

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Finance Business Partner
Service: Resources Directorate
Team: Finance Team
Reports to: Strategic Finance Business Partner
Grade: P2 (£39,120 to £42,137)

Job Purpose

The role of the Accountant is to promote, support and develop provision of corporate accountancy support to the County Council. This enables the Council to completely and accurately record its income, expenditure, assets and liabilities, in accordance with accounting standards and governance requirements.

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

The Accountant will work with colleagues to provide high quality financial support to Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and ultimately Members (Councillors). This is an important role and requires good communication and technical skills to ensure that finance services provided are professional and customer focused.

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

Principal Accountabilities

1. Financial reporting (40%)

- Collect, assess and analyse information required for annual statutory financial reporting
- Contribute to the preparation of the Council's statement of accounts, ensuring compliance with current accounting guidance, fully documenting processes
- Co-ordinate the production of associated reports and returns to central government departments
- Liaise with the auditors throughout the year; advance and arrange the provision of documentation to audit, ensuring information meets appropriate standards before release
- Aid the preparation and presentation of management accounts
- Promote accounting concepts across the Council such as accurate classification of revenue and capital expenditure, accruals accounting and materiality as part of an overall system of robust financial governance and budgetary control

2. Service & personal development (20%)

- Provide specialist financial advice to service managers on various specific and general service developments.
- Advise budget holders and other stakeholders of the financial implications of changes in national legislation or local practice.

- To keep abreast of regulatory changes and best practice initiatives by undertaking an appropriate programme of continuing professional development and attendance at, and contribution to practitioner groups
- Support accounting arrangements and group accounts consolidation for Council owner and part-owned companies and subsidiaries, as the diversity of income streams grows

3. Financial support and strategic financial advice (25%)

- Work with budget holders to ensure accurate and timely budget monitoring including risk appraisals when required.
- Support budget holders in financial planning, budget modelling and decision making in different scenarios.
- Monitor and reconcile grant claims and maximise eligibility for external funding
- Support and train colleagues in the use of the council's ERP Gold accountancy software
- Challenge budget holders as necessary to ensure their financial plans and projections are accurate and realistic.
- Ensure that the Authority's records with respect to fixed assets are complete, accurate and comply with statute, regulation and best practice.
- Ensure compliance with county council financial regulations, protocol and guidance, including Financial Regulations, Contract Regulations, and Schemes of Delegation.
- Promote continuous improvement of financial management across the annual financial cycle of budgeting, monitoring, forecasting and reporting.

4. 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.

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

Special Requirements

- Ability to travel to areas across the County