

Finance News



News and views for
everyone interested
in finance

Issue 54

October 2005

FIMS - The way ahead

The FIMS project officially draws to a close on 6 October when the final Project Board meeting is held.

For many people, this is the conclusion of a number of years of hard work and commitment to see the project through to a successful conclusion. However, this should not be seen as the end, but only the closing of a chapter. We must continue to work very hard to secure the benefits and improvements in our ways of working that FIMS allows.

The County Council has invested significantly in the new financial and management information system and it is incumbent on us now to deliver ongoing benefits.

We move to our "business as usual" arrangements. The newly appointed Service Heads are introduced on pages 3 - 4, and the organisational arrangements for delivering and developing the core finance services, and supporting the user community, are explained in a bit more detail.

These arrangements are very different to pre-FIMS, with responsibility for the main service areas being pulled together under individual managers.

Our intention is to develop "one stop shops" - centres of excellence for the main financial processes and services. We hope that this will improve our support to service users as we establish greater clarity about who you should contact for advice and support, and build the new working teams resourced and trained to meet their new roles.

As we now move to 'steady state', I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the finance community who have supported the project, and enabled us to reach this point.

The journey, which started back in 2000, still has a long way to go, and each service area faces significant challenges, but I am confident that together we will continue to build upon the foundations that we have laid within the FIMS project.

Paul Brittain

Head of Financial Management
01603 228977

Featured inside:

- FIMS - the way ahead
- FIMS Survey results
- iProcurement Hints and Tips
- PAPG Hints and Tips

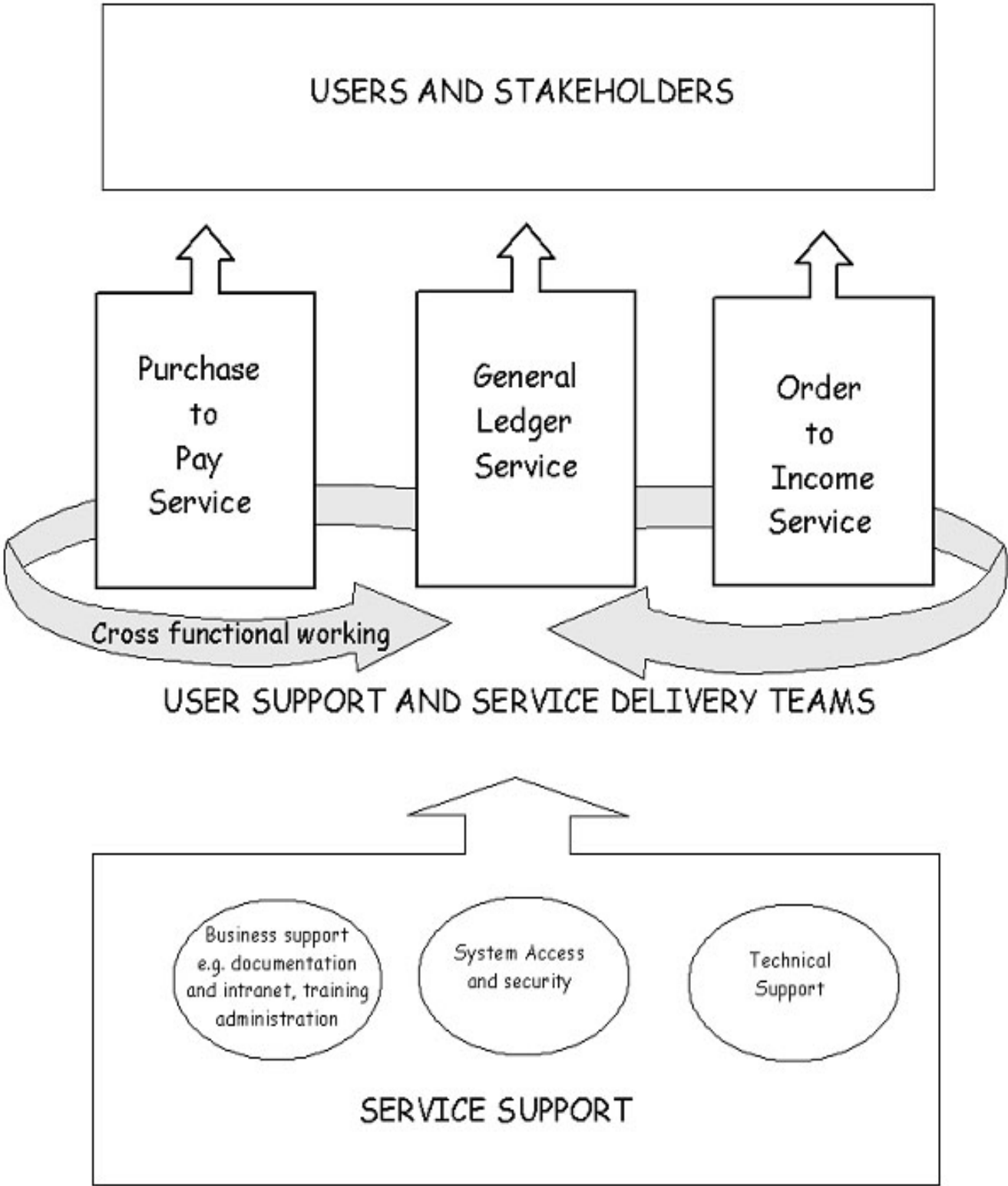
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FIMS - the way ahead

The new structure



FIMS - the way ahead

The new structure

Each new Service Head has responsibility for the delivery and development of their end-to-end service, in line with the established Vision for their service, including:

- Policy
- Operational service delivery
- Performance and service development
- Process and system maintenance and training delivery
- User support and functional support

This will provide clear leadership, ownership and areas of responsibility.

The new service teams will, in effect, provide a “one stop shop” for their service users and customers. Greater emphasis will be placed on a proactive rather than reactive approach, working closely with users and stakeholders, to drive forward the service and deliver improvements and efficiencies.

Cross service area working groups will be established as required to manage service, system, process and development issues, either on a temporary or permanent basis. For example the extension of e-enabled ordering and payment arrangements will require close collaboration between the Purchase to Pay service team and the Corporate Procurement Unit; clarification of links with Treasury; co-ordination of development, testing, recovery arrangements; year end planning and processing etc.

Closer working relationships will be developed with Charles House ICT colleagues, in line with the recommendation of Oracle Management Board, with business, functional and operational support colleagues working side by side to most effectively deliver Norfolk County Council’s agenda.

The new service heads

Order to Income Manager: Bob Batterham



Bob’s previous role was as Tax Manager, but also with some responsibility for debt recovery and credit control. Through the FIMS project he has acted as process owner for Accounts Receivable. He now takes on board responsibility for leading, developing and implementing the Council’s policy and strategy for invoicing, income collection and credit control, from order to income. He will also pull together a central debt recovery team

FIMS - the way ahead

Purchase to Payment Manager: Jenny Browne



Jenny will be familiar to many of you as Exchequer Manager for the last few years, originally within ITEX, then Capita and now again within the Department of Finance. Jenny will extend her current Accounts Payable role to take full responsibility for all aspects of this service, and will work closely with the Corporate Procurement Unit to develop and support the i-procurement and purchasing processes.

General Ledger and FIMS Integration Manager: Darren De Lara

As FIMS Core Team Leader and latterly FIMS Support Centre Manager, Darren has played a key role in delivering the FIMS project. This experience, together with his background in accountancy, ideally places him to lead the General Ledger team, and to ensure effective working across the interlinked finance system modules.



Two further posts have been created to complete the reorganisation.

Capital and CPA Manager: Paul Mason



Paul has been managing a team responsible for capital accounting systems support and project work including best value reviews and medium term planning. The systems support role is now being incorporated into the FIMS service centres whilst Paul retains the other responsibilities and takes on the role of providing support to Paul Brittain (Head of Financial Management) on CPA issues.

Finance Development Manager: Peter Shackley

Peter's role is to help get the new service teams up and running as quickly and effectively as possible, to help secure the delivery of benefits at the earliest opportunity. He is also tasked with establishing longer term business support arrangements for the Department of Finance. Peter's background is fairly unique, bringing together a combination of personnel and financial services experience.



FIMS Survey

The results of the FIMS user survey are now on the Intranet at:

http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/new_fims/content/fims_survey.asp

The aims of the survey included finding out:

- How FIMS has affected the ability of users to do their jobs
- What further support users need
- How effective e-learning has been
- What we can learn for future projects



The survey included plenty of opportunities for users to comment and suggest improvements.

So what did we find?

- Over 90% of users find the system OK or easy to use
- There was an almost equal split between those who find their jobs now more difficult to do (52.4%) and those who find them easier (22.3%) or no change (25.3%)
- Three quarters of respondents were okay, reasonably or very satisfied with the new system and processes
- Nearly 90% were satisfied with post go-live support
- Over half of those who used e-learning found it reasonably or very effective, this figure rising to 70% if e-learning is combined with other training

The Intranet site includes the full statistical results of the survey, an analysis of these and the comments made, and an explanation of the action being taken as a result of the findings.

The intention is to repeat the survey in 6 months time, so that we can track changes. This will enable us to target problem areas where the system or process may not yet be quite right, or identify where additional training may be useful, and also to record improvements as we all continue to become more familiar and confident with the new ways of working.

We would like to thank everyone who completed the survey. It has been really helpful to receive your comments and suggestions and this is already helping to shape our future action plans.

Doris Piper

Project Administrator
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PS: A separate iProcurement survey has been circulated – the results will be published in a future edition of Finance News.

iProcurement Hints and Tips

ESPO delivery point numbers (DPN)

If you forget to enter the ESPO delivery point number when ordering, your order will be delayed because ESPO then has to ring the Corporate Procurement Unit for it.

ESPO orders - one DPN per order

When you place an order with ESPO you can only use one ESPO DPN per order. If you send an order with multiple DPNs, their system takes the first DPN it finds and all items will be delivered there.

If you need to order for more than one ESPO DPN make sure you create a separate requisition and a separate order.

One Time Addresses

If you use a One Time Address in iProcurement you should type it in as follows:

Please Deliver to:

Name

Address Line One

Address Line Two

Town/City

County

Postcode

The reason for this is that when suppliers receive our orders this information goes as a "Note to Supplier". Some suppliers don't recognise this as where you want the items delivered.

Also, suppliers can receive orders in different ways and different formats and, depending on how they have their systems set, the information can display differently. If you include the words "Please deliver to" then it will give absolute clarity.

Purchase Requisition 1234567 emails

These are "reminder" e-mails and part of Oracle's "Standard Functionality". If you receive one that just says "Purchase Requisition 1234567" and then has the option to "Approve" "Ignore" "Reassign" or "Request Information" it will be acting as a prompt because you have either:

- 1) A saved shopping cart
- 2) A requisition that has been rejected

If you have a saved shopping cart, you will stop receiving these reminder e-mails once you submit your saved shopping cart. In the meantime you can click the "Ignore" option.

If you have a requisition that is rejected and you DO NOT re-submit it, then it will be considered "Incomplete" by the system. You will then receive periodic e-mails/notifications that just have the requisition number and the option to "Approve" "Ignore" "Reassign" or "Request Information".

To stop these messages, you will need to go in to iProcurement, find the requisition and click on the requisition number to open it. You then need to select the "Cancel" option and "Cancel Entire Requisition".

This means it will no longer be "Incomplete" and you will stop getting the reminders.

Purchasing, Accounts Payable and Grants

Hints and Tips

Searching more easily for information

Use the torch icon rather than F11, as the torch is not case sensitive and provides a more flexible search facility.

Did you know that rather than use drop down boxes to bring up a “Find” box, you can enter part of the search criteria & then use TAB. This will automatically bring up a refined search list.

Viewing accounting records created

By selecting View Accounting you can view the accounting records created for a particular “Invoice” or a “Payment”. Select the required Document Class and enter the invoice or payment number.

Alternatively to track the entire accounting throughout the process, instead of viewing the accounting for Document Class “Invoice” or “Payments”, leave this field blank and you will see the accounting for both the invoice and payment, in other words the full accounting audit trail.

Finding invoice batches

If you query an Invoice Batch you can now see the date the Batch was entered, whether the Batch is Urgent and information on any of the invoices in the Batch that may have been returned to a department with detail on why the invoice was returned.

If there are no invoices in your batch, then this shows the processing centre has received the Batch but not yet entered the invoices.

Finding invoices

The Find Invoices screen is a very powerful inquiry tool. You can find invoice information via suppliers, invoices-using invoice numbers, amounts or dates, pay groups, batches etc. You can also inquire or invoice statuses or Holds.

Many fields have drop down boxes, therefore you can search using the boxes, or type part of a criteria and use tab to automatically receive a refined list. Some of these boxes also provide the opportunity to use wildcards.

General coding grid and invoice tips

- Please ensure that EVERY invoice received within the authority is date stamped. This ensures that all payment terms are calculated correctly from the Date Invoice Received. Otherwise the invoice date will have to be used as the Date Invoice Received.
- Please ensure that the Date Invoice Received is copied correctly onto the coding grid, and that the Invoice Date is not used by mistake.
- Please take care when using Further Analysis codes on the coding grid. Numerous examples have been found where the Further Analysis code has been entered in the Project Code field.
- Please be careful to check the VAT on the invoice and enter a line on the coding grid for each different type of tax.
- Please write legibly on the coding grid.
- Please enter the subjective code with the full five digits required.

Roll up, roll up for your FIMS training!

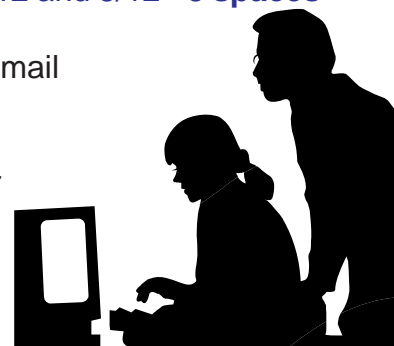
There are spaces on the following FIMS training courses:

GL02	General Ledger Input, Posting and Reporting	12/10 - 6 spaces
AP01	Accounts Payable Invoice Input	19/10 - 3 spaces
AR02	Accounts Receivable Invoice Processing	20/10 - 6 spaces
GL02	General Ledger Input, Posting and Reporting	2/11 - 2 spaces
AR02	Accounts Receivable Invoice Processing	16/11 - 2 spaces
PO02	Buying and Contract Management	7/12 and 8/12 - 3 spaces

For further details contact Marie Collins on 01603 495847, or email marie.collins2@norfolk.gov.uk.

Details of training courses to be held until the end of December can be found on the FIMS intranet site.

http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/new_fims/default.htm



European Funding

Bitesize training session

On the morning of **18th October** in the Cranworth Room, there will be a bite-size training session on European Funding. Karen Gibson (European Funding Manager) will be the lead presenter.

Other presenters will come from Finance, Audit and Project Managers who have previously obtained European Grants.

Anyone wishing to attend should contact Karl Murphy-Barnes on 8841

This newsletter is also available on the intranet.

If you have any interesting articles or news items that could be included in future issues please let us know.

If you (or a colleague) would like more copies or you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact Angie Yeomans on 01603 223488 or

email: angie.yeomans@norfolk.gov.uk

Watch this space for info on the new editor for Finance News

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.

