

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director of Support Services
to

Audit Committee

on

13th January 2011

Report prepared by:
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Agenda
Item No.

Updated Finance Manual

A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To inform the Audit Committee of the updated Finance Manual.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The content of this report is noted.

- 2.2. To note that the Finance Manual, attached as Appendix 1, has been reviewed and updated and will be on the Council's intranet shortly.

- 2.3. To note that the Finance Manual is subject to change on an ongoing basis as strategies are updated, regulations and codes of practice change and processes are amended in response to system changes such as the implementation of Agresso.

3. Background

- 3.1. A report was submitted to Audit Committee on 13th January 2010 to inform members of the procedures for setting a budget. In addition to these procedures, there is a Finance Manual that is updated on an ongoing basis as necessary.

- 3.2. This Finance Manual is attached as Appendix 1. It has been reviewed and updated and the latest version will be on the Council's intranet shortly. It contains links to the relevant documents held elsewhere on that site.

- 3.3. The Finance Manual should be read alongside the Authority's Constitution. The manual refers to other published manuals, guidance and strategies but these are not reproduced within the manual itself, to allow updates to be carried out more rapidly.

- 3.4 The Finance Manual has been created to support the Authority's Members and Officers in their respective roles and aims to:
- Provide a clear and concise reference guide to financial operations of the Council;
 - Ensure the Authority complies with current financial legislation and current best practice guidelines;
 - Collate relevant financial information in one document or refer to the relevant document, policy or standard where the information can be obtained.
- 3.5 The Finance Manual is designed for use as a reference source by all staff, but it will clearly be of particular benefit to all officers, financial and non-financial, directly involved in the financial processes in the Authority.
- 3.6 The Finance Manual will need to be updated on a regular basis as circumstances change. The table below sets out some of the sections of the manual and some of the reasons for needing to keep them updated:

Section of Finance Manual	Reasons for updates
Financial regulation	As regulations and codes of practice are issued or revised
Organisational structure of finance/devolved finance sections	As the outcomes of the Delivering Excellence programme are realised
Budget setting/monitoring, year end procedures	As processes and audit requirements change
Financial planning/MTFS	As local and national circumstances change, as local decisions/priorities change
Capital, Asset Management and Treasury Management strategies	As local decisions/priorities change, as relevant guidance/codes of practice are revised
VAT	As VAT regulations change and HMRC rulings are issued
Financial systems	As these are implemented/upgraded

4 Corporate Implications

4.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The Finance Manual has been created to support the authority's members and officers in their respective roles, one of which is the contribution to the Council's vision and corporate priorities.

4.2 Financial Implications

The Finance Manual aims to provide a clear and concise reference guide to financial operations of the Council.

4.3 Legal Implications

The finance manual aims to support the authority's members and officers in ensuring the authority complies with current financial legislation and current best practice guidelines.

4.4 People Implications

None

4.5 Property Implications

None

4.6 Consultation

None

4.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

None

4.8 Risk Assessment

Various financial risks and their management are the set out in the relevant strategies referred to in the Finance Manual.

4.9 Value for Money

The Finance Manual has been created to support the authority's members and officers in their respective roles, one of which is the achievement of value for money.

4.10 Community Safety Implications

None

4.11 Environmental Impact

None

4 Background Papers

None

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Updated Finance Manual