

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**JOB TITLE:** Principal Accountant - Business Engagement

**REPORTS TO:** Head of Financial Services – Business Partnering

**DEPARTMENT:** Finance & Resources

**SECTION:** Finance

### 1. PURPOSE OF JOB

The primary role of the post is to develop and maintain relationships with key customers, stakeholders and partners and provide them with professional accountancy support at both a strategic and operational level that enables them to achieve value for money in the development and mobilisation of commissioning plans, business plans and service transformation.

To lead and manage an effective and customer focussed business engagement team that provides professional advisory, analytical and reporting services to the council and customers and promotes and supports the achievement of value for money and effective financial management.

To develop and maintain appropriate links with other financial services and other Support Services to ensure a 'whole service' approach to providing effective financial advice and services to commissioning and delivery units.

To proactively manage the system of work to continually improve the customer experience, minimise failure demands and improve value for money.

### 2. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To be responsible for the delivery of prompt, effective, efficient and user friendly Financial Services to nominated services or directorates, undertake service level meetings, track and manage customer service issues and link with other financial services teams to resolve them.
2. To proactively manage the system of work through effective change management to continually improve the customer experience, minimise failure demands and improve value for money. This includes developing appropriate outcome and performance measures and ensuring that services are benchmarked appropriately and that best practice is acknowledged, understood and promoted.
3. To act as part of the wider Finance management team to define and implement effective financial management and controls across the organisation.
4. To advise and assist nominated services to develop effective short and medium term business and financial plans in accordance with relevant corporate or statutory timetables and the

council's constitution (e.g. Financial Regulations). To promote and support the achievement of value for money in the development and mobilisation of commissioning plans, business plans and service transformation .

5. For the nominated services, to assist in the preparation of various reports and briefings for senior management and members, ensuring that comprehensive value for money, financial and corporate implications are included in reports.
6. To interpret and advise the nominated service areas on the financial implications of relevant local and national initiatives, statutory changes and corporate initiatives. Also, to assist in the preparation of responses to consultation documents issued by Central Government and other bodies.
7. To attend external and internal working groups as required and represent the council and the Chief Finance Officer as required at committees and meetings with senior management to explain financial and corporate implications.
8. To assist and advise in the preparation of government and other statistical returns and grant claims to maximise the council's cash flow, whether completed by the Business Engagement team or other finance teams.
9. To assist and advise the nominated service areas on the effective closure of their accounts (including partnerships) in accordance with corporate and statutory requirements. To liaise with the Audit Commission as necessary.
10. To prepare briefings for the Chief Finance Officer and other senior Finance management.
11. To attend various CPD and other training events and workshops to ensure up to date knowledge of legislation, accounting guidelines and regulations and assess implications for the council and nominated service areas.
12. Deputise for the Head of Financial Services – Business Partnering as necessary.
13. Recruit and lead a team in which the behavioural competencies of staff are developed and promoted so that the customer service ethos is completely ingrained and the driving force behind the management of the team.
14. Recruit and lead a team in which the technical and professional competencies of staff are progressively developed through a structured path of lifelong learning so that the correct competencies are available to support the achievement of value for money and effective financial management.

### 3. RELATIONSHIPS

**Head of Financial Services – Business Partnering** – The Principal Accountant - Business Engagement will work closely with the Head of Financial Services – Business Partnering to ensure that service provision meets the aspirations of the nominated service areas as defined by service requirements.

**Directorate Management Teams** - The Principal Accountant - Business Engagement will engage directly with Directorate Management Teams, or partner organisation management teams in

order to undertake service management, and business planning in order to aide planning, financing and resourcing decisions and contribute to the development of commissioning strategies and business plans, and associated service plans and risk registers.

**Business sponsors and stakeholders** – The Principal Accountant - Business Engagement will meet regularly with key business stakeholders to ensure the provision of financial services and support remains aligned with business needs and aspirations.

#### **4. GENERAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

*(These accountabilities are applicable to all posts)*

1. To be prepared to implement the Council's Equalities Policy at all levels appropriate to the job and must at all times carry out his/her duties with due regard to the Council's Equalities Policy.
2. To be responsible for the implementation of, and compliance with, the provisions of legislation relating to health and safety, of such employees and areas of the workplace as fall under direct control of the postholder and for complying with legislation relating to works and contracts as are within the direct responsibility of the postholder.
3. To undertake such other duties appropriate to the grade and character of the work as may be reasonably required.

Your duties will be as set out in the above job description but please note that the Council reserves the right to update your job description, from time to time, to reflect changes in, or to, your job.

You will be consulted about any proposed changes.

The list of duties in the job description should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. There will be other duties and requirements associated with your job and, in addition, as a term of your employment you may be required to undertake various other duties as may reasonably be required.

## Person Specification

**POST TITLE:** Principal Accountant - Business Engagement

**DIRECTORATE:** Finance and Resources

**SECTION:** Finance

### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**Job Related  
Education,  
Qualifications  
and  
Knowledge**

- CCAB qualified accountant with substantial post qualification relevant experience.
- Educated to degree level or equivalent skills gained through proven and substantial experience
- A detailed understanding and working up-to-date knowledge of the statutory framework of accounting requirements and other legislation, guidance and initiatives that impact on the financial integrity of the council and the ability to successfully implement them.
- Knowledge of the requirements of the current Performance and Inspection framework in relation to the nominated service areas.
- Extensive knowledge of financial systems, Microsoft office products and the ability to develop/improve procedures and processes through the use of ICT systems.
- Knowledge and awareness of equalities and its application both in terms of service delivery and staff management.
- Substantial knowledge of the business areas assigned, including an understanding of the legislative requirements.
- Continued commitment to keeping knowledge current and relevant in a rapidly changing environment.
- Excellent understanding of the workings of the council and the public sector in general.

## **Experience**

- Experience of change management including transforming and improving services.
- Confident and effective communicator, able to negotiate and influence at all levels, both internally and externally, including board level, through effective oral and written presentation and reporting skills.
- Experience of budget monitoring and annual budget preparation procedures and preparation of grant claims and other returns including producing appropriate documentation in accordance with appropriate accounting principles and statutory frameworks.
- Experience in assisting with the closure of local authority accounts in accordance with appropriate accounting principles and statutory frameworks.
- Experience of building and maintaining effective working relationships with finance staff, senior managers in service departments, members and partners.
- Experience of managing and motivating a team effectively within a pressurised, changing work environment that's meets customer expectations and delivers corporate and departmental objectives within tight deadlines.
- Experience in the recruitment, selection and induction of staff.
- Experience of training and giving high quality presentations to both financial and non-financial managers.
- Experience of creating complex financial spreadsheets/reports with the ability to manipulate the data to produce management information in alternative formats.
- Experience of undertaking financial appraisals of commissioning strategies, business cases and policy options.
- Experience of successfully developing and implementing corporate accounting standards, new initiatives and improving working practices to improve financial management and control.
- Personal ability to work efficiently in ongoing high pressure situations. Ability to prioritise and streamline workloads individually and across teams.
- Ability to co-ordinate and manage major tasks and projects in accordance with specified timetables, other guidelines and statutory frameworks.
- Substantial, proven experience of leading and managing a team of professional and technical finance staff.
- Ability to consider the corporate strategic position when negotiating customer support requirements.
- A willingness to work both as a team player and as part of the wider management team to contribute positively to achieve a common goal.

## **Equalities**

- Be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of Equalities and to be able to carry out duties in accordance with the Council's Equalities Policy