

Job Description

Principal Financial Accountant and Deputy S151 Officer

Grade: Level 17 – SCP 44 – 46 (plus Deputy s151 Officer Allowance)

Full time 36.25 hours

Responsible To:

Director of Finance (S151 Officer)

Responsible For:

Senior Financial Accountants
Financial Accountants

About the job:

To provide high quality treasury management, financial and corporate accounting services to South Ribble Council, Chorley Council and their subsidiary companies, ensuring efficient and effective financial management, to meet the objectives of both councils and the responsibilities to the Shared Services Joint Committee (SSJC);

In conjunction with the Principal Management Accountant, to act as the Councils' Deputy s151 Officer, with statutory responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1972 and s114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to maintain the financial administration of the Councils, balancing local service needs with corporate interests whilst also ensuring compliance with all financial, statutory and constitutional requirements.

Role:

Deputy s151 Officer Responsibilities

To deputise for the Director of Finance when required, including attendance at Council Committee meetings, Joint Committee meetings, Member meetings, Officer meetings and meetings with outside bodies as required;

To work with the administrations of both Councils, to develop and deliver their respective Medium Term Financial Strategies and balanced budgets;

To play a key role in developing and delivering the Councils' transformation programmes, particularly in relation to delivering efficiency savings, the development of shared services and a single operating model, including services within the Finance Team;

To be responsible for the delivery of relevant and timely advice and guidance to Members, the Senior Management Team, Directors, Heads of Service and Budget Holders at both councils;

To support the Finance Team to ensure accountancy, financial systems and exchequer services are creative and innovative in supporting both councils to achieve their organisational objectives

Managing and Supporting the Financial and Corporate Accounting Service

To be responsible for the management and delivery of a comprehensive treasury management, financial and corporate accounting service across both councils and their subsidiaries, including;

- preparation and publication of the Statutory Finance Statements;
- all technical matters in relation to financial planning, tax and treasury management;
- providing clear financial reports in accordance with corporate and statutory requirements;
- financial appraisal of capital and revenue projects/bids;

To be responsible for all aspects of day to day staff management in relation to the team, including recruitment, absence management, appraisal, motivation, development, performance, capability and discipline;

To complete relevant statistical, financial and grant returns to central government and other external bodies as applicable;

To work with the Director of Finance and the Finance Department Management Team to develop and deliver the actions assigned to the team within the annual Shared Financial Services Plan for both councils;

To ensure the achievement of professional standards in the provision of treasury management, financial and corporate accounting services, including adherence to the Constitution, Standing Orders, Financial Procedure rules, other financial policies and procedures and relevant accounting codes of practice;

Statutory Accounts

To manage and coordinate the Financial and Corporate Accounting Team, working closely with colleagues across the wider Finance Team and service directorates, to ensure the timely and accurate year end close-down of the revenue and capital accounts for both councils and their subsidiaries, in accordance with statutory requirements and government deadlines;

To be responsible for the production and timely submission of the statutory accounts for both councils and their subsidiary companies, including production of group accounts;

To be responsible for the training of the Financial and Corporate Accounting Team, to ensure they are sufficiently skilled to deliver their responsibilities in the closure of the accounts;

To work with the external auditors to ensure the smooth and timely completion of the statutory audits, ensuring that their queries are dealt with accurately and promptly across the wider Finance Team;

To liaise and maintain effective working relationships with the internal and external auditors, ensuring work is planned, supported, and completed on time and recommendations are swiftly implemented or responded to;

Treasury Management

To develop, implement and monitor the Council's Capital Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy and Practices;

To provide a robust and effective Treasury Management function, ensuring that the controls and appraisal processes employed are sufficient to manage risk in respect of investments, borrowing and day to day banking and cash management;

Technical Accounting

To provide technical accounting advice to members of the wider Finance Team and to Officers and Members across the councils, as required;

To be responsible for Collection Fund accounting across both councils;

To be responsible for the administration and accounting of taxation across both councils, including their subsidiaries, (i.e. VAT, Corporation Tax and CIS) and liaison with HM Revenues and Customs and the councils' tax advisors, as necessary;

Supporting Organisational Strategy

To support the Director of Finance in providing timely and accurate financial advice and Statutory Finance Officer comments to Service Directorate, Senior Management Team, Executive Member, Cabinet and Council reports, and for any other Committee reports as required;

To maintain an up-to-date knowledge of issues that affect both councils and their subsidiaries, in order to support the production of the Statutory Accounts, the Treasury Management Strategy and the Capital Strategy, and the development of their Transformation Programmes;

To contribute to the development of corporate and service strategies, including investment/option appraisals and benchmarking;

Other

To act as signatory for the timely processing of CHAPS, BACS, cheque and other payments;

To ensure that the Financial and Corporate Accounting Team provides timely and accurate responses to Freedom of Information queries;

To support the Financial Systems Team to maintain and develop the financial management systems;

To continuously improve processes, procedures and systems in operation across the Finance Team to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of services;

Any other such duties, functions and responsibilities that may be necessary or appropriate, commensurate with the role and grade of the post.

Responsibilities:

Team:

- You will work with your colleagues to prioritise team objectives over individual objectives.
- You will support and respect your colleagues at all times.
- You will work together to share knowledge and experiences to improve your service.
- You will participate in development activities as required.

Corporate:

- You will carry out your duties and responsibilities in line with the Health & Safety Policy and associated legislation.
- You will actively engage with customer care, value for money and performance management.
- Your duties will be carried out in line with our equality scheme.
- You will be compliant at all times with GDPR and data protection legislation.
- You will constructively participate in communication and promotional activities

Organisational:

- You will be committed to ensuring that shared services works for each organisation and act as an advocate for its development over time
- You will be prepared to take on responsibilities and projects that may be outside of your normal work area but are relevant to your role.
- You will support an inclusive culture which provides opportunities for everyone to participate and progress.
- You will support effective relationships across all Directorates, with stakeholders and external partners to ensure the Council's priorities and objectives are met.
- You will positively promote and represent the Council at all times.

What the successful candidate will have:

Qualifications

- Qualified CCAB/CIMA accountant with significant post qualification experience;
- Evidence of continuing professional development;

Knowledge & Experience

- Significant experience of managing relevant teams/areas with demonstrable success;
- Significant experience of delivering the closure of accounts and the production of statutory accounts;
- Advanced understanding of financial management and financial principals;
- Significant experience and knowledge of the application and development of financial accounting procedures and transactional accounting processes;
- Strong technical and financial accounting skills, including detailed knowledge of both IFRS and UK GAAP requirements;
- Extensive knowledge and experience in the application of statutory and non-statutory requirements and legislation in relation to finance and VAT;
- Experience of writing reports, and delivering briefings and presentations to Senior Officers and/or Members, presenting complex financial information in a clear and understandable way;

Skills & Abilities

- Ability to manage staff to achieve organisational priorities;
- Ability to plan, prioritise and manage workloads effectively, coordinating work within the Financial and Corporate Accounting Team, across the wider Finance Team, and with teams in other disciplines;
- Ability and skill to understand and interpret financial standards, regulations and legislation, and to translate them into practical application;
- Strong skills and ability to respond to a range of complex financial queries and issues;
- Ability to collate, interpret and present financial data and information to a range of audiences with varying levels of financial knowledge and understanding;
- Ability to communicate effectively at all levels across the councils, and with outside organisations;
- Ability to be a key advocate for change, and to work with ambiguity, uncertainty and under pressure;
- Excellent IT skills.

You will play a key part in our organisational culture:

A LEARNING FORWARD THINKING ORGANISATION – Plans and prioritises effectively deciding what to do and what not to do, if unsure ask

RESPECT AND INTEGRITY – Is visible, approachable, open and honest with colleagues.

PRIDE – Creates an upbeat, positive culture among colleagues.

TWO COUNCILS, ONE SHARED SERVICE – Builds effective relationships outside their immediate team, with win-win relationships for all

