

Finance News

 **Norfolk** County Council

Issue 53

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News and views for
everyone interested
in finance



Keeping on the straight and narrow

From time to time it is helpful to revisit some of the arrangements that the Council has in place to protect all of us. This article revisits and updates four important topics that are key to the effective running of our operations and protecting our reputation: the Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy, the Budget Holder Guidance Booklet and the Gifts and Hospitality Rules. Please take a moment to read on.

Anti Fraud and Corruption

Norfolk County Council is one of the largest organisations in the County, employing around 25,000 people. The Council is determined to protect itself against fraud and corruption both from within the County Council and from outside. The Council is committed to an effective Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy designed to:

- ◆ encourage prevention;
- ◆ promote detection; and
- ◆ identify a clear pathway for investigation.

The Council expects Members and staff at all levels to lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

The Council is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees and others who work for the Council.

The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, which can be found on the intranet, is based on a series of procedures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt act. For more information on fraud and corruption visit :

http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/legal_services/antifraud.htm

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Featured inside:

- Spotlight on the Norfolk Records Office
- Feedback from FIMS Clinic
- Memories from The 'Good old days'

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● **Editor** - Phil Ballard 01603 223144

Production and Distribution - Angie Yeomans 01603 223488

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Department of Finance Norfolk County Council, Floor 4, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2DW

www.norfolk.gov.uk



Spotlight on

Cultural Services



The Norfolk Record Office

The Norfolk Record Office (NRO) provides the county's archive service. We store, catalogue and conserve records and make them available to the public. We also provide an enquiry and research service.

Records held by the NRO, from c.1090 onwards, include those of Norfolk County Council and its predecessors and of other local authorities in Norfolk.



THE NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE

The NRO also holds a huge range of non-official records of businesses, other organisations, and families and individuals.

The removal of the NRO to our new home at The Archive Centre has enabled us to improve and extend the services that we offer.

The Norfolk Sound Archive, established in 2004, collects, preserves and makes available for public listening audio material relating to Norfolk.

Our Archive Education and Outreach section has developed an extremely popular series of lunchtime talks, including guided historical walks around parts of Norwich.

Guided tours of The Archive Centre have also proved hugely popular (2,875 persons have had tours since January 2004).

There are also records of :

- ◆ the Diocese of Norwich, Norwich Cathedral and around 700 parish churches (including registers of baptisms, marriages and burials);
- ◆ nonconformist registers and records plus copies of registers of some Catholic churches;
- ◆ wills and other probate records; records of public bodies including coroners' and magistrates' courts, hospitals and health authorities.



THE LONG GALLERY, IN THE ARCHIVE CENTRE
SHOWING THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION

The Norfolk Record Office (continued)



THE PUBLIC SEARCH ROOM

In 2004, the Corporate Freedom of Information and Records Management section was established and sits within the Record Office structure. At the same time, the Corporate Data Protection Officer transferred from eServices and Efficiency Directorate.

As the range and volume of our services increase, it is even more important that our administrative and financial procedures are responsive to current needs and future change and growth.

Close working with, plus training, and invaluable support from the Cultural Services Finance and Administration Teams, has meant that our transition to FIMS and i-Proc has been an enjoyable and, largely, trouble-free experience.

Proud to have been the first section across the Authority to post a FIMS invoice, we were also chosen by Cultural Services Finance to pilot i-Proc in Cultural Services. I-Proc serves our business needs by speeding up the ordering and receiving of goods. It is advantageous to minimise the length of time which recordable media remains unused and i-Proc allows for next day deliveries, this enhances our conservation of recorded media.

Family historians are our largest interest group (over 60% of our users) but our collections are of national and international significance- over half of requests for paid research are from abroad.

In one week alone requests for information or research included those from the Getty Art Library for an 1816 art dealer's notice; a 'Mastermind' researcher checking Norfolk answers; Harvard University for some 18th-Century letters and a request for a copy of a 1486 will.

The introduction of FIMS has enabled us to receive charge card and credit card payments, which has been an enormous benefit to our customers, particularly those from overseas. It has also streamlined our income retrieval.

As more and more of our suppliers are on line we look forward to a time when paper orders and invoices are as worthy of a historian's interest as the contents of our strongrooms.

Rachel Farmer

Archive Support Services Manager
01603 222107

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.



Keeping on the straight and narrow

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Whistleblowing Policy

As a person working for the Council you may be the first to realise that there could be something seriously wrong within your work place. However, you may feel that speaking up would be disloyal to your colleagues or to the Council. You may also fear harassment or victimisation. Head of Law Keir Hounsome explains: "The purpose of the Whistleblowing Policy is to make it clear that such concerns can be raised in confidence without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage."

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. We expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice those concerns.

The Whistleblowing policy covers a wide range of potential issues including: conduct which is an offence or breach of law; sex, race or disability discrimination; health and safety risks; damage to the environment and possible fraud and corruption.

If you are worried about someone's actions you should initially approach their immediate manager, Chief Officer or Trade Union. If management is believed to be involved one of those listed below should be contacted.

- ◆ Chief Executive, Tim Byles
01603 222000
- ◆ Director of Finance, Bob Summers
01603 222400
- ◆ Head of Law, Keir Hounsome,
01603 223415
- ◆ Head of Democratic Services,
Ian Lambert, 01603 22620

- ◆ Chief Internal Auditor, Adrian Thompson,
01603 222784

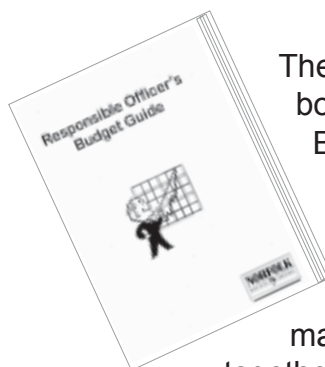
Other contacts are:

Public concern at work: 0207 404 6609;

Whistleblowing Hotline: 01603 224433

For more information on Whistleblowing visit http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/legal_services/whistle_policy.htm

Budget Holder Guidance Booklet



There is a guidance booklet for Responsible Budget Officers, which is a comprehensive and concise summary of the responsibilities of those officers managing budgets, together with details of useful information sources and who to contact in specialist finance teams.

Please address any queries relating to the guidance to Chris Upton in the Department of Finance (ext 4373). It is intended to place an updated version of the Guidance on the Intranet shortly.

Gifts and Hospitality, and Interests in Contracts

If, in the course of your work you are offered a gift or some other benefit from an organisation, a client or member of the public, you must tactfully decline it. Minor items such as calendars and mugs may be accepted. Invitations to hospitality events should be politely declined unless you have received prior authorisation to attend from your Chief Officer.

Keeping on the straight and narrow

Gifts and hospitality should not be accepted from contractors who are potentially tenderers leading up to the award of a contract by the Council.

Remember: Any acceptance of gifts or hospitality that are construed as an action to gain advantage or favour is a **criminal** as well as a disciplinary offence. Employees are required to declare any interests to, and note any gifts received, in the register held by the Head of Democratic Services.

Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit and by fair competition against other tenders. Scrupulous care must be taken to ensure that the selection process is conducted impartially and in strict accordance with the Contract Standing Orders.

Employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must remember the need for accountability and openness in the tendering process.

Employees known to have a relevant personal interest must play no part in the selection. If you become aware that the Council has entered or proposes to enter into a contract in which you have a pecuniary interest, you must declare your interest to the Head of Law or the Council's Statutory Monitoring Officer. For more information on Gifts and Hospitality visit: http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/insight/content/pdf/gifts_hospitality_a_code_of_conduct_for_councillors.pdf

To find out about the Law on Gifts and Hospitality
<http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/PAndTprocedures/manuals/mgt-&-administration/ad02-01a.htm>

Finally, it's a responsibility for all of us to keep on the straight and narrow!

For more information contact: Adrian Thompson, Chief Internal Auditor, Norfolk Audit Services, 01603 222784.

Email: adrian.thompson@norfolk.gov.uk

Some of the questions and answers from the FIMS Clinics



Will the Buyer's Course be run again in the near future?

Yes, we plan to schedule further courses when there is sufficient demand. Details of these will be circulated amongst the appropriate user groups and made available on the intranet.

Can you get an order number quickly?

Order numbers are generated automatically by the system when the purchase order is approved.

Are the order numbers still missing from orders?

Order numbers now appear on all purchase orders.

What is the Supplier set up time

Requests for new suppliers need to go to the Corporate Procurement Unit if the suppliers are to be set up as a 'purchasing site'. CPU will approve (or in some cases not) within 24 hours and forward to Accounts Services for set up. Accounts Services will complete the set up within 24 hours of receipt.

Memories from the ‘good old days’ . . .

With finance staff now getting to grips with the new ways of working brought in with FIMS and I-Procurement, we thought it would be interesting to look back at life in the Treasurer’s department in days gone by.

Who better to ask than Brian Wigg, who joined the department as an accountancy trainee in 1963 at 16, and rose through the ranks to become the Council’s Pension Fund Manager, retiring in 2001. *Were those the days?*



The photo shows Brian in his younger days celebrating gaining his accountancy qualifications.

Brian says:

You just don’t know how lucky you are!

“When I were a lad times were hard.”

We didn’t have the luxury of flexitime – in fact we had very rigid office hours viz 8.45 to 12.50 and 14.00 to 17.30 (16.35 on Fridays). In the mornings we had to sign in on a sheet of A4 and punctuality was maintained by the Cashier, who drew a line across the paper at 8.55 with latecomers being reminded of their transgression by the Assistant County Treasurer.

The offices were old and, because they were closed at the weekend, were cold on a Monday morning. The junior in the Accountancy section was responsible for ensuring that the County Treasurer’s fire was burning well and glowing for his arrival at 9.30.

Whilst in his room, his calendar had to be changed, the clock checked and wound up and his desk checked to ensure that his papers had been delivered.

One key facility lacking in those days was email. Communication was by word of mouth and usually face to face as there were no keyboards (we used to call them typewriters) available except in the typists’ room.



There was an antiquated internal phone system which did not really work effectively and no “private” external calls as these were made via the telephonists.

Refreshment facilities were practically non-existent with most people relying on flasks for drinks. However, in the afternoons a tea urn was available in the basement. Each section’s junior member would take a tray and return with mugs of steaming tea for the section – luxury and all for the equivalent of a halfpenny.

For those who needed a snack there was a shop opposite the offices on Thorpe Road and there would be a constant stream of staff stocking up on provisions.

There was also the Coach and Horses, which provided the base for Christmas festivities, but that’s another story worthy of revisiting on another occasion!

On reflection you don’t know how lucky we were!



Brian now, enjoying his retirement.