

# Finance News

 **Norfolk** County Council

Issue 65

March/April 2009

News and views for  
everyone interested  
in finance

And now for something completely different....



Bored with reading about finance? Bored with adding up figures? Bored with making things balance? Bored with coding invoices? Bored with people asking what the out turn is likely to be?

Well maybe, but only maybe, you shouldn't be reading this, because it isn't about to get much better. I only used the heading to get your attention.

Wouldn't it be nice if finance could be as funny and off the wall as some of the Monty Python sketches or perhaps an episode of Fawlty Towers. Unfortunately finance is a serious business and has to be treated as such....but surely there must be some funny stories to relate. If you have any please let me have them and I'll try to get the Editor to include some in a future edition. A prize for the best one? I doubt it, but I'll speak to Harvey so you never know.

So why the article?

Those of you who have been here a few years will already know the answer to that. But for any new people in the finance community this serves as a reminder that we are rapidly approaching 31<sup>st</sup> March.....the end of our financial year. In fact by the time you read this we may already be past that date. However, even if that is the case that doesn't mean it's all over for another year....far from it.

Year end activities and the production of the Statement of Accounts continue for several months beyond 31 March, and nowadays it seems that no sooner has one set of accounts

*continued on next page . . .*

## **Beware Frauds and Scams**

Have you had an email from the British Inland Revenue Department, or Inland Revenue & Customs, or Inland Tax Clearance? They are fake departmental names!!

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been closed, approved, audited and printed we (the Corporate Accounting team at County Hall) start planning for the next year.

Many years ago (yes I can remember that far back) there used to be a lull between one year end and the next, but those days are long gone reflecting the increased complexities of accounting treatments and information requirements which have to go into the final accounts.

As I write this article a colleague is concocting a response to a consultation document from DCLG regarding some additional information they think should be disclosed in local authority accounts, to bring them more in line with some other government departments and private sector accounts. If that becomes a requirement it will need to be done for the 2009-10 accounts and will mean extra work for someone. As I said the planning never ends.

So where do we start?

Contrary to what IT experts might tell you when trying to sell you their accounting packages, it's certainly not as easy as simply pressing a button on a computer and waiting for the accounts to be churned out. I'm not saying it shouldn't be that way, but it just isn't. Maybe one day it will be, but I fear not in my working lifetime.

The planning for this year end process started back in October when a proposed timetable was discussed at FOG (Finance Officers Group). This group is made up of senior finance staff from all departments and the Corporate Finance team. As you can imagine the agenda's are full of really exciting issues and sometimes you can get through one without going to sleep. With some nods of heads, it was agreed the timetable should stay basically the same as last year.....so that's good.

A further meeting of some FOG members and other staff took place in early January to mull over problems/issues that arose during last year's closedown with a view to smoothing the process even more this year.

Worryingly one of the messages I picked up on was that there are people involved in finance who don't get to see the Year End Guidance notes which are produced, and don't know who to contact for advice if they think they may need to do something for year end.

If therefore you take only one piece of information from this article it should be that, if you are in a job which involves finance, the Guidance notes have been issued and are available on Finance For All (FFA) intranet site, or from your departmental finance officer.

If when you read them you are unsure as to if or how the process affects you in your job, please speak to your departmental finance officer. Again there is a list of who they are on the FFA intranet site.

If you're still unsure after trying those options please contact any of us in the Corporate Accounting Team (Alan Lincoln ext 4374, Stephanie Mullarney 3322, Nigel Gabriel 2825, Hazel Eyre 2828). We'll be pleased to help because, at the end of the day, anything you do or don't do will impact on our efforts to get the accounts correct for the County Council members to sign off by the statutory deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June, and satisfy the external auditors that the accounts provide a true and fair view of the Council's finances.

If you're interested, you can find a copy of last years Statement of Accounts, which is what all this effort finally results in, on the FFA website. It's worth a look, even if you don't read the entire 124 pages, as it will give you an appreciation of the amount of information that has to be produced and the financial value of the transactions that pass through the accounts during the year.

This year's printed Statement of Accounts will be available by November...by which time the timetable for 2009-10 will probably have been discussed at FOG....and so the cycle begins again.

Below for information is the corporate timetable agreed back in October 2008 for this year end which you may find useful. Please refer to the Guidance notes for detailed information supporting those tasks.

<b>2008-09 YEAR END CLOSEDOWN TIMETABLE</b>	
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March 2009 4.00pm</b>	Last date for normal AP payments to be passed to Purchase to Pay (P2P) for inclusion in pay run scheduled for 31 <sup>st</sup> March.
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 4.00 pm</b>	Last date for urgent AP payments to be passed to P2P for inclusion in pay run scheduled for 31 <sup>st</sup> March.
<b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2009</b>	a) Final AP pay run for inclusion in period 12 2008-09 b) Final date for input of debtors invoices for inclusion in period 12 2008-09 c) Sub ledgers for period 12 2008-09 close.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009</b>	Period 12 2008-09 reports available.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 4.00pm</b>	Final date for normal payments to be passed to P2P to include those payments 'flagged' as 31MAR09 for inclusion in the pay run scheduled for 17 <sup>th</sup> April.
<b>7<sup>th</sup> April 2009 4.00pm</b>	Final date for urgent payments to be passed to P2P to include those payments 'flagged' as 31MAR09 for inclusion in the pay run scheduled for 17 <sup>th</sup> April. Last date for credit notes and cancellations to be passed to Order to Income (O2I)
<b>10<sup>th</sup> &amp; 13<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	Easter Holidays.
<b>16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 4.00pm</b>	Final date for input of 'flagged' debtors invoices.
<b>17<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	Scheduled date of AP run which will include 'flagged' payments. b) All prime data from Accounts Payable and Receivable and Payroll to be posted to General Ledger.
<b>20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	a) Departments to complete all journal entries for creditors, debtors, suspense account etc clearances. b) Final Capital C1's to be received by Corporate Finance, which <b>MUST include a reconciliation to ORACLE of both expenditure and financing</b>
<b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	All imprest account certificates to be returned. b) Departments to complete review/grants, etc. All Capital entries by Departments to be completed Final review/completion of recharges (including internal recharges). <b>No more entries by departments after this date.</b> <b>PERIOD 13-09 will be closed and unavailable for any further entries to be made.</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> May 2009</b>	Corporate Accounting Team to complete final checks. Information requirements from departments for inclusion in outturn/final accounts report eg reasons for over/underspends. Reports available to be run.
<b>By 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009</b>	a) Reporting to Audit Committee:- <b>Audit Committee 29th June</b> , circulation date <b>19<sup>th</sup> June</b> b) RO forms completed and returned to Corporate Finance

.....and finally, if you've already started work related to the year end process, many thanks for your efforts so far. In the Corporate Accounting team we realise that our job would be much more difficult than it already is without your support.

Must close now as I'm about to be evicted from my hole in the road, but not before I finish my breakfast of a handful of gravel.....

**SCHOOLS.** Please note that you should have received guidance notes from Children's Services Finance at County Hall, and should direct any queries or requests for assistance to your individual Finance Support Officer in that section.

Alan Lincoln 4374

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## **A Mixed Bag from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)**

### **Beware Frauds and Scams**



Criminals are now targeting HMRC or rather their customers, you and me! Whilst most communications from HMRC are unwelcome we are usually happy to learn that we are due a tax repayment however beware as all is not as it appears!

HMRC are warning that e-mails offering tax rebates that appear to come from them are probably fake. HMRC rarely contact by e-mail and will never request personal information like login, bank and credit card details.

Legitimate communications from HMRC will always have :-

- The padlock shown in the bottom right hand corner
- Your name not a general greeting like 'dear customer'
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as the sender
- Their website ([www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)) as the only embedded link

If the e-mail fails to meet any one of these tests do not respond to it or disclose any details or follow any links. Forward the e-mail immediately to HMRC at [phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk) for further investigation.

If you are at all uncertain about the credentials of any HMRC communication ring HMRC first to check it's genuine before replying. Their phone number is 0845 366 7851. Please have your national insurance number to hand.

In the unfortunate event that you have already been scammed you should report the incident to your Internet Service Provider (ISP), via their abuse hotline (eg [abuse@aol.com](mailto:abuse@aol.com)) as they close down bogus sites.

### **National Insurance Contributions (NIC)**

If you have received a letter recently stating that your NIC contributions were insufficient for the tax year 2006/07 it is incorrect, please ignore it. Payroll has contacted HMRC and HMRC are now amending their records.

Sue Catton 3177

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## Finance for All website

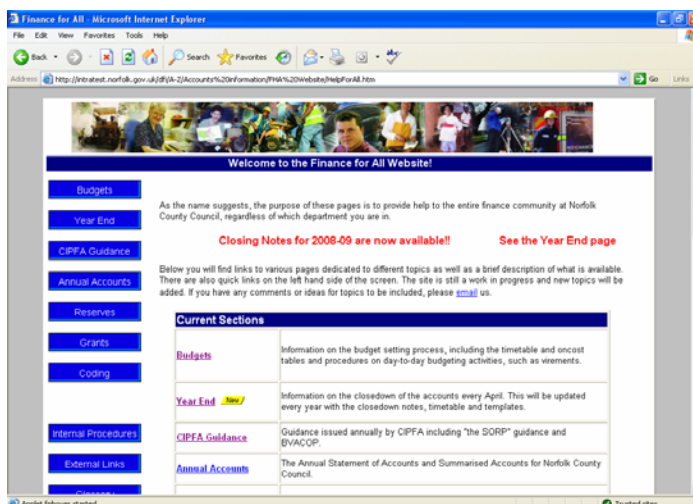
Have you ever wondered how to move money from reserves? Or, which subjective code to use? Perhaps you just want to find out who your departmental finance officer is?

Yes? Well now there is a new website just for you!

The aim of Finance for All is to provide advice and guidance on everything finance related, a “one-stop shop” for all members of the finance community within Norfolk County Council.

Current topics on the website include:

- Budgets
- Year End
- CIPFA Guidance
- Annual Accounts
- Coding
- Reserves
- Grants
- International Financial Reporting Standards
- Internal Procedures
- External Links
- Glossary of Financial Terms
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Useful NCC Contacts



We hope to add many more new topics including Journals, Tax & VAT and Stock plus a section on managing Imprest Accounts.

If you don't find what you need on the website then let us know and we'll add it!

You can access the website from the “Working at NCC” drop down list on the corporate intranet page or go to <http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/financeforall/default.htm>

**Why not check it out today?!**

Hazel Eyre 222828

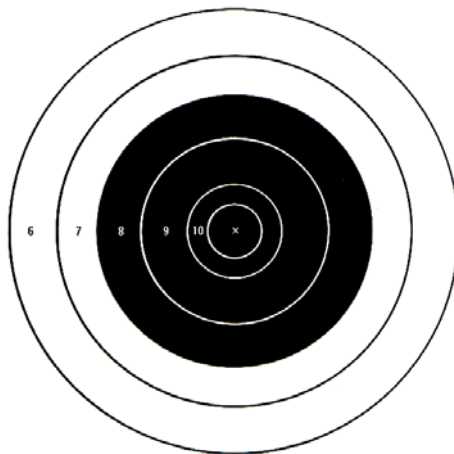


**\*NEWS\***

The word \*NEWS\* was coined from the fact that early daily papers carried images of globes on their mastheads and boasted that their reports came from all directions -- **N**orth, **E**ast, **W**est, and **S**outh (source unknown)

**Help us meet the Government target  
of paying supplier invoices within 10 days**

In these dark days of economic gloom, the Government has set Local Authorities a target of paying supplier invoices within 10 days.



It goes without saying that until P2P receive the invoice for processing it won't be paid.

Could I urge everyone who deals with the receipt, coding or batching of invoices to process them promptly and send them through to P2P.

If you know you will be on leave, arrange for a colleague to deal with any invoices that come in. Make full use of i.proc as invoices should be sent from the supplier directly to P2P which means there is less of a delay.

If you receive a workflow notification advising you that an invoice is on hold, don't ignore it – deal with it! The invoice won't be paid until all issues are resolved.

If you finally close purchase orders please make absolutely certain that all invoices relating to it are paid and not on hold. We can't match the invoice to the order if it has been finally closed and have to cancel the invoice and send it to you for coding and batching.

Finally, thanks to everyone for their efforts so far, hopefully together we can ensure our suppliers get paid promptly.

Jenny Browne 495702  
Purchase to Payments Manager

If you would like 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.



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