
- There is a rule which allows NCC to reclaim VAT on all its input costs,

We are already looking at Extended Schools and Sure Start. These are both services that involve capital projects and income to the Council from services delivered through new or refurbished premises.

Please talk to the tax team if you would like advice on these, or any other capital projects or income streams.

**Sue Catton**

Tax Officer, Department of Finance  
01603 223177

# Taxing times

## Reminder: Partnership and Joint Ventures

Whenever you set up a partnership or joint venture, please talk to the tax team in the Department of Finance.

Whether your partnership or joint venture is long established, brand new or embryonic, please talk to us soon, if you haven't done so already.

Talk to us again whenever anything changes (partners, structure, activities, funding, etc)

**Sue Catton**, Tax Officer, Department of Finance - 01603 223177

## Vital information for those who bank paying in slips . . .

Please could I kindly ask that this information is forwarded to all finance officers who bank **Paying In Slips (PIS)**.

It has come to my attention that some vital information which should be put on PIS is not, and this is having an impact on the income team's work. It makes listing the vouchers a much longer process which is an important role in tracing which establishments have paid money in. It also assists greatly when dealing with missing payment queries.

Please could you all ensure that the following is written on your PIS:

- (1) Establishment name - written clearly on the front of the PIS
- (2) Name of payee - person paying in amount
- (3) Date of money banked
- (4) Can the income codes be clearly written on the reverse of the PIS to assist when allocating the finance
- (5) Any VAT items should be clearly marked and calculated correctly.

These pieces of information have become very important with the volumes of PIS that the council processes.

**Paul Harker**, Cash Manager - Order to Income Team  
[paul.harker@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:paul.harker@norfolk.gov.uk)

Tel:01603 224153  
Fax:01603 224346

# More news from Cultural Services

Following on from the report in our last issue on the success of the new library in Dereham, we have more exciting news from other libraries.

**North Walsham Library** is now lighter, brighter and more popular than ever before, following a winter refurbishment. Work costing more than £100,000 included redecoration, the creation of a new entrance and installation of new shelves and flooring. A new layout features a reading area, children's section and larger express self-service section.

North Walsham Library in New Road is open six days a week with late nights until 7.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. In addition to hundreds of new books, the library has music, films and Playstation games, along with computers offering free email and the internet.

Extra computers and hundreds of new books are heading for Tolhouse Street as **Great Yarmouth Library** reopens following a £110,000 refurbishment paid for by Norfolk County Council. This latest refurbishment includes:

- Extra computers in a new IT area. There are now 19 internet-connected computers available for public use on the ground floor and a new learning centre area on the first floor with 6 PCs
- A bigger and improved children's area
- New shelving and lots of new books
- Redecoration throughout, including the 120-seat lecture theatre
- A new kitchen, improving the facilities that have made the lecture theatre and galleries popular with local groups



As well as more new books, borrowers can now look forward to the arrival of Playstation 2 games.

With around 190,000 visitors a year, Great Yarmouth library is one of the most popular in the county. It is open six days a week with late nights on Mondays and Wednesdays. The closest neighbouring libraries are at Gorleston, Caister and Acle.

In the coming year, the council hopes to carry out improvements at libraries in King's Lynn, Swaffham, Watton, Caister, West Earlham and Long Stratton.

Watch this space!

**Angie Yeomans**

Department of Finance Administrator  
01603 223488

# The Efficiency Programme is helping us to serve the people of Norfolk better

We all want the hassle of bureaucracy taken away – the Efficiency programme aims to do this to allow us all to:

- Serve the people of Norfolk better
- Give taxpayers value for money

We all strive to improve things in our day-to-day work, but sometimes changes on a bigger scale are needed. This is why we have a programme of efficiency projects across all services in the county.

Norfolk has made good progress although a difficult Government grant settlement is putting further financial pressures on us all. If we become more effective and efficient in what we do it will mean we can make ends meet without cutting services.

The Efficiency programme is trying to square that circle, to take away difficult, upsetting decisions by finding ways of providing better services without the luxury of more resource.

We can realise efficiencies by:

- Keeping things simple
- Focussing on users and customers
- Applying consistent ways of working

We already have some great examples of efficiencies:

In libraries we were able to free up more customer facing time by:

- Looking at our mobile library routes to give more time to serving customers
- Reducing the amount of time we spend on back room work that provided little benefit to our customers
- Changing the focus of some of our work to put more time in to encouraging and supporting people to use library services

**Jennifer Holland, head of Norfolk libraries, says:**

“Taking part in this review has made us look critically at the way we do things. As a result we have simplified a number of our processes, for example enabling people to join the library via the Internet has removed some barriers to the service, made it easier and quicker for people to join and reduced the queue times for people waiting for counter service in libraries”.

The people who are co-ordinating the efficiency effort in Norfolk are the “Delivery Unit” led by the new Head of Efficiency, Paul Carter (see Our Norfolk April 06) – please contact them with any questions you have.

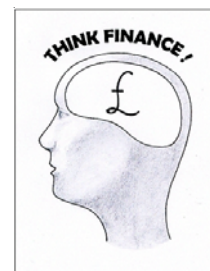
# Finance and Risk Management training courses

CTD have joined forces with Peter Roe, Financial Training Manager, and Gerry Wilson, Senior Risk Consultant, to offer series of key Finance and Risk Management training courses.

These courses are vital corporate initiatives that play an important strategic role in the continued development of NCC.

Places are being taken up quickly so please call CTD on 01603 223805 to book your places.

How to Manage Risk (A Training Course for Managers)  
<http://www.ctd-training.co.uk/?area=3&catid=7&item=169>



## Financial Management Training for RBOs

- ◆ **2006** 7th July, 6th September, 6th November
- ◆ **2007** 10th January, 9th March  
<http://www.ctd-training.co.uk/?area=3&catid=7&item=168>

## Finance for Non-Financial Managers

- ◆ **2006** 9th June, 19th July, 25th September, 20th November
- ◆ **2007** 29th January, 26th March  
<http://www.ctd-training.co.uk/?area=3&catid=7&item=113>

Please feel free to call CTD, Peter Roe or Gerry Wilson for more information

CTD	-	01603 223805
Peter Roe	-	01603 222813
Gerry Wilson	-	01603 223843





Where else can you get a whole day of

Financial Training for only

**£30 ?**

**Did you realise that....**

- The new RBO Training and Finance for Non-Financial Managers Courses in the new CTD brochure cost £30 instead of the normal £100 per person per day fee?
  - This can be charged against your CTD SLA budget?
  - This £30 charge includes accommodation, refreshments, course material etc ?
- 

*Don't let your staff miss these training dates:*

**Financial Management for RBOs**

**2006** 7 July, 6 September, 6 November

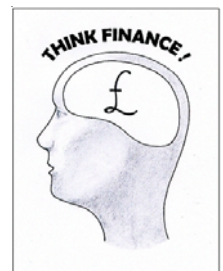
**2007** 10 January, 9 March

**Finance for Non-Financial Managers**

**2006** 9 June, 19 July, 25 September, 20 November

**2007** 29 January, 26 March

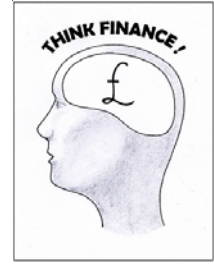
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Interested?

For more information contact CTD on 223805 or Peter Roe on 222813

# Technical Update for Finance Staff



When: At 2.30pm on 17 July 2006

Where: The Edwards Room,  
County Hall

## Programme for half-day update session:

- |                                    |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Introduction                    | Paul Brittain       |
| 2. Training and "Thinking Finance" | Peter Roe           |
| 3. New Financial Regulations       | Dawn Filtness       |
| 4. SORP 2006                       |                     |
| I. Capital Changes                 | Paul Mason          |
| II. Accounting Issues              | Stephanie Mullarney |
| 5. VAT matters                     | Howard Jones        |
| 6. Treasury Management             | Glenn Cossey (tbc)  |
| 7. "Carry-On Close-down" - quiz    | Alan Lincoln        |

You are invited to the whole event, but very welcome to join for specific individual sessions if you prefer.

Tea/coffee and biscuits provided

Any queries to Peter Roe, 2813



## Annual Financial Timetable

Set out below is a timetable of tasks identified for completion during 2006.

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Closedown of accounts(all)			X	X	X	X						
Medium Term Plan and Budget (all)	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Draw up template for depts for Review Panel reports (DF)							X					
School Budget Shares and outturn			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Detailed Closedown schedule (DF)											X	
Closedown timetable to RBOs (depts)	X											
Review Panel reports about next financial year (depts)	X								X			X
Cabinet reports about next financial year (Depts and DF)	X									X		
Draw up pro-formas/templates for depts to use in Medium Term Plan process					X							
Reporting of accounts (DF)						X						
Annual Efficiency Statement reviews			X			X						
Apportionment of 2007-8 budget to departments (DF)			X									
Inputting budgets	X	X									X	X
Recharge of capital programme	X											
Recharge of support services (property, finance etc)		X										
Accommodation and insurance recharges	X											
External funding	X											X
External audit						X	X	X				
Local Transport Plan												X
<b>Other issues:</b>												
Cabinet Monitoring		X	X									
IHRIS	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Re-organisations in ASSD, CSD and P&T and Support Service Review	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FIMS Workshops and Developments		X	X									
Annual leave peak			X	X			X	X	X			X
Grant Claims		X				X	X					
Service Planning		X										
Education s52 Statistics		X										
Surveys (note 2)	X					X			X			
Financial Management Improvement Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

# Oracle Alerts

You may have noticed that a new feature called Oracle Alerts has recently been implemented on FIMS.

Oracle Alerts is simply an email notification trigger. In other words, this feature has been set up to send requisitioners an automatic email at regular frequencies, informing them that certain types of **Holds** have been applied to invoices matched to purchase orders raised through I-Procurement. These invoices cannot be paid until the hold is resolved.

By creating automatic email notifications, all appropriate requisitioners are contacted simultaneously, which in turn improves the communication and error resolution process and speeds up the payment process.

The email Alert provides information regarding the PO / invoice to help you determine the action required to resolve the hold. You can then email Purchase to Payment Team (P2P) at "FIMSHoldQueries@norfolk.gov.uk", so they can release the invoice for payment.

In all there are three types of matching holds applied when invoices matched to POs fail validation. They are:

- Price holds (the amount invoiced exceeds the amount ordered)
- Quantity ordered (the quantity invoiced exceeds the quantity ordered)
- Quantity received (the quantity invoiced exceeds the quantity received)

Please note that for all other invoice holds you will still receive an email manually from the Purchase to Payment Team providing the appropriate information. To resolve these holds, again please email Purchase to Payment Team (P2P) at "FIMSHoldQueries@norfolk.gov.uk", so they can release the invoice for payment.

Below is an example of an Oracle Alert email that you might receive.

To resolve this Hold, please email the Purchase to Payment Team (P2P) at FIMSHoldQueries@norfolk.gov.uk, so they can release the invoice for payment. Please DO NOT select REPLY to this email.

The following invoices are on price hold, meaning the invoice price has exceeded the order price. As the appropriate Requisitioner you are responsible for these items. Please review the purchase order and invoice details recorded on Oracle to resolve these holds, as copy invoices will not be produced.

If you are happy with the Price Variance, please can you email the P2P Team so they can release the invoice for payment. If you are not happy with the price variance, please can you contact the supplier and request they re-invoice with the correct amount or send a Credit Note. If the supplier is to re-invoice, please contact P2P to cancel the existing invoice.

Invoice: 9999 Vendor: Sportspark At UEA  
Purchase order: 1234/1/Professional Develop  
Purchase order price/invoice price: 325/335  
Description: 3rd November '05. Sportspark UEA. Hire of Bowthorpe Rm

# Oracle Alerts

If you would like further information please to contact either Jenny Browne, Purchase to Payment Manager, on (01603) 495702, or myself on (01603) 495852.

**Alan Chappell**

Purchase to Payment Functional Support Manager

## Invoice or Payment queries

Please note that it is no longer necessary to contact CHS Helpdesk and log calls for invoice or payment queries.

Ideally, if you, or anyone else you work with, has access to NCC Payables Invoice Enquiry, you can query the invoice/payment yourself. This is actually our preferred method as this allows users themselves to query as many details and as frequently as they wish. If you do not have this facility but wish to, please ask your line manager to request this access via a CAR form and I will be happy to talk you through how to query your information.

Alternatively, you can simply ring the Purchase to Payment Team (based at Charles House) who will be happy to help out. There is no single number by which to contact.

However if you dial 01603 49 followed by any of these extension numbers:

5830 (Jean Goff)  
5827 (Jean Heard)  
5829 (Heather)  
5797 (Sue)  
5834 (Beth)  
or 5835 (Madeleine)

you should get through to someone who will be happy to help you.

If you still require further information or need any further assistance with either of these methods, please contact either Jenny Browne, Purchase to Payment Manager, on (01603) 495702, or myself on (01603) 495852.

**Alan Chappell**

Purchase to Payment Functional Support Manager

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.







# Well-Being for you and your team

The NCC Staff Well-Being Programme is up and running, and gathering momentum.

The aim of the Well-Being Programme is to promote the health and well-being of all Norfolk County Council employees. By working in partnership with existing support networks and initiatives, the programme aims to provide a better working environment in NCC.

The Programme wants to find out how staff feel about their work, and what ideas they have for improving their own well-being and the well-being of others in the workplace. Depending on the size of the team, one or two people will be trained as Facilitators to help their colleagues through the process.

Once the facilitator has been trained, the teams will be asked to complete a confidential questionnaire.

The results are then fed back to the team, who will then decide which areas they wish to improve and how this will be done.

The Well Being Team provides training and guidance, as well as ongoing support where required, thus enabling each team to develop a suitable programme.

## Who are we?

The Well-Being Team consists of the following people:

**Corporate Well-Being Co-ordinator** - Nicola Robinson (01603 638125)

**Corporate Well-Being Adviser** - Jo Hanson (01603 223763)

**Corporate Well-Being Adviser** - Margaret May (01603 224293)

**Adult Social Services Well-Being Adviser** - Julie North (01603 638121)

**Corporate Well-Being Administrator** - Danielle Youngs (01603 223820)

For more detailed information, including dates of forthcoming training dates and venues, please contact a member of the Well-Being Team or visit our website - <http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/wellbeing/>

### Finance News Editorial Board

**Editor - John Holland**

Telephone: 01603 222807

Email: [john.holland@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:john.holland@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Paul Mason**

Telephone: 01603 224427

[paul.mason@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:paul.mason@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Production and Distribution - Angie Yeomans**

Telephone: 01603 223488

Email: [angie.yeomans@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:angie.yeomans@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Doris Piper**

Telephone: 01603 638133

[doris.piper@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:doris.piper@norfolk.gov.uk)