

Role Profile

Job title	Senior Accountant
Role Family	Specialist
Grade	Grade I
Reports to	Chief Financial Services Officer
Politically restricted post	Yes
DBS requirement	Basic

Team Summary

The Support Services Specialist team will provide input into corporate strategy, define the Council's policies and be accountable for ensuring professional service delivery in their area of expertise across all areas of the Council. Using technical skills, specialist knowledge and judgement the team will resolve complex cases.

Support Services includes Finance, Corporate Debt, Democratic Services, Committee Services and Information Services.

Role Purpose

To support the Chief Financial Services Officer with modelling the Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council as well as supporting the Housing Revenue Account Business Planning.

To co-ordinate financial input into corporate projects.

To provide technical accountancy support to the Finance team to meet statutory and regulatory reporting requirements and the wider Council to support the delivery of Council objectives.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

- Provide professional advice to Members on technical financial matters in particular on the Councils key strategic projects.
- Provide professional support including financial modelling, scenario planning, options appraisal and business planning for new initiatives and opportunities to enable informed decision-making.
- To co-ordinate the input of the Finance team into corporate and strategic projects, drawing on the individual expertise of team members as appropriate.
- To work with consultants and advisors on strategic projects to ensure there is an internal understanding of the financial modelling undertaken in respect of projects, assessing the robustness of estimates made.
- To support the Chief Financial Services Officer in the preparation of estimates for inclusion within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Ensure that budget preparation, monitoring and preparation of the Council's annual financial statements are completed to the specified standards and deadlines.
- To support the Chief Financial Services Officer with the project management requirements of the Final Accounts process.
- Lead the development and review of key financial strategies, returns and plans, including; HRA Business Plan, HRA Revenue and Capital budgets, General Fund Revenue budget, Collection Fund, charity accounts, final accounts and reserves.
- Carry out professional and technical research to ensure that all financial management activity and reporting is in line with current best practice and legislation/regulation. To include providing timely advice to the Chief Financial Services Officer and Chief Finance Officer on the impacts of any changes or developments and the required action to address them.
- Ensure that financial reporting is accurate, relevant and timely to support effective decision-making and meet statutory responsibilities.
- Attend Committee meetings to present financial reports.
- To complete statutory returns, grant claims and other requests for information (including Freedom of Information requests) from external bodies in accordance with prescribed timescales.
- Ensure that the council's financial record-keeping arrangements are managed in line with legislation, the council's Constitution and current professional standards.

- Support the Chief Financial Services Officer with ongoing review of the Finance team's service plan, including monitoring delivery against targets/deadlines and taking action to address shortfalls in performance.
- Taking lead responsibility for liaising with internal audit when carrying out reviews of financial processes and taking lead responsibility for agreeing management actions in response to their recommendations and for implementing them.
- Liaising with external audit and responding to audit queries during their work on the annual statement of accounts.
- Lead, develop and motivate finance staff by providing direction, identifying emerging issues and determining priorities.
- Address any staff performance issues and identify any required training support/plans while adhering to the Council's Capability & Disciplinary policies.
- Monitor sickness absence within the team and identify triggers/patterns. Work with HR to arrange regular sickness absence monitoring meetings and devise an agreed improvement plan (with the individual).
- Authorise overtime and expenses claims for team members.
- Identify and deliver continuous improvement/best practice initiatives.
- Network with professional and technical contacts and external advisors to identify best practice and follow up opportunities/challenges identified.
- Lead service development projects as required to deliver agreed outcomes/benefits.
- Optimise the use of technology in service delivery and identify new opportunities for investment to improve performance.
- Fulfil the duties of a Complaints Investigation Officer (Stage 2).
- Have direct financial oversight of the Corporate Projects Initiatives budget including the Otterpool scheme (budgets in excess of £100 million).
- Authorise key financial processes as required including the processing and approval of the bank reconciliation, journals and BACS payments. Ensure the authorisation is undertaken to minimise risk to the Council. Managing high standards of processing within the department.

Corporate Expectations

- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training in order to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.
- To contribute ideas on improvements in service delivery.

Qualifications

Either part CCAB (accountancy) qualification or significant recent experience working within a local authority accountancy team is essential. Full CCAB (accountancy) qualification with recent and relevant senior local authority finance experience would be desirable.

Knowledge, Skills & Experience

- Extensive demonstrable experience (ideally at least 3 years) in a financial environment
- Extensive experience of providing professional advice to senior stakeholders and to service management in a local authority on the financial implications of current and proposed service delivery activities
- Good understanding of accounting principles and standards
- Ability to adopt a strategic perspective while overseeing operational delivery
- Experience of undertaking financial modelling
- Experience of reviewing financial modelling undertaken by third parties to assess its robustness and suitability to aid decision making

- Strong project management skills
- Ability to analyse complex financial data and present to non-financial recipients
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to operate on own initiative and work with minimal supervision
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- High level of attention to detail and accuracy
- Very competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office, with an ability to learn new systems quickly
- Very experienced in use of computerised financial information systems
- Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development
- Ability to adapt and proactively organise work to meet deadlines whilst maintaining high standards
- Ability to forward plan and manage conflicting priorities
- Professional and customer focused approach
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to operate and build strong working relationships at all levels
- Proven ability to understand and comply with legislation and regulations that apply to the support service area