**JOB SPECIFICATION**

**JOB TITLE:** Senior Financial Accountant

**DIRECTORATE:** Resources

**SECTION:** Finance & Business Services

**GRADE:** 5

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Chief Accountant

**RESPONSIBLE FOR:** Accountancy Assistant (Bank Reconciliation)

Accountancy Assistant (Capital and Systems)

**MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JOB:**

To support the Chief Accountant on technical financial matters including financial accounting, financial controls, financial appraisals and financial implications, and specifically:

* in the delivery of the Statement of Accounts by leading on the day to day preparation of the annual statement of accounts ensuring that all technical and statutory requirements are met.
* by managing operational delivery of the Treasury management function including direct supervision of the daily treasury activity and the day to day management of cashflows in line with the Treasury Management Strategy.
* for the submission of key returns.
* responsible for the asset register and all aspects of the Council’s Capital Programme including budget setting, monthly monitoring (including capital financing) and year-end accounting in accordance with relevant accounting standards and accounting codes of practice.
* responsible for the Bank Reconciliation process and corrective action required to address emerging issues and avoid future risk.
* maintaining up to date procedure notes to ensure adherence to regulations and statutory guidance.
* responsible for the day to day management of two direct reports.

**MAIN DUTIES:**

**Financial Accounting**

1. Leading on the production of the year-end financial statements in accordance with applicable accounting standards and within the statutory deadlines. Including the preparation of the timetable and the management of key milestones to deliver the accounts on time.
2. Assisting the Chief Accountant with the on-going monitoring and management of internal and external audit recommendations, ensuring timely completion and management reporting.
3. Researching and maintaining up to date technical accounting knowledge (i.e. IFRS, Audit & Accounting regs), and to provide relevant guidance / updates to management and members as required.

**Capital Accounting**

Managing the Council’s capital programme, including:

* + maintenance of the fixed asset register
  + capital budgeting, including managing the capital budget timetable and preparing relevant Committee reports
  + prepare capital monitoring on a quarterly basis for inclusion in monitoring reports to the Financial Monitoring Panel and to the Scrutiny Committee
  + year-end capital accounting, including all capital accounting transactions and capital financing.

**Financial Advice and Support**

Supporting the Chief Accountant to deliver other aspects of the Council’s financial accounting function including:

* Preparation of key reporting returns (COR/RO/RA/WGA)
  + preparation of the council tax levy, including liaison with parishes to ensure they meet the Council’s timetable
  + participating in the preparation of the NNDR returns of income
  + monitoring the collection fund throughout the year in conjunction with the Revenues Manager
  + Provide financial advice, statistics and information to Officers and Members for inclusion in various reports.
  + financial support and advice on major projects and procurements including financial appraisals and support in the preparation of sound business cases as required that supports decision making
  + Oversee the day to day financial control function within the council, including reviewing and approving all control account and bank reconciliations on a timely basis

**Financial Systems**

1. Maintenance of the financial systems including the financial ledgers, asset management system and financial reporting system, ensuring that these systems are kept up to date with the latest releases, hierarchies are up to date and financial reports are accurate and timely and provide suitable management information.
2. Supporting the Chief Accountant with any major system upgrades.
3. Monitoring systems contracts in liaison with the Procurement Manager and Information Digital Services (IDS) and keep the Chief Accountant abreast of any contractual changes and potential impact on costs.

**Management**

Day to day management of the two direct reports.

**Other Duties**

1. Preparing Full Council and Executive Committee, management team and other reports as required.
2. Attending Committees, Working Groups, Panel Meetings, Inter-Authority Meetings as directed by, and on behalf of, the Head of Finance & Business Services.
3. Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and make referrals to the appropriate agency. Training and supervising staff to enable them to respond to the safeguarding needs of service users.

**NOTES**

This list of duties is not exclusive or exhaustive and the post holder may be requested to perform other duties commensurate with their grade and capabilities.

This list of duties will be reviewed with the post holder on a regular basis. The post holder will be kept fully aware of emerging changes in requirements and will be expected to be flexible in their approach to work reflecting the Council’s requirement to work in partnership across the organisation.

**PERSONAL SPECIFICATION**

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| **Criteria** | | **Essential / Desirable** | **Assessment**  **A – Application**  **I – Interview**  **T – Test**  **D – Document** |
| Qualifications & Training | 1. Qualified Accountant (CCAB Qualified) | E |  |
| Experience | 1. Minimum of 5 years’ experience within financial accounting 2. In depth experience of all aspects of Local Authority Finance. | E  E |  |
| Knowledge | 1. Working knowledge of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK (The Code). 2. Sound knowledge of financial systems, legislation, strategy and management within an organisation. 3. Understanding of the financial resources and information requirements of Senior Management and Members. | E  E  E |  |
| Competences | **Customer Focus**   1. Liaises effectively with customers, colleagues, outside bodies and Councillors, in writing, by telephone and face to face. 2. Deals tactfully with customers and deal with complex issues in a sensitive manner 3. Tact, diplomacy and awareness of the importance of and ability to maintain confidentiality.   **Outcome Driven**   1. Assesses and handles risk effectively. 2. Prioritises effectively and meets statutory, organisational and customer driven deadlines.   **Organisational Focus**   1. Works collegiately and corporately with colleagues, is outward looking and willing to work across organisational boundaries to get the right results for customers. 2. Uses evidence and best practice to achieve results.   **Problem Solving & Decision Making**   1. Demonstrates initiative and uses good judgment 2. Identifies potential problems, find solutions and implement change appropriately 3. Proactively identifies system / system weaknesses and opportunities for improvements.   **Change & Adaptability**   1. Takes a positive attitude towards and promotes change within the organisation 2. Manages change with minimal impact on service delivery | E  E  E  E  E |  |
| Skills & Abilities | **Communication**   1. Excellent interpersonal skills and communicator with the ability to maintain effective relationships with colleagues and external stakeholders at all levels. 2. Excellent written communicator with proven experience in report writing 3. Able to effectively liaise with customers, colleagues, outside bodies and Councillors, in writing, by telephone and face to face 4. Comfortable and able to present information to members and officers at all levels, including those without an accountancy background   **Team Working**   1. Builds effective, supportive working relationships 2. Demonstrates a flexible approach to work 3. Contributes positively within a team environment 4. Learns and assists other team members.   **Quality of Work**   1. Produces high quality work with good attention to detail 2. Demonstrates accuracy, and a systematic and thorough approach to work.   **IT/Technical Skills**   1. High degree of computer knowledge and experience. 2. Quickly learns new technologies and techniques. 3. High degree of Financial Systems knowledge   **Research & Analytical Skills**   1. Investigates and researches accounting and other legislation required for the role in order to maintain own knowledge and that of others. 2. Promotes knowledge sharing within the organisation. 3. Analyses and researches information on topics outside previous experience and applies within the organisation 4. Analyses and presents complex information to others in an easy to understand manner. | E  E  E  E  E |  |
| Other Requirements | 1. Willingness to work outside normal office hours when required to ensure deadlines are met and a high quality service delivered 2. Represent Finance at committee, senior management and other internal meetings 3. Willing to attend external user group and other off site meetings relating to the role. | E  D  D |  |

**COMPLEXITY AND CREATIVITY**

The role involves technically complex financial accounting responsibilities requiring the post holder to maintain appropriate working knowledge and understanding including full knowledge of the financial regulations including International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK (The Code), the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011, and must keep up-to-date with changes in all of these areas. The post holder will use this information to ensure management and colleagues are kept abreast of current relevant legislation affecting their respective service areas.

The post holder must have a high attention to detail and the ability to investigate errors and discrepancies, often complex in nature, and without any assistance. This will prove essential in overseeing and managing the financial control for the council, and in particular in reconciliation of control accounts to feeder systems, etc.

The postholder must have an understanding of the wide range of accounting requirements of all the Council’s units in line with legislation and local regulations in order to work in any area either on projects or deputising for the Financial Services Manager or the Head of Finance & Business Services. They will be responsible for advising senior management and members on most aspects of new legislation affecting Local Government Finance.

The post holder must understand clients’ needs in order to provide solutions, using innovation as necessary to satisfy requirements. The post holder must form close working relationships with other council officers and their work with other services and advice given will impact services across the council as well as a strategic level.

**JUDGEMENT AND DECISIONS**

The post holder will assist the Chief Accountant in maintaining the Council's financial control procedures. They will advise, when required, senior staff in other units on Local Government Finance, Best Value Accounting Code of Practice and all other matters relating to finance. Errors in decision making could have a significantly detrimental impact on the Council and services to the public and possibly affect all Units or the Council's long term future.

The postholder will be provide specialist technical accounting advice to Members, Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service. The quality of the advice has a significant impact on the results of the organisation, and is crucial to the financial stability of the Council and may impact on the publicity of the Council.

In all areas of the role the post holder will have access to sensitive and confidential information and they will therefore need to act in a diligent and professional manner at all times to ensure the Council’s interests are not compromised.

The post holder is responsible for the timely and accurate submission of data / returns to government and other legislative bodies and as such they will require excellent time management skills and maintain appropriate knowledge, as failure to do either may lead to financial penalties and/or reputational damage.

The post holder is responsible for undertaking complex financial appraisals and supporting the preparation of sound business cases. The quality of this information and advice is crucial to inform key decision making and to ensure that any such decisions cannot be challenged.

#### CONTACTS (INTERNAL 70% EXTERNAL 30%)

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**Internal:** Chief Officers, Service Heads and Officers at all levels, Members, Internal Audit

**External:** External Auditor, Other Local Authorities, including Hertfordshire County Council, CIPFA, Communities and Local Government, General Public.