

Job Description

Post Title	Principal Accountant (Trading Companies)
Service Area	Finance
Team	Financial Planning
Grade	G (£42,821 - £45,857)
Reports to	Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Date prepared	09 September 2021

Job Purpose

1. Be the technical lead for Trading Companies for the Council, providing strategic advice to members, directors and assistant directors on the financial implications of any commercial schemes or developments, financial options appraisal and associated modelling regarding commercial schemes/trading companies' activities.
2. Ensuring that all proposals for change involving trading companies/commercial activities are supported by a comprehensive and compelling business case.
3. Manage, mentor and train one of the three accountancy teams within Finance, serving Lewes and Eastbourne Councils, their companies and their stakeholders in accordance with the Councils' corporate plan, company business plans, priorities and values.
4. Initiating and driving continuous improvement in service performance and efficiency.

Key Tasks

1. To work routinely with budget and senior managers across the organisation (typically up to and including Director level) and elected Members (including clearing reports for and attendance at formal Committee meetings), providing specialist professional, technical expertise and reports to support and influence financial planning, management and operational decision making. In relation to the Trading companies' role, hold equivalent responsibility to serve and support directors and senior managers in relation to the rules and regulations under the most recent Companies Act.
2. To manage one of the accountancy teams (up to 7 staff, directly and indirectly) in accordance with council values, policies and procedures to ensure that the service is delivered in an economic and efficient way.

3. Lead and manage staff including setting clear targets and objectives and proactively managing workflow, priorities and performance; and carrying out effective recruitment, induction, coaching and ongoing staff management and development.
4. To ensure there is a business continuity process and adequate strategy for handling the loss of key individuals by cross-training and providing individuals with the opportunity for greater development.
5. To develop and maintain expert technical financial knowledge (including financial legislation, accounting policies and standards, comparative benchmarks, grant funding regimes, financing and costing methodologies and regulatory compliance) to support the Councils' financial operations and strategic financial planning and decision making.
6. To deliver high level financial modelling required of the position.
7. To represent the Councils' interests as required at appropriate working groups as well as in negotiations with external partners, regulatory bodies or commercial suppliers.
8. To take responsibility for managing and improving financial systems and processes across the council so that they operate in compliance with financial policy and statute and any necessary amendments are designed and implemented promptly in response to framework changes or to any identified exceptions to governance and control standards.
9. To initiate change and to drive and measure continuous improvement in service performance and efficiency utilising all available tools. To ensure that all processes and procedures meet suitable standards for internal and external audit compliance for all accounting and related activities.
10. To represent the Finance service and deputise for the Finance Manager when required at Council Committees, Board meetings, Working Parties and Project Teams. Take responsibility for the financial aspects on allocated projects and work in partnership with services and third-party consultants in the assessment and review of business plans and identify the financial implications and benefit realisations. Ensure the Service and Financial Plans or the relevant company business plan includes all associated costs or savings.
11. To maintain up to date knowledge of legislation, changes in accounting standards, tax requirements, guidance related to the team being managed.
12. To ensure that all statistical, government returns, and FOI requests allocated to the team are completed within deadlines.
13. Carry out ad-hoc accounting or other projects as required to meet the demands of the service.
14. Responsible to one of the Deputy Chief Finance Officers for the Trading Companies area and be capable of delivering the following work required in these areas:
 - Statutory Accounts
 - Budgets and Business Planning

- Budget monitoring
- Treasury management and cash flow
- Bank and control account reconciliations
- Taxation
- Financial advisor to Boards
- LDC in house Waste service budgets and budget monitoring

Corporate Accountabilities

1. To promote equality of opportunity in service delivery in line with strategic commitment and corporate policies.
2. To promote a culture that is supportive of the Councils' purpose, aims and values, and to take all reasonable steps to maintain good employee relations.
3. Staff are encouraged to participate fully in promoting a safety culture to protect the safety and health of themselves, colleagues and other people affected by the Councils' activities.
4. To understand and apply the Councils' Data Protection and Data Quality policy and procedures.
5. Any other duties commensurate with the nature of the post.
6. Deputise for Deputy Chief Finance Officer and cover absence of other team leaders as appropriate.
7. You will be required to support the Borough Councils corporate priorities and to ensure business continuity eg emergency response, elections, deployment to critical services.
8. Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils are committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Procedures provides a framework within the Councils, setting out responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk.

The policy applies to all employees, councillors, volunteers and service providers that are commissioned by the council.

9. To work within the Councils' Management and Core Competencies Framework(s). Central to the delivery of the role are the values and behaviours set out below. These are shared by all employees and applied to everything we do. The bullet points for each competency are examples of performance required:

Core Competencies

Sharing the Vision - Shaping the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the Councils' purpose, context, goals, objectives and values, and is willing to behave consistently with them. • Knows the strategic direction of the Councils and acts in support of it.
Communicating Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to and participates in an organisation where high quality information flows smoothly both internally and externally. • Works positively to gain understanding from others.
Driving Improvement Performance &Results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes responsibility and ownership for decisions, actions and results. • Takes actions to improve skills, knowledge and level of contribution. • Seeks and delivers high standards for self, team and Council
Self Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self motivated and professional. • Is organised and uses time and technology efficiently. • Adopts a flexible approach to change
Delivering for our Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a desire to identify and give priority to meeting and exceeding the needs of internal and external customers, generating high levels of customer satisfaction
Working Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contributes to team working, sharing information, valuing the input of others. • Works co-operatively and is committed to building, productive, positive relationships. • Demonstrates commitment to achieving overall team objectives

Management Competencies

Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspires and engenders commitment in others. • Leads from the front and by example. • Presents a united corporate view.
Managing and Developing Performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches and supports individuals and teams to perform at their best, motivating and developing them to achieve high performance.
Managing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the Councils' priorities are achieved through planned action programmes. • Makes best use of resources, ensuring value for money

Managing change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embraces, facilitates, implements and manages change to improve and develop services
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This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. Such details will vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility involved.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCAB qualified, or finalist or qualified by experience with extensive track record of mid to senior level management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management qualification• Membership of appropriate professional body e.g. CIPFA, or other CCAB body.

TRAINING

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial systems• Microsoft Outlook, Excel and Word• Financial reporting systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civica Financials• Business Objects• Microsoft PowerPoint

SKILLS & ABILITIES

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to analyse complex information, focussing on the key financial drivers• Highly advanced financial modeller• Ability to explain financial information effectively to staff with a non-financial background.• Able to influence directors and members as appropriate• Very high financial and management accounting skills• Strong Team player• Ability to build positive relationships with colleagues at all levels.• Initiative• Ability to deal with personnel and sensitive work confidentially.• Ability to prioritise, meet deadlines and work effectively under pressure, without direct supervision.• Very good written and verbal communication skills, including report writing and presentation skills• To act with dignity when representing the Council• Resourceful, innovative organised and IT literate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Politically aware and sensitive

KNOWLEDGE

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of accounting concepts and rules • Understanding of preparation and interpretation of Financial Appraisals • Use of computerised financial information systems and tools • External audit requirements • Data protection 	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the local authority accounting code of practice including main IFRS or UKGAP rules • Understanding of CIPFA's Service Expenditure Code of Practice • Knowledge of corporate structures and extensive knowledge of UK tax law • Knowledge of Taxation
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EXPERIENCE

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong experience in accountancy, including budgeting, monitoring, reconciliations, financial modelling and end of year reporting • Proven ability to manage and deliver a demanding workload • Management of finance staff 	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in a local authority or private sector financial environment with experience producing the Accounts, as appropriate • Strong post qualification experience
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PHYSICAL, LEGAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works within the Councils' Core Competency and Management Frameworks • An engaging, enthusiastic and positive manner with a strong "can do" approach • Be occasionally available to work additional hours outside of normal working hours • Ability to travel to Lewes and Eastbourne • Willingness to develop skills and knowledge in other areas to provide flexibility within the service 	<p>Desirable</p>
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All staff must be prepared to have an understanding of the Equal Opportunities, Customer Care and Health and Safety policies. Managers

in particular, must have a commitment to implement and abide by these policies.