NEW FINANCE SYSTEM

The introduction of a new cloud based finance system that is more bespoke to a District Council working will provide a number of enhancements over the current system.

<u>**Accounts Receivable (Debtors)**</u>
- The system provides a strengthened automated debt recovery capabilities compared to what we currently have such as comprehensive reminder letter routines which can be structured by customer type if needed, and also structured to automatically generate case management information for each debtor. The reminder routines are further supported by improved credit management functions such as instalment plan maintenance, credit control diary which will include the option to attach documentation and notes which the Council currently can't do. This all enables the Council to easily identify the status of a debt transaction as it progresses through the legal recovery process for example recording when a transaction has reached court or enforcement stage.
- <u>Debt Types</u> - Debts can be chased by type which enables the council to operate different recovery process depending on the type of debt and customer recognising the need for different wording on letters for example.
- <u>Payment Options</u> - The current system only allows for paper mandates whereas the new system provides flexible collection routines enabling direct debits to be collected at frequent times through the month and can be amended easily by authorised officers when required.
- <u>Instalment Plans </u>– Amendments to instalment plans are currently longwinded especially when direct debits need to be altered which causes problems for the recovery officers. Moving forward flexible instalment plan capabilities are provided as standard which can be easily amended if required and re-profiled for any changes that arise.
- <u>Sundry Debt reports</u> -   Currently there is a limited number of reports that can be generated and have to be manipulated to obtain the relevant information. E.g unable to provide a report that gives payment received per quarter per customer by service area. The new system provides a wide range of reports and online enquires are provided as standard and to help interrogate and analyse outstanding debt within the system.   There are over 50 pre-defined reports on credit management, debt analysis and invoices as standard. Detailed exception reports and enquires are also available within the system. There is also an ad-hoc reporting tool which provides very intuitive, user friendly web based report facilities which can be customised and provided to users through a dashboard with integrated drill through to support service areas in managing their debts effectively.

- Printing – Currently officers struggle to reprint copy invoices, credit notes, reminders and statements but with the new system copies will be automatically saved in the system to enable rapid retrieval and easy reprinting.

Accounts Payable (Creditors)

- Automated invoice processing – The ability for invoices to be scanned when they enter the building to automatically be entered into the finance system reducing the need for manual intervention. This will remove the need to retain hard copies and also allows the electronic workflow of information for approval.
- Paper Clip - the new system has the ability to attach documents and other important information to transactions within the system for a clear audit trail and reference for users.
- Budget Checking – parameters can be set within the system to check there is budget available before orders are raised and prevent the Council from committing to expenditure it can't afford.
- Purchase Invoice Manager – this tool allows for the self service management of invoices after they have been scanned into the system on arrival so they can be electronically work flowed through the organisation to ensure effective process of invoices. The system allows for invoices to be tracked through the council so it is easy to see what stage in the approval process they are at. This will help support the council in achieving is performance targets around payment of suppliers.
- CIS Gateway (Construction Industry Scheme) – the system comes with a specific module which is approved by HMRC for electronic connection to the government gateway for the transmission for monthly tax information for CIS subcontractors.

Reporting Improvements

- Integration with Payroll System – when the payroll information from the payroll / HR system used by Leicester City is brought across to the finance system more data will be available within the finance system to drill down against rather than the current positon which just shows a total costs against a budget line enquiry.
- Improved reporting Capability – a suite of user friendly core system reports will be provided alongside a robust report writer facility to enable the finance team to extract data quickly and easy in an easy to view format which the Council currently struggles to do at present. Currently users have to rely on information being provided by finance but the new system will enable them to self-serve through online reporting facility with real-time interaction with the system which can range from detailed enquiry screens to dashboard reporting containing infographics.
- Financial information Improved reporting facilities will enable some government returns to be automatically produced. Elements of the Statement Account notes can also be automated which we are currently unable to do.

- Excel Uploader – the new system will provide functionality to automatically upload a large number of data direct into the system without the need to manually enter this in a more easy to use integration tool.

Collaborative Planning

The Council is getting a new module to support the budget monitoring and setting process. The tool will remove the need to use manual spreadsheets and be able to provide an overview of the Councils budget position in real time through regular automated updates from the core finance ledgers. Budget holders will be able to access real-time information rather than having to wait on monthly reports. Alongside this they will be able to drill down into individual transaction and view associated documentation to ensure they have full access and awareness of their budgets.

When setting budgets the system will provide the ability for scrutiny and sign off by SLT and directors in a simplified manner which can be work flowed and tracked though a traffic light system showing what stage budgets are at in the approval process.

The system will also enable the modelling and updating of budgets to support the development of the MTFS through the ability to run different scenario plans. For example central tables within the system around elements such as pay and inflation can be modelled and altered easily to produce different budget predictions.

Removing the need to rely on spreadsheets will help reduce the risk of data loss, errors and corruption of formulas.

Other Benefits

- Screen Designer – functionality will be provided to enable officers to design the elements of the system so that they are more appropriate for users' needs rather than having to rely on standard system views which may not suitable. For example removing fields which are required to simply input data or renaming screen references so that users only have access to areas they need to help ease of navigation around the system.
- Single Sign on – users will only have to log into the system once to access all modules (such as General Ledger, procurement. Collaborative Planning) rather than having to maintain individual passwords for different parts of the system and log in each time separately.