

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Finance Business Partner (Schools)  
**Service:** Resources Directorate  
**Team:** Finance Team  
**Reports to:** Senior Finance Business Partner (Schools)  
**Grade:** P2 (£44,260 to £47,277)

### **Job Purpose**

The post is located in the Finance Team supporting Cambridgeshire County Council. The Finance Team is the business partner to all parts of the Council and is responsible for:

- Accountancy and financial reporting and stewardship of taxpayers funds
- Strategic financial management
- Advice and support to budget holders
- Driving of the efficiency and best value agenda

This role is to support and advise school Governors, Heads, Bursars and finance staff on all aspects of financial management as part of a traded service. This will cover both strategic and operational management and include financial training. The post holder will manage a team of Schools Financial Advisors, each of which have a named patch of schools, which can be drawn from all phases (Nursery, Primary and Special).

In addition, the post holder will support the corporate role of the Local Authority in relation to school finance, ensuring that audit and corporate requirements set by the Local Authority are adhered to.

This is a high-profile role that calls for strong technical accounting and communication skills.

Within the broader Finance Team the post-holder will be expected to be able to operate in any of the Finance Business Partner roles at the same grade.

### **Principal Accountabilities**

1. Strategic Financial Advice & Support (45%)
  - Support schools to plan both short-term and long-term to maximise use of funding available.
  - Support each school to prioritise the allocation of resources as specified within their School Improvement Plan.
  - Support schools to strategically plan the application of any balances within the overall priorities of the School improvement Plan.
  - Work with schools to model the impact of different scenarios on the funding available.
  - Ensure schools are aware of and understand the risks involved with each budget allocation and the cumulative risk for the bottom line budget.
  - Encourage schools to develop contingency plans for different budget scenarios.
  - Challenge schools to forecast finances across several years to ensure future changes are phased in a planned and considered manner.
  - Advise and support schools to meet the School Financial Value Standard in schools (SFVS)
2. Operational Financial Advice and Support (25%)
  - Support and advise schools on monitoring both revenue and capital budgets.

- Support schools to analyse and interpret the financial information produced on FMS or other local systems.
- Support budget holders through the provision of financial advice, information and support.
- Provide school specific operational interpretation and advice on the detail of the County Council's Financial Regulations.
- Provide a point of contact for financial queries and ensure corporate documentation is updated to address the issue if appropriate.
- Support schools to develop day-to-day systems and processes which meet the requirements of County regulations and good practice.
- Advise schools on the operation of the various county insurance and contingency schemes available.
- Advise schools on the correct accountancy treatment and reporting of the separate revenue and capital streams.
- Liaise with the appropriate County Council service on the schools' behalf with specific queries.

### 3. Management (15%)

- Provide leadership and mentoring to team members, including training where appropriate.
- Contribute to the team planning and monitoring process.
- Contribute to the development of finance support services to meet customer needs in a changing business environment.
- Contribute to the overall management and development of the team and deputise for colleagues and the Strategic Finance Manager as necessary.
- Undertake any other duties that may arise, from time to time, to assist the chief finance officer (section 151 officer) in the delivery of financial services across the Council.

### 4. Training (5%)

- Support and train schools in the County Council's Financial Regulations, standing orders and financial procedures.
- Support and train schools in all aspects of the annual financial cycle.

### 5. Development (5%)

- Contribute to the development of corporate financial systems and processes to schools.
- Work closely with the wider finance team to ensure up to date knowledge and understanding of the guidance and regulations produced.
- Contribute to the development of traded services to schools.
- Contribute the on-going professional development of the Schools Traded Team.
- Support service development to meet the changing needs and demands of the customers.
- Contribute to team planning.

### 6. Corporate responsibilities (5%)

- Notify the relevant County Council services where schools are causing concern
- Make the relevant County Council services aware where schools are breaking financial regulations, standing orders or schemes of delegation.
- Provide a risk assessment of the financial standing of individual schools.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Education, Qualifications and Training**

#### Essential

- Qualified Accountant (registered with one of the member bodies of Accountancy Europe), or AAT qualified / CCAB part-qualified plus extensive experience of accounting work including experience of financial reporting and/or audit
- Good 'A' Level qualification or equivalent.
- Evidence of commitment to ongoing personal and professional development

### **Knowledge and Experience**

#### Essential

- Significant experience of working in a multi-disciplinary professional environment.
- Experience of applying finance analysis to improve value for money.
- Experience in managing change
- Knowledge of financial accounting concepts and experience of applying regulations or procedures as part of financial reporting

#### Desirable

- Experience of staff management desirable
- Experience of working with and responding to audit or inspection regimes
- Experience of providing financial advice to non-finance managers.
- Experience of working in the public sector
- Experience of local authority financial practices

### **Financial Skills**

#### Essential

- Sound experience of financial practices and work, including preparation of budgets and/or final accounts
- Ability to analyse complex financial and business issues and offer sound, reliable and professional advice
- Ability to write management reports explaining complex financial issues in a simple and concise manner.

#### Desirable

- Experience in option appraisal / financial selection techniques.

### **IT / Software Skills**

#### Essential

- Fully competent in desktop applications (spreadsheet and word processing)
- Experience of using sophisticated general ledger package
- Innovative approach to exploitation of IT to improve the quality and range of services offered to customers
- Experience of taking available data and presenting it in such a format as to improve decision making.

#### Desirable

- Experience of using and writing macros to automate tasks in Excel

## **Communication**

### Essential

- Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of budget holders and stakeholders with differing levels of understanding of finance.
- Ability to constructively challenge budget holders, Heads of Service and Directors to take a corporate approach to finance issues.
- Experience of balancing support to individual colleagues with the challenge required of working within the over-arching corporate context.
- Experience of explaining complicated and inter-related financial issues in the appropriate level of detail.
- Proactively, you share information and search out expertise from relevant partners and/or the communities we serve.

## **Team Leadership / Team working**

### Essential

- Team working: Ability to lead and constructively contribute to team working at all levels. Demonstrate the ability to work with others to reach a common goal.
- Planning and Organisation: Initiative and ability to plan and organise time and resources to ensure that deadlines and agreed targets are met with the minimum of supervision
- Leadership: Ability to provide professional leadership to colleagues

## **Personal Skills**

### Essential

- Innovation: Ability to innovate and develop good practices on own initiative, tackling objectives innovatively and with particular regard for shared objectives.
- Professional Integrity: Ability to deliver impartial and independent professional advice
- Relations with others: The personal qualities and skills that promote open and constructive relations with colleagues, reports and customers
- Flexibility: Ability to maintain high levels of performance under changing conditions, tasks, responsibilities or people
- Motivation: Ability to motivate and lead a team to achieve its objectives
- Challenge: Ability to provide challenge to financial managers under difficult situations

### Desirable

- Training: Experience of delivering training to small and large groups of people