

Job Description

Service:	Finance
Job title:	Chief Accountant
Grade:	Grade I
Hours of work:	Full time (37hrs per week)
Responsible to:	Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer
Responsible for	
Direct reports:	3
Indirect reports:	Relevant officers within Finance on regular basis

Purpose of Post:

- To support the Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer in ensuring effective financial management, governance and stewardship of the Council's resources.
- To provide senior professional and technical leadership across the finance function, ensuring high-quality financial reporting, robust financial controls and compliance with relevant legislation, accounting standards, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and the Council's financial framework.
- To lead preparation of the annual Statement of Accounts and the operational management of external audit, ensuring accounts and supporting working papers are accurate, complete, timely and audit ready.
- To play a key role in the annual budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy, capital programme and corporate financial monitoring, providing clear advice, analysis and constructive challenge to senior officers and elected Members.
- To provide authoritative advice on complex accounting and financial management matters and lead continuous improvement in corporate accountancy, financial control and finance processes.

Key Deliverables:

Financial reporting, technical accounting and audit

- Lead preparation and production of the annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the CIPFA Code, applicable accounting standards, statutory requirements and agreed deadlines.
- Develop, maintain and apply the Council's accounting policies and ensure consistent application across the organisation.
- Act as senior technical accounting adviser on complex matters, interpreting changes in accounting standards, legislation and professional guidance.
- Lead year-end closedown arrangements, including timetables, instructions, working papers, quality assurance and supporting evidence.
- Coordinate the finance response to internal and external audit and ensure recommendations are addressed appropriately.
- Maintain oversight of the integrity of the general ledger and corporate financial accounting arrangements.

Budget, MTFS and financial management

- Support the Head of Finance in coordinating the annual budget-setting process and development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Lead corporate financial modelling and scenario analysis, ensuring assumptions are transparent, evidence-based and appropriately reflected in forecasts.
- Support development and monitoring of revenue budgets and the capital programme, identifying and escalating financial risks, pressures and opportunities.
- Provide analysis and constructive challenge to savings proposals, growth bids, investment proposals and business cases.
- Work closely with Finance Business Partners to promote consistent forecasting, budget monitoring and financial management standards.

Financial control and governance

- Support the Head of Finance in maintaining a strong, proportionate system of financial management and internal financial control.
- Lead review and improvement of finance procedures, accounting processes and controls.
- Support maintenance and review of Financial Regulations and associated finance procedures.
- Identify emerging accounting and financial control risks and ensure appropriate mitigation, reporting and escalation.
- Work constructively with Internal and External Audit and coordinate responses to relevant recommendations.
- Promote sound stewardship of public money and financial accountability across the Council.

Leadership and continuous improvement

- Provide professional leadership and management to designated finance staff, creating a supportive, accountable and high-performing culture.
- Coach and develop finance staff, building technical capability, confidence and resilience.
- Plan and prioritise resources to ensure statutory, audit, budget and reporting deadlines are achieved.
- Lead continuous improvement, including opportunities to streamline, standardise and automate finance processes.
- Promote consistent professional standards, succession planning and continuing professional development.

Senior advice and organisational support

- Provide clear, objective and evidence-based financial advice to the Head of Finance, senior officers, Heads of Service and elected Members.
- Attend management meetings, Member briefings, committees and governance forums as required, explaining complex financial matters clearly.
- Support corporate projects, transformation programmes and investment decisions requiring senior financial expertise.
- Build effective relationships with finance colleagues, service managers, auditors and external stakeholders.
- Provide financial training and guidance to improve financial awareness across the Council.
- Deputise for the Head of Finance on operational finance matters as required.

Corporate responsibilities

- Demonstrate commitment to the Council's values: Inspiring, Collaborative, Accountable, Respectful and Enterprising.
- Comply with Council policies and procedures, including equality and inclusion, health and safety, information governance, safeguarding and risk management.
- Demonstrate commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life and high standards of professional and ethical conduct.
- Contribute positively to cross-Council working, organisational change and corporate priorities.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the level and responsibilities of the post, including attendance at meetings outside normal working hours where reasonably required.

<p>Knowledge and Qualifications</p> <p>The minimum knowledge required to undertake this role and any qualifications or training essential for the role.</p> <p>(E) Essential</p> <p>(D) Desirable</p>	<p>Full CCAB qualification (E)</p> <p>Demonstrate evidence of continued professional development relevant to the role (E)</p> <p>Local government finance and accounting; CIPFA Code and relevant accounting standards; statutory reporting and closedown; revenue and capital accounting; budgeting, forecasting and financial control. (E)</p> <p>Treasury management and Prudential Framework; wider local government funding and grants. (D)</p> <p>A thorough understanding of the environment and financial framework in which local government operates(E)</p> <p>Understanding of emerging and existing national and regional policy issues which relate to local government. (E)</p> <p>Understanding of Equality and inclusion measures and interventions. (D)</p> <p>Understanding of Local authority safeguarding duties & responsibilities. (D)</p>
<p>Experience</p> <p>Experience the person would need to do the job.</p> <p>(E) Essential</p> <p>(D) Desirable</p>	<p>Significant post-qualification experience; statutory accounts and external audit; financial planning and monitoring; complex technical advice; improving controls and processes (E)</p> <p>Experience of working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to achieve organisational goals. (E)</p> <p>Inclusively leading and motivating a diverse team to a high level of achievement. (D)</p> <p>Experience of preparing, managing, and controlling complex budgets and capital programmes and the deployment of resources to achieve corporate objectives. (D)</p> <p>Improving performance, delivering results, and establishing a strong performance culture which is customer focused, quality driven and allows objective measurement of outcomes (E)</p>

	Strong work ethic with the ability to work in a team but also manage own workload. (E)
Skills and Abilities Specific skills the applicant would need to do the job. (E) Essential (D) Desirable	Confidence to work effectively at all levels of the organisation (E). Ability to self-motivate (E) Ability to work independently on their own initiative but to tight deadlines and also be able to work collaboratively to support partners, other managers, and internal service leads. (E) Agile thinking and the ability to establish and prioritise tasks and objectives in to make effective use of time and resources. (E) Effective communication skills with the ability to communicate equally with financial and non-financial people (E) Giving clear, balanced advice and guidance and exchanging information in a variety of formats to both internal and external customers. (E) Able to make effective and timely decisions. (E) Ability to balance multiple responsibilities (E) To collaborate effectively with managers and staff, able to deploy persuasive and influencing skills (E) Ability to work individually and as part of a team (E)
Decision Making and Impact on Others What impact the reasons made by the post holder would have on others across the Council.	The ability to quickly understand and analyse complex issues, and convey that understanding to others, and to make decisions based on imperfect information. (E) Enables others to perform and models the behaviour expected of others. (E) Leads staff to enable things to happen by delegating appropriately providing development opportunities and support necessary for staff to achieve their goals. (E)

	<p>Embraces new situations and responds positively to change. (E)</p> <p>Adjusts their interpersonal style to respond to the needs or preferences of others. (E)</p>
<p>Communication with Internal and External Customers</p> <p>What customers the applicant would be in contact with in the job</p>	<p>Internal customer contact 70%</p> <p>External customer contact 30%</p> <p>To support and collaborate with internal customers at all levels and from all departments. Support external stakeholders to understand the challenging financial environments.</p>

<p>HDC values</p> 	<p>The values outlined below reflect our collective positive attitude and how all staff are expected to work together as one team.</p> <p>Inspiring: We have genuine pride and passion for public service; doing the best we can for customers matters to us all.</p> <p>Collaborative: We achieve much more by working together, and this allows us to provide the best service for customers.</p> <p>Accountable: We take personal responsibility for our work and our decisions, and we deliver on our commitments to customers.</p> <p>Respectful: We respect people's differences and are considerate to their needs.</p> <p>Enterprising: We use drive and energy to challenge the norm and adapt to changing circumstances. We are always ready for challenges and opportunities, and we embrace them.</p>
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Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults.

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.