**COVID19 Update - 7th April 2020**

Due to the impact of COVID-19 it is essential that the council work closely with its current suppliers to ensure smooth processing of payments. This is to mitigate any cashflow issues that may be faced during this difficult time. As such changes have been made to Accounts Payable processes to ensure the service remains efficient. Please note that these changes are an **interim** arrangement and controls will revert once BAU returns.

**Changes which have been implemented:**

**Payment Terms**

* The council has reviewed its standard 10-day term and has decided from the 24th March 2020 to operate an “immediate” payment term until further notice. This is to ensure quick and smooth release of payments and thus reduce the likelihood of any cashflow problems in this period for current suppliers. Therefore, once a Purchase Order / API has been processed correctly in the system, the payment will be released immediately.

**Tolerance Levels**

* The current Integra tolerance levels have been reviewed and will be increased to £100. This will reduce the number of invoices requiring certification and lighten workload on senior members of staff who can then focus on more business-critical services.  This will remain under constant review and updated accordingly based on regular data provided by Accounts Payable.

# Covid-19 Cost Centres & use of API E-Form

* In light of the new requirements to capture the cost of COVID-19 for each delivery unit, specific cost centres have been created as per below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Cost Centre** | **Cost Centre Description** |
| 11720 | Covid-19 Costs – Adults & Safety |
| 11721 | Covid-19 Costs – Children & Family Services |
| 11722 | Covid-19 Costs – Environment |
| 11723 | Covid-19 Costs – Growth and Corporate Services |
| 11724 | Covid-19 Costs – Chief Executive |
| 11725 | Covid-19 Costs – Public Health |
| 11726 | Covid-19 Costs – Assurance |
| 11727 | Covid-19 Costs – Finance |

* Purchase Order, P Card and API transactions can all be raised against these cost centres.  For API transactions related to COVID-19, under E-Form, a new coding structure has been created labelled “COVID / COVID”.  This API code has been added to the API master listing. The requirements to allow these payments to be processed are as followed:
* OTV / Supplier availability
* Email attachment from Budget Holder as audit evidence and clear approval
* Where OTV, evidence of the bank account details in PDF

**API E-Form**

* Where physical signatures were required on an API item as evidence, due to current circumstances, an email of confirmation or telephone authorisation along with Budget Holder Integra approval will suffice. This is to ensure smooth running of payments and limit difficulties in obtaining physical evidence. For example, if an API item requires a resident to sign a document, due to the inability of residents to print and scan, an email confirmation or telephone authorisation along with Budget Holder Approval on Integra will suffice. Please note that telephone authorisation will need to be documented i.e. who made the call, time and date, and a note of the authorisation.

# Dual Authorisation Forms

* Dual Authorisation Forms are required documentation on all Purchase Orders above £1m. It may be difficult to obtain physical signatures of the approver so under these circumstances digital signatures of the approvers will suffice. If this remains arduous, an email approval from the signatory can act as evidence. Note the Dual Authorisation Form will still need to be completed and the email confirmation would need to be attached separately onto the PO.

## Manual Payments Upload Process

* Due to the coronavirus outbreak, council staff are working away from the main office buildings so have restricted access to gain the required wet signatures for the control sheets relating to spreadsheet uploads. In response to this we have agreed a temporary adjusted policy:

Users will provide the following:

An email submitting the request will include:

* The usual upload template spreadsheet
* The usual control sheet detailing the values and number of lines count. This should detail the names of the users as normal but wet signatures will not be required.
* An additional email from the authorised signatures own email account (@barnet.gov.uk address) titled: “Payment Upload Approved”. This email should state the name of the upload, the value and the total lines count.

The 3 documents should be reconciled back to match. In the case that a submission does not meet these criteria, it will be rejected back to the initial user for compliance to this policy.

**Supplier E-Form**

* Where a physical signature was required on a PDF document outlining the suppliers bank details, due to current circumstances, there is no longer a requirement for this document to be signed. As long as the document is on headed paper, this evidence will suffice.

**As and when changes are made, this section will be updated.**