

Job description and employee specification template

Job title:	Head of Finance	Location:	Municipal Offices
Reports to:	Director of Finance and Assets	Working hours:	37 hours per week
Supervises:	A team of officers in the finance team, including business partnering, technical accounting and projects and development support. Direct supervision of the Technical Accountant, Principal Commercial Accountant, Treasury Manager and Finance Business Partner.		
Purpose:	<p>Are you a motivated finance professional seeking your next career opportunity to shape your own team to support our Council to achieve its ambitious growth plans?</p> <p>Cheltenham are an extremely ambitious Council – committed to becoming carbon net zero by 2030 and the Cyber Capital of the UK all whilst continuing to support all our communities. And our aspirations are more than words – we have won national awards for our commercial approach as a Council and our Golden Valley development has recently been named in the Government's National Cyber Strategy.</p> <p>Following the Council's recent organisational change to bring the housing services back into the Council we are looking for a Head of Finance to bring together two finance teams previously working for separate organisations. Cheltenham is only one of two District Councils in Gloucestershire who still own their own housing stock and with the proposed changes to Local Government organisation and focus on affordable housing, this provides a unique opportunity to make a lasting difference to tenants and residents in the town.</p> <p>Likewise, the general fund budget has successfully delivered over £4m of savings since the pandemic and as we move into a period of recovery the focus is shifting to delivering the clear ambitions set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The team are dynamic, close knit and passionate about the town and making a difference to the place they live. We are looking for an energetic individual who can work with senior leaders to build on our vision to provide continuous opportunities for the team and ensure that our Council is financially secure and sustainable into the next chapter of Local Government.</p>		
Key duties and responsibilities:	<p>As part of this role, you will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and managing the finance team to ensure the provision of a high quality, effective professional accountancy service, keeping yourself and the section abreast of developments affecting local government generally and professional accounting developments in particular Overseeing the activity to co-ordinate the setting and monitoring of the Council's HRA and General Fund revenue and capital budget, including preparation of reports for key Committees Supporting the Deputy s151 Officer in the production and monitoring of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading on the delivery of the savings and reserves strategies, working across Council to ensure we meet the target savings goals for the budget each year • Provision and oversight of strategic financial advice, support and challenge to new commercial initiatives that are brought forward – challenging assumptions, setting and monitoring budgets and providing reporting for key stakeholders to measure success. This includes but is not limited to the development of business cases, monitoring of outcomes, presentation to Members and understanding of funding arrangements. • Managing the business partnering team to support budget holders and service managers to monitor their budgets throughout the year, providing advice when decisions or changes to the budget are required • Overseeing the completion of key Government finance returns in line with the required timetable • Oversight of the monitoring and management of our capital loans and borrowings • Overseeing the year end close down process for the Council's HRA and General Fund revenue and capital budget through to production of the Statement of Accounts and supporting the external auditors • Managing the Council's capital and investment strategies; treasury management strategies & financial management policies and procedures • Providing ad hoc advice on technical areas such as VAT <p>Other Accountabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive continuous and sustained performance improvement in line with the Council's values • Planning and reviewing workloads to ensure outputs & outcomes are delivered within agreed timescales • Recruit, develop and retain people with the skills, competence and attitude to deliver services in accordance with procedure and law ensuring that the appropriate systems and processes are in place to measure, manage and develop staff • Work to add value to, and be a valued member of the team and to be valued by customers • Work in compliance with the codes of conduct, regulations (including financial) and policies of the council
<p>Essential requirements – qualifications, skills, abilities and experience:</p>	<p>To be successful in this role our ideal candidate will have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully qualified accountant (ACA, CIMA, ACCA) or equivalent experience • Experience of providing advice, and influencing, to senior officers and elected Members. • Experience of work planning and meeting deadlines for self and for others. • Experience of working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. • Experience of producing written reports summarising financial information to inform Cabinet and Council decisions • Experience and knowledge of the social housing sector and financing of housing development • Experience of formulating and implementing strategies, policy and procedures • Experience of managing, coaching and supporting a multi-disciplinary finance team

- Experience of year end close down process and financial accounts preparation in line with the Local Government Code of Practice, including preparing working papers and liaising with external auditors
- Experience of producing business cases which underpin and support key decision making in an organisation
- Ability to work under pressure and meet strict deadlines

Skills and abilities

- Ability to identify the financial implications of proposals that may not always be immediately apparent
- Understanding of key Local Authority financial and funding arrangements, including National Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax and the Housing Revenue Account
- Understanding of accounting standards and implementation of changes to ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory and reporting frameworks
- Awareness and up to date knowledge of national finance requirements and the local government and national economic environment
- Team player with the ability to take complex financial data & translate it into a lay format & deliver with political sensitivity
- Ability to think on one's feet, particularly in meetings
- Knowledge of performance management frameworks and their application