

# Runnymede Borough Council

## Service Area Plan 24/25

### Finance

## FINAL FOR COMMITTEE APPROVAL

#### Approvals

Approved by CLT:

Approved by Corporate Management Cttee:

Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 2023

DATE

# Service Area Plan for Financial Year 2024/25

**Service Area:** Finance

**Corporate Head of Service:** Paul French

**Supported by:** Aidar Ismailov, Sam Cooper, Emma Lyons

**Version:** FINAL DRAFT

## Mission statement

To ensure the Council carries out its financial affairs in a fair, proportionate, and professional manner, by providing clear financial and strategic advice to all stakeholders whilst adhering to statutory and professional regulations in the dealing and reporting of all financial transactions.

### Service Area Narrative

A restructure of the finance team was undertaken in 2022/23 to help alleviate the loss of several key personnel and to try and solve ongoing recruitment issues. As of September 2023, the team were finally fully resourced with a mix of internal promotions and external recruitment, most of which have no, or limited, local government finance experience and one team member has been brought into the accountancy team with no prior accounting experience under a new “grow your own” ethos.

Whilst it will take time for these new team members to settle in, we are already beginning to see some tangible benefits with new ways of working and a replacement of an over-reliance on paper hard copy files. This will be further assisted by the implementation of the new joint HR/Payroll system due to go live in April 2024 followed by the tendering for a much-needed new Financial Management System (FMS).

As well as the day-to-day activities of a busy finance department, the team are very much embroiled in many of the various projects and initiatives set out in the CBP (Corporate Business Plan) from participating in service reviews, assessing benefits packages, and assisting in reviewing and developing new policy creation. Some team members will also become heavily involved in the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme. In all initiatives, the team ensure the financial consequences of decisions are planned, analysed and are robust and financial governance procedures are adhered to.

# Service Information

## Service Area: Finance

Service Area 1:	Accountancy
Service Area 2:	Exchequer Services
Service Area 3:	Other

The Financial Services Section is managed by the Corporate Head of Finance (the Council's deputy section 151 officer) and is split into two distinct teams – Accountancy and Exchequer Services. Its main function is to exercise the Council's statutory duties in relation to its financial administration and stewardship. This includes ensuring that the Council's plans and strategies are affordable and that there is sufficient money available to deliver them. This is achieved by robust budgeting and forecasting and the diligent collection and investment of money.

### Description of Service (1) Accountancy

Main Purpose:

- Prepares and maintains the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Prepares, updates and monitors the Capital & Investment Strategy ensuring adherence to CIPFA and DLUHC requirements.
- Prepares, updates and monitors the Treasury Management Strategy ensuring adherence to CIPFA and DLUHC requirements.
- Monitors and prepares the Council's Housing Revenue Account, General Fund and Capital budgets.
- Produces the final accounts for the Council in accordance with professional and statutory guidance and regulations.
- Undertakes ongoing budget monitoring and reporting to SLT, Members and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- Providing on-going financial planning and advice to Members and officers at committee meetings, project groups, working parties, departmental team meetings and on a daily basis.
- Undertakes in excess of £200million of investments a year- which need careful investment and risk management – and maintains the Council's borrowing position (approx. £650million).
- Provides a full bookkeeping, accounting and treasury service to the Council's three companies including accounts payable to two of the Council's companies.
- Quarterly treasury management reporting to Members and other stakeholders.

- Daily banking, cashflow and treasury management recording.
- Arranging training and refresher sessions on the use of The Council's Financial Management Systems and on the Council's Financial Regulations
- Completion of, and advice on, grant claims and completion of an ever-growing list of statutory returns to government and other stakeholders
- Monthly VAT returns, VAT compliance, advice and annual Partial Exemption calculation.

## **Description of Service (2) Exchequer Services**

Main Purpose:

Accounts Payable (Creditors)

- Pay all of the Council's suppliers of goods and services (over 13,000 payments processed a year).
- Carrying out weekly payment runs for the payment to suppliers, housing benefit claimants, and refunds for Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debts, and Housing Rents.
- Management of Construction Industry Scheme Tax (CIS) and reporting to HMRC.
- Submitting NFI returns for payments – Subsequently reviewing all returns and investigate any errors or potential cases of fraud.
- Quarterly KPI returns for invoices paid.

Payroll

- Undertakes the payroll for employees, Members, election staff & RBC Companies (approximately 6,500 transactions per year).
- Apply pay increases and tax code changes for all staff, members and employees for the three Runnymede payrolls.
- Submitting NFI returns for Payroll – Subsequently reviewing all returns and investigate any errors or potential cases of fraud.
- Annual pension auto-enrolment exercise (tri-annual exercise but undertaken for three payrolls with different enrolment dates).
- Annual Gender Pay reporting in conjunction with HR.
- Annual salary return for HR.
- Year-end reconciliation & subsequent returns such as P11D, pension, P60's.
- Procuring, implementing and monitoring the Councils Pension AVC and Cah Health Plan contracts

Purchasing

- Carries out the Council's central purchasing function including stationery, envelopes, uniforms and cleaning products and negotiates/locates cheaper deals to save the Council money.
- Monthly purchase card statements, reviewing and extracting VAT total and transparency reporting for web site.
- Continual review of prices to obtain value for money when ordering stationery, uniforms and cleaning products.
- Review staff purchases to check that value for money is being achieved service by service and top spending one off purchases.
- Ongoing training of staff in the Purchase to Pay system requirements and general Financial Management

#### Accounts Receivable (Debtors)

- Issues and chases over 21,000 invoices a year amounting to over £22million per annum.
- Provides a full debtors service to the Council's three companies and to Surrey Heath BC's Community Services customers (including billing for service charges and insurance).
- When necessary, visits debtors to recover money owed and if necessary, negotiate instalments.
- Year-end reconciliation and subsequent returns.
- Apply all fees and charges changes for April billing.

#### Income Management

- Receives (and deposits into account), allocates and reconciles all of the Council's cash receipts. Ensures revenue accounting for corresponding income, including year-end accruals.
- Maintaining Payment Card Industry (PCI) accreditation for the Council's income collection methods (mobile handheld terminals etc), keeping up to date with changes in legislation, returning compliant Self-assessment questionnaires and undertaking quarterly penetration scans and uploading results.
- Maintaining and managing Council's main revenue management system (Civica) and relevant controls
- Maintaining and managing Council's payment systems – Cardnet, Allpay, GovPay, PayPal etc.
- Maintaining and managing the Council's BACS processes

#### Insurance

- Arranges and manages the Council's insurances and that of its companies.
- Handles, reports and manages approx. 75 claims a year.

- Provision of insurance advice for Council's contracts
- Complete, submit and agree new insurance renewal terms and the management of all insurance claims during the year.
- Recharging all insurance premiums to the Council and Council owned company commercial and residential tenants.
- Submitting NFI returns for Insurance – Subsequently reviewing all returns and investigate any errors or potential cases of fraud.

### **Description of Service (3) Other**

Main Purpose:

Other business as usual activities undertaken in the department include:

- Staff Appraisals using the competency framework along with formalising one to ones and quarterly meetings
- Adhering to ongoing external audit requests for both the Council and it's companies – throughout the year
- Maintaining external relations with suppliers, ICT system suppliers, insurance, banking and treasury relationships
- Retendering for Treasury Management consultants, banking and payments services, Insurance services, insurance brokers, Stationery contracts, Cash collection contracts etc
- Update Business Plans, Business Continuity Plans etc.
- Credit management and advice for contracts and investments
- Managing internal and statutory financial reviews and audits
- Contracts and projects financial performance and appraisal advice

# Planned Activities



Project						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Project	Payroll System Implementation (HR/Payroll system)	Organisational Development	09 May 2023	09 May 2023	01 April 2024	In progress
Project	Banking Services	Organisational Development	01 February 2024		31 December 2024	Not started
Project	Income Management System	Organisational Development	01 October 2023	01 October 2023	24 July 2025	In progress
Project	Finance Management System Tender	Organisational Development	01 November 2023	13 November 2023	01 April 2026	In progress

Review						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Review	BACS System Review	Organisational Development	01 July 2024		31 December 2025	Not started

One-off						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
One Off	NFI creditor & payroll data submission	Organisational Development	01 September 2024		30 September 2024	Not started
One Off	Insurance Brokerage Services	Organisational Development	01 June 2024		31 March 2025	Not started

New Core Activity						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
New Core Activity	International Financial Reporting Standard 16: Leases	Organisational Development	01 April 2023	01 April 2023	31 March 2025	In progress

Corporate Business Plan Activities						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress

Service Area Plan Activities						
Type of Activity	Title	Corporate Theme(s)	Plan start date	Actual start date	Plan due Date	Progress
Review	BACS System Review	Organisational Development	01 July 2024		31 December 2025	Not started
Project	Banking Services	Organisational Development	01 February 2024		31 December 2024	Not started
Project	Finance Management System Tender	Organisational Development	01 November 2023	13 November 2023	01 April 2026	In progress
Project	Income Management System	Organisational Development	01 October 2023	01 October 2023	28 July 2024	In progress
One Off	Insurance Brokerage Services	Organisational Development	01 June 2024		31 March 2025	Not started
New BAU	International Financial Reporting Standard 16: Leases	Organisational Development	01 April 2023	01 April 2023	31 March 2025	In progress
One Off	NFI creditor & payroll data submission	Organisational Development	01 September 2024		30 September 2024	Not started
Project	Payroll System Implementation (HR/Payroll system)	Organisational Development	09 May 2023	09 May 2023	01 April 2024	In progress

**For all information contained within this document contact:**

Runnymede Borough Council  
The Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Addlestone  
Surrey KT15 2AH

Tel 01932 838383

email: [finance@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:finance@runnymede.gov.uk)

[www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)

Further copies of this publication,  
or copies in large print other  
formats or languages  
can be obtained via the  
above contact details.



Search: Runnymede Borough Council