

Job Description

Job Title:	Financial Accountant
Directorate:	Resources
Section:	Finance
Responsible to:	Principal Financial Accountant
Responsible for:	<i>Assistant Accountant / Assistant Finance Business Partner</i>

Job Purpose

To work as part of a developing commercially focused team to provide financial and commercial advice to a range of services and transformational projects across the Council.

Key Duties / Responsibilities

- To provide financial and commercial advice in relation to the procurement, negotiation, implementation and contract management of major Council projects and national finance initiatives...
- To support the delivery of an integrated, robust financial planning process by the provision of high quality, accurate, timely and relevant information.
- To ensure that all strategic and operational plans are supported by the provision of high quality, accurate, timely and relevant information and robust investment appraisals.
- To provide high quality, accurate, relevant and timely monitoring and forecasting information.
- To provide high quality, accurate, relevant and timely financial reporting information to meet statutory and stakeholder needs including service managers, Elected Members, partners, auditors and the public.
- To provide direction, financial advice and guidance to stakeholders/service managers and working groups as required.
- To assist the Principal Financial Accountant providing strategic financial direction for the City Council ensuring that all statutory requirements are adhered to and policy and performance standards are met.
- To assist the Principal Financial Accountant in dealing with financial management accounting, budgeting and reporting matters and to deputise as required.
- To provide specialist financial services on behalf of the City Council.
- To provide financial and commercial advice, support and information in respect of the strategic management, transformation and operational delivery of a range of council services. This will include development of financial and commercial aspects of business cases, securing approval of business cases from chief officers, elected members and external organisations.
- To provide financial and commercial advice in relation to the procurement of major projects from specification, through bid evaluation and, negotiation including complex procurement requiring competitive dialogue.

- Assisting in the establishment of operational contract management arrangements including financial management and accounting processes, procedures and reporting mechanisms.
- To work closely with relevant project directors, project managers and multi-disciplinary project teams including internal and external advisers to successfully deliver projects in accordance with the Council's corporate objectives and financial governance standards and within approved timescales.
- To deliver high quality, efficient financial, accounting and budgeting services to support the City Council in delivering its corporate aims and objectives.
- To contribute towards the compilation, monitoring and reporting of the Council's integrated Medium Term Financial Strategy and other related plans.
- To provide effective financial and accounting analysis in support of City Council projects and desired outcomes.
- To provide strategic analysis and financial advice to stakeholders to support the Council in its delivery of corporate aims and objectives.
- To contribute towards the delivery of the Council's statutory Statement of Accounts in line with professional and statutory requirements.
- To contribute towards the formulation, implementation and review of all appropriate service plans.
- To assist in the provision of appropriate financial and commercial advice to enable the development of business cases for major projects and service redesign. This includes drawing upon internal and external specialist financial expertise as required, for example VAT and tax advice, capital accounting and pensions advice as applicable.
- To develop appropriate financial models to support the development of whole life costing of projects including, the integration of service or output specifications and payment mechanisms, and operation of key commercial contractual terms within relevant contracts.
- To produce financial documentation for all stages of business case development, procurement, negotiation and implementation to secure commercially sustainable solutions and to agreed professional standards.
- To provide scrutiny and audit of financial models and associated affordability models relevant to individual projects.
- To consult effectively with the other Directorates / Partnerships of the City Council to ensure effective delivery of the value for money agenda and equating essential requirements with resources available.
- To provide support and advice on financial management, policy development and corporate financial matters.
- To ensure the effective financial management and regular monitoring of performance indicators and quality standards insofar as they affect the value for money agenda.
- To contribute to the achievement of any relevant statutory inspections.
- To contribute towards the formulation, implementation and review of all Service Plans in line with recognised best practice, regulatory and statutory requirements.
- To directly line manage the Assistant Accountants / Assistant Finance Business Partners within a high functioning and robust finance team, including the completion of PLANs.

- To ensure that Assistant Accountant / Assistant Finance Business Partners within the team are organised, receive appropriate training, are informed, managed and motivated to deliver a high quality, cost effective service.
- To assist the Principal Financial Accountant in demonstrating proactive and innovative financial developments to ensure that all functions within the section are maintained and enhanced.
- To maintain effective communications to ensure that key interests both inside and outside the Directorate are appropriately informed and involved.
- To ensure that the team fosters positive relationships with its own staff, customers, auditors, members, the rest of the Directorate, other directorates and partners.
- To establish and maintain effective working relationships with key partners and stakeholders.
- To develop and maintain the highest standards in the reporting of financial information including the City Council's statutory accounts.
- To represent the Director of Finance, Financial Services at internal and external working groups, Council Committees and other meetings.
- To work closely with the Principal Financial Accountant and other sections to maintain an integrated, professional finance service.
- To act as a point of contact with the City Council's appointed external auditors regarding financial reporting and governance matters.
- To report to the Principal Financial Accountant in respect of management issues and the Council's financial affairs.
- To embrace the City Council's vision and values through effective leadership and the promotion of sound financial management.
- To promote a culture of high quality risk management, financial governance and accountability to ensure that best value for money is sought.
- To operate in an open manner and ensure that the Principal Financial Accountant is kept informed on key issues.
- To promote a culture of opportunity, achievement, responsibility and personal development within the section.
- To promote the modernisation agenda particularly insofar as to achieve Value for Money across the Council.
- To actively promote diversity in the provision of services in accordance with the City Council's policies and procedures.
- The role requires an understanding of risk transfer and contract interpretation and financial management, beyond those of a traditional accountancy function.
- To assist in securing commercially robust and financially sustainable project solutions in relation to the delivery of service redesign, transition to alternative service delivery models and the major and complex capital projects across the organisation.
- To help make a tangible difference to the efficiency and quality of Financial Services to support the strategic priorities of the City Council.
- To support the efficient accurate closure of the Council's accounts, including compliance with year-end requirements for external bodies/sponsors, to ensure that all statutory deadlines are met.

- To ensure that sound systems of control are in place to protect the Council and to minimise the possibility of misappropriation of assets.
- To help develop, maintain and implement appropriate accounting policies and standards and to consider and manage the implications of new accounting developments as they impact upon the City Council and companies controlled or influenced by the authority.
- To respond positively to the external audit and other inspection scrutiny reviews of the City Council to achieve improved assessment.
- To support the compilation and delivery of balanced integrated budgets.
- To co-ordinate and manage the completion of any grant claims to ensure that the authority meets all imposed deadlines and reporting standards.
- To provide specialist financial advice, options appraisals and innovative solutions to inform and formulate the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- To take responsibility for any other duties as designated from time to time as falling within the remit of a local authority accountancy arrangement.
- To contribute towards the delivery of an effective, high performing, customer focused financial service that is continuously improving.
- To promote corporate working and effective team building in order to provide financial information, analysis, support and advice to officers as appropriate in their operational and strategic roles.
- To maintain the required level of market intelligence and knowledge of key developments in order to assist the Principal Financial Accountant in formulating the most effective, innovative and forward looking financial practices.
- Any other duties appropriate to the post.

Finance and Staffing Dimensions (if applicable)

Indirect

Total Revenue

Expenditure £731,912,686

Income £731,912,686

Housing Revenue Account Budget

Expenditure £98,790,680

Income £98,790,680

Capital Programme £741,264,000

Staff: 2 FTE

Person Specification

Job Title: Financial Accountant
Directorate: Resources
Section: Finance

Minimum essential requirements – evidenced by: **a:** application form **b:** test **c:** interview

Criteria	a	b	c
CCAB Qualified with full current membership and CPD participation	✓		
Sound understanding of public sector finance, local government financial accounting and reporting standards, systems and related matters and business options appraisals			✓
Appreciation of the sensitive nature of a political environment			✓
Record of success in supporting sustainable improvements with the ability to help translate strategic objectives into operational plans	✓		✓
A track record of helping to motivate and inspire staff in order to deliver a change agenda and improve service delivery	✓		✓
Proven success in developing effective working relationships, partnerships with other agencies and communicating and influencing others	✓		✓
Relevant technical experience in the respective role		✓	✓
Demonstrable experience of the utilisation of financial information systems			✓
Good interpersonal skills and the ability to establish positive relationships with stakeholders			✓
Well-developed networking, advocacy, oral, written and presentational skills with the ability to represent the Council's policies and views to stakeholders.			✓
Ability to work effectively within the democratic process, with the political acumen and skills to develop productive working relationships	✓		✓
Ability to maximise resources and manage budgets effectively in a financially disciplined environment.	✓		✓
Ability to make effective decisions in a complex and challenging environment			✓
Ability to implement creative and imaginative approaches and identify new options for service	✓		✓
Well developed analytical skills to enable interpretation and development of contractual documentation and translation into operational practice.	✓	✓	✓
Ability to analyse and assimilate large volumes of complex financial and non-financial information and use it to develop, propose and implement innovative and effective solutions to complex problems	✓	✓	✓

Criteria	a	b	c
Ability to provide clear financial advice and present complex financial information in a format that is relevant and meaningful to a financial and non-financial audience.	✓	✓	✓
An understanding of negotiation and mediation skills to secure robust financial and commercial outcomes for the City Council in contractual negotiations.	✓		
Ability to build and audit complex spreadsheets and financial models.			✓
A good team player with the energy and determination to support the promotion of cultural changes to raise service standards in Stoke-on-Trent. This includes a personal and professional commitment to open communication, open mindedness, equal opportunities and diversity.			✓
Degree of personal and professional probity, integrity and credibility that sustains the confidence and trust of stakeholders			✓