

JOB PROFILE

Post No.

Post Title: Lead Accountant

Division/Team: Financial Services

Grade: H

Service: Finance and Performance

Reports to: Technical and Finance Manager

Issue Date: September 2021

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Reporting directly to the Technical and Finance Manager/Deputy Chief Financial Officer, this is a key post in the delivery of the Council's Financial Services function.

The post holder will champion excellent management of financial resources, promoting efficiency, high performance, probity and excellent value for money services. The post holder will play a crucial in the delivery of service transformation, driving efficiency and productivity improvements and also the optimisation of income opportunities, to contribute towards the achievement of financial self-sufficiency.

The post holder will ensure that Elected Members and officers are provided with high quality advice and direction on financial strategies, policies, standards and practices, enabling timely and well-informed decisions to be made in the knowledge of the impact of those decisions will have financially on the Council.

There are two generic lead accountants within the team who will share the responsibility for:

- The annual budget setting process for the General Fund, Collection Fund and Housing Revenue Account ensuring that the Council's strategic objectives for financial matters are also met in the medium term through effective planning in conjunction with the Technical and Finance Manager.
- The production of financial strategies including the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Medium Term Financial Plan, Housing Business Plan, Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy.
- Role dependant, to act as the Council's expert on all financial matters relating to:
 - Housing Services, including the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund Housing Services
 - General Fund
 - Treasury Management
 - Collection Fund

- Manage and co-ordinate the Council's revenue and capital budget monitoring, including preparation of reports for Leadership Team and Council meetings.
- Provide a proactive internal financial advisory service to the Council across a range of major corporate initiatives, projects and schemes.
- The Council's Treasury Management activities and Council Strategy.
- All VAT implications in respect of payments made and income received.
- The development of financial reporting and monitoring tools for Budget Managers to support the Council's objective to provide a more self-service approach to forecasting and budget planning.
- Co-ordinate the Council's capital budgets and programme, including financing and all associated balance sheet and asset management transactions.
- To play a significant and leading role in the closure of the Council's annual accounts and production of the Statement of Accounts, for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and collection fund, plus the Whole of Government Accounts.

The duties of the post will be allocated to play to strengths and capacity, and responsible areas may change. Each post holder will ensure that Elected Members and officers are provided with high quality strategic advice and direction on financial strategies, policies, standards and practices, enabling timely and well-informed decisions to be made in the knowledge of the impact of those decisions will have financially on the Council.

1. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 Assist the Technical and Finance Manager in managing the Financial Services' contribution to the Council's annual budgetary and financial cycles by collating information and reporting to Council meetings. Role depending, this will include Capital and Revenue for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2 Support the implementation of a Finance Business Partnering approach within the organisation.
- 1.3 Contribute to the delivery of service transformation, driving efficiency and productivity improvements and the optimisation of income opportunities to contribute towards the achievement of financial self-sufficiency.
- 1.4 To take a lead in ensuring the proper administration of financial affairs and monitor compliance with relevant financial standards and legislation, whilst supporting the delivery of a programme of continuous improvement.
- 1.5 Ensure that Elected Members and officers are provided with high quality strategic advice and direction on financial strategies, policies, standards and practices, enabling timely and well-informed decisions to be made in the knowledge of the impact of those decisions will have financially on the Council.
- 1.6 Co-ordinating the annual budget setting/rent setting process and ensuring that the council's strategic objectives for financial matters are met in the medium term, through effective planning in conjunction with the Technical and Finance Manager.
- 1.7 Analysis and interpretation of changes in government policy as it affects Council's finances.

- 1.8 To undertake financial analysis and options appraisals of investment decisions, transformation programmes and other corporate initiatives and make recommendations to Elected Members and Leadership Team.
- 1.9 Contribute towards the development of a commercial approach across the Council, recommending and supporting moves into new income generating areas and advising on the most efficient company structures and other related financial matters.
- 1.10 Champion excellent management of financial resources, promoting efficiency, high performance, probity and excellent value for money services.
- 1.11 To take a lead in ensuring the proper administration of financial affairs and monitor compliance with relevant financial standards and legislation, whilst supporting the delivery of a programme of continuous improvement.
- 1.12 Lead in specialised areas ensuring thorough financial evaluation/analysis and risk identification, resulting in robust financial data that can be relied upon.
- 1.13 Challenge services where appropriate on proposals which affect the Council's financial resources.
- 1.14 Provide financial expertise for and attend various officer working parties and Council meetings.
- 1.15 Supervise various other activities within Financial Services, which may include financial system administration and reporting, system reconciliations and grant claims and returns.
- 1.16 Co-ordination, completion and certification of statutory and non-statutory returns.
- 1.17 Have in-depth knowledge of all relevant current legislation and interpret new legislation and advise other officers on the financial and operational implications.
- 1.18 Undertake financial appraisals to advise on strategic investment options, in accordance with the Council's relevant strategies.
- 1.19 Manage the maintenance of the Council's asset register in accordance with CIPFA guidelines.
- 1.20 To act as the Council's expert on Treasury Management function including monitoring investments to ensure compliance and adequate rate of return and daily cash management including the bank account.
- 1.21 Ensuring VAT treatment is correct and providing guidance to others.
- 1.22 Any other appropriate duties as requested.

2. OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 To provide training and development of staff carrying out financial activities across the Council and financial training for Elected Members as requested or required.
- 2.2 To represent Financial Services at presentations, induction seminars and any other meetings where financial advice, assistance or guidance is required.
- 2.3 Finance representative at Council meetings when required.

3. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Direct -**
- Role 1 Finance Business Partners (2)
Funding and Treasury officer
 - Role 2 Finance Business Partners (3)

4. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility to authorise grant claims and other government returns on behalf of the Council.

Financial Rules and Procedures

The Council's rules and procedures for all financial activities are set out in the Council's Constitution within Contract Standing Orders (part 3f) and Financial Standing Orders (part 3g). More detailed guidance on specific financial activities is provided in a series of Financial Instructions.

All employees who carry out any financial activities must ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with at all times, the Council's financial rules and procedures.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSETS AND DATA

Responsible for all assets and data used to carry out the duties of the role.

6. EXTENT OF PUBLIC CONTACT

- Works with Elected Members, Leadership Team and senior officers within the Council.
- Liaises with professional members of other local authorities, Government departments, the external Auditor and members of other professional bodies on professional accountancy and financial issues.
- Maintains contacts with consultants and suppliers of IT and with representatives of other services.
- Responds to enquiries from members of the public and gives financial advice to Elected Members when requested.

7. WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

Office based or agile working. Occasionally required to attend and represent Financial Services at evening Council meetings outside normal working hours or at external meetings usually within normal working hours.

8. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have to act within the Council's rules and follow all reasonable management requirements. These are contained within: the Council's Standing Orders, Employment Policies, Constitution and Code of Conduct for Employees. Other documents may be introduced at times setting out rules of the Council. These will cover responsibilities and requirements for the following:

Financial Accounting
Equality and Diversity
Health and Safety
Risk Management
Anti-Fraud
Data Quality and Data Protection
Business Continuity
Major Emergency Plan
Procurement and Contract Management
Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Copies of the relevant rules and policy are available on the staff intranet or from your manager.

In addition, all employees are expected to behave in line with our Values and Behaviours and challenge other employees whose behaviour is against our values.

9. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Refer to Person Specification attached.

Signed as agreed:

Post-holder

Date

PERSON SPECIFICATION



Post: Lead Accountant

For effective performance of the duties of the post the post-holder will be able to demonstrate that they have the skills and/or knowledge detailed in 'Essential Criteria'.

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable	Method of Assessment
Experience		
At least three years post qualification experience in a professional finance environment preferably within the public sector.	E	A, I
A full understanding of up to date Local Government finance policies and legislation.	E	A, I, T
Experience of developing and maintaining good working relationships with colleagues and external contacts to achieve service outcomes.	E	A, I
Experience in developing financial systems and processes.	D	A, I
Experience of producing high quality and accurate financial reports for management information.	E	A, I
Qualifications		
Must be a fully qualified member of one the accountancy institutes in CCAB, preferably CIPFA.	E	A, D
Knowledge, Skills and Abilities		
Effectively communicate to deliver a positive reputation through relationships with colleagues and customers.	E	A, I, T
Establish and promote a customer-focused culture across the service and council.	E	I
Ability to advise managers and other staff on complex finance related issues.	E	I
Drive service improvement through challenging processes and ways of working and undertaking complex option appraisal and sensitivity work.	E	I
Ability to effectively manage a small productive team.	E	A, I
Preparing complex and detailed written and verbal reports for Leadership Team and Council meetings as required.	E	T, I
Excellent working knowledge of Excel, Word and other financial systems.	E	T, I
Able to deliver finance training programmes to finance and non-finance staff.		
Ability to produce and understand detailed/complex financial reports (utilising IT systems) to aid decision-making, to be used by a variety of users.	E	T, I
Ability to demonstrate a continuous approach to learning and development, keeping abreast of changes affecting Local Government finance, by attending relevant seminars, training and undertaking self-learning.	E	I

Personal Qualities		
High degree of motivation and personal enthusiasm, and able to use own initiative.	E	I
Ability to work to tight deadlines and work under pressure to achieve positive outcomes.	E	I
Ability to work with confidential and sensitive information.	E	I
Other Factors		
To understand and be committed to the Council's Core Values and Vision.	E	I
A commitment to work within our CAN DO values.	E	A, I
Experience in developing financial systems and processes.	D	A, I
Able to deliver finance training programmes to finance and non-finance staff.	D	A, I

Application	A
Interview	I
Test (written, presentation, practical – e.g. word processing)	T
References	R
Documentary – e.g. certificates	D