

Candidate Brief

CLIENT:	Southampton City Council
ROLE:	Director of Finance (Deputy S151)
CIPFA PENNA CONSULTANT:	Andrew Tromans (07805 226301 / andrew.tromans@penna.com)
APPLICATIONS DEADLINE:	Sunday, 17 th November 2024

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Further reading:

Southampton City Council's key strategies are available here:
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-plans/strategy-hub/>

You may wish to review:

- [Southampton City Strategy 2015-25](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-30](#)
- [Corporate Plan \(2024 Update\)](#)
- [MTFS](#)
- [Southampton Transformation & EFS](#)

Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in our position of Director of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer) at Southampton City Council.

This is an exceptional opportunity to shape the financial strategy and sustainability of Southampton at a time of transformation and growth. Like many local authorities, we face significant financial challenges, but we are focused on and committed to building a vibrant and sustainable future for our wonderful city and its residents. With challenges and financial pressures, comes opportunities, and we are seeking a leader to help us seize them.

As our Director of Finance, you will be integral to inputting into and delivering our new City Plan and Council Plan, which will outline a vision for growth, regeneration and transformation.

You will lead a finance transformation programme, and be responsible for the finance division playing its part in establishing a trusted business partner approach across the directorate. This role is pivotal as you will work collaboratively with senior leaders and elected members as part of the Council's transformation programme.

We are particularly keen to find candidates with strong management skills who can lead change, influence strategic decision-making, and foster a culture of financial excellence. You will have the opportunity to harness the power of emerging digital technologies and artificial intelligence, developing an award-winning finance service that will enable the regeneration of Southampton. Your work will directly impact the city's residents, growth, infrastructure investments, and essential community services.

Whilst experience within local government would be beneficial, we are equally interested in candidates from adjacent sectors who bring transferable expertise. Whether you are a more experienced applicant looking for an interesting side-step, or an aspirant candidate looking for the right step-up into a senior leadership role, this position offers a unique chance to be part of a major transformation of both the Council and the City.

You'll find Southampton to be a vibrant, diverse city with a rich history and a bright future. We are proud to be an inclusive, forward-thinking Council, with equality, diversity, and respect for all at the heart of our work. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone can succeed.

So if you have the vision, skills and passion to lead meaningful change and make a lasting positive impact on our city, we would be delighted to hear from you. For more information about the role and the selection process, please contact Andrew Tromans at CIPFA Penna on 07805 226301 or at andrew.tromans@penna.com.

We look forward to receiving your application and wish you the best of luck.

Yours sincerely,



Mel Creighton
Executive Director of Enabling Services (S151 Officer)
Southampton City Council

Advert

Director of Finance, Southampton City Council

Salary: £104,815 - £115,128 (a market supplement of up to £10k may apply)
Location: Southampton (hybrid working is available)
Contract: Full-time, Permanent

Southampton City Council is seeking a Director of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer) to lead their finance function at a critical time of transformation and growth. This critical role is perfect for a strategic thinker who can ensure financial sustainability while contributing to the long-term success of this vibrant and ambitious city.

The Role

As Director of Finance, you will be a key member of Southampton's Senior Leadership Team and the Enabling Services Leadership Team. Reporting directly to the Executive Director of Enabling Services (S151 Officer), you will play a significant role in shaping the financial strategy that underpins Southampton City Council's ambitious Corporate Plan and Transformation Programme.

Tasked with playing a lead role in ensuring that Southampton remains a city of opportunity and growth, your responsibilities will include:

- Leading the Council's finance improvement plan, promoting sound financial management and value for money.
- Ensuring the Council's financial systems, budgets, and strategic decisions align with medium to long-term financial goals.
- Managing a broad portfolio, including operational and strategic finance, treasury management, and business partnering across key directorates.
- Providing financial insight and advice to senior leaders, Members, and key stakeholders to guide critical decision-making.

Candidates

We are looking for a fully qualified CCAB or CIMA accountant with relevant public finance management experience. You will be an innovative leader with a proven track record of delivering financial transformation within large, complex organisations. Key to your success will be your ability to influence decision-making, foster collaboration, and lead operational improvements.

Next Steps

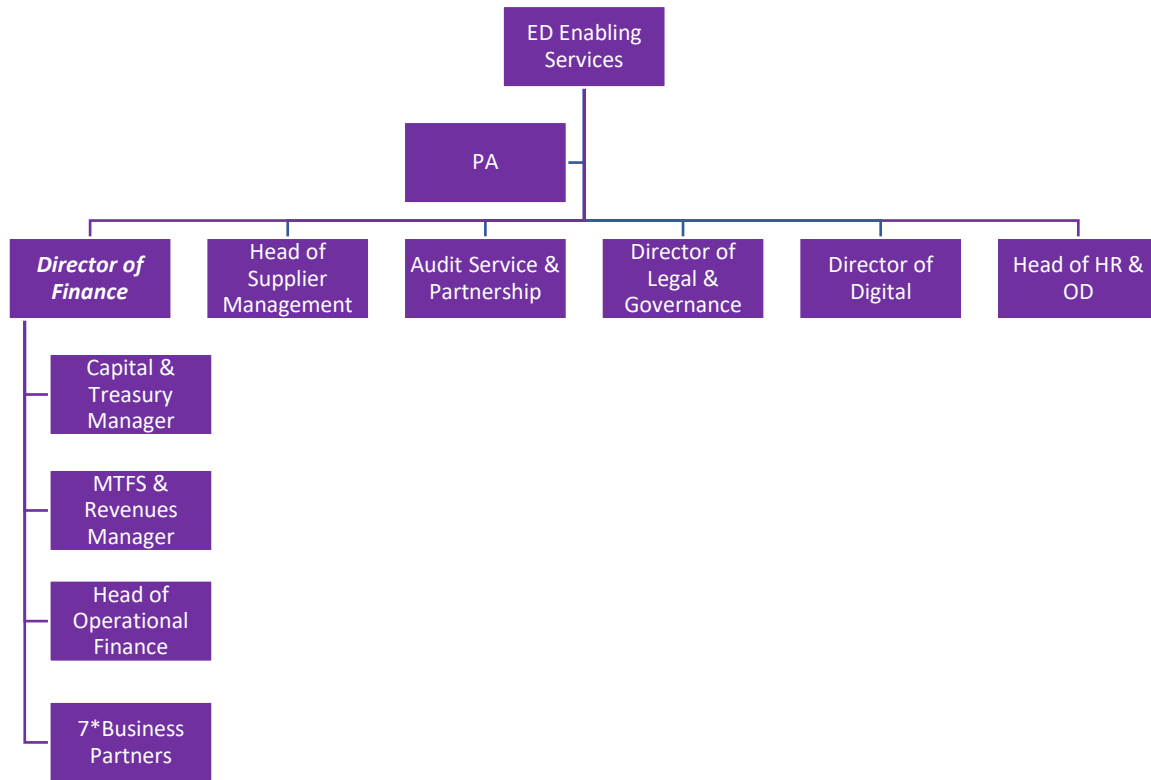
If you are passionate about making a difference and have the vision to lead financial transformation, we want to hear from you.

For more information and a confidential discussion, please contact Andrew Tromans at CIPFA Penna on 07805 226301 or at andrew.tromans@penna.com.

Closing Date: Sunday, 17th November 2024

Southampton City Council is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all backgrounds.

Structure Chart



N.B. The reports into the Director of Finance are subject to a restructure that the successful candidate will help shape.

Team Briefing

We've canvassed Southampton City Council's finance team for their thoughts and opinions on what they would value in their future Finance Director.

"This is a great opportunity to deliver meaningful change and make a lasting impact on the community."

Here is a summary of their insights:

- **Breaking Down Silos and Standardizing Services:** The team emphasized a need to overcome departmental silos across the Council, which impede efficient finance services. They seek a leader who will promote cross-functional collaboration and standardized service delivery.
- **Transformational Leadership, Strategic Thinking & Long-Term Commitment:** Candidates should be prepared to drive transformational change without micromanaging. The team will value a leader who will commit to the council for the long-term, supporting strategic initiatives over short-term gains.
- **Team Unification and Inclusivity:** The ideal Finance Director will foster a cohesive environment. The team values inclusive leadership, where decisions are not imposed but co-created with team input.
- **Transparency and Communication:** A visible, communicative leader is critical. The team needs assurance that their leader is well-informed and open, fostering confidence and trust.
- **Relevant Sector Experience:** Public finance experience (e.g. from district, borough, unitary or county council, or from the NHS) is seen as very valuable. The team also values a social conscience, and the ability to understand the impact of their work on residents' lives.
- **Cultural Fit and Developmental Mindset:** The team is diverse, and they are looking for a leader who can harness this diversity effectively. A developmental mindset and an appreciation for new technology, especially in process automation, will be advantageous.
- **Agility and Integrated Services:** With ongoing cost pressures, the team seeks a leader who can guide them toward a more agile, integrated service model to enhance service delivery for residents.
- **High-Performing and Motivated Team:** The Finance Director will inherit a motivated, talented team with ambitions to achieve recognition, such as the CIPFA Team of the Year award. A passion for working with and developing a successful team will be crucial.

Role Profile

Post Title	Director of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)
Service Area	Enabling Services – Finance
Grade	CO2.3
Salary	£104,815 - £115,128
Accountable to	Executive Director of Enabling Services (S151 Officer)
Accountable for	Operational Finance (income, expenditure, and business admin teams) Strategic Finance – Capital, MTFs, Treasury Management, Technical Strategic Business Partnering – Children & Learning including Schools Strategic Business Partnering – Wellbeing and Housing Strategic Business Partnering – Growth & Prosperity Strategic Business Partnering – Resident Services Strategic Business Partnering – Enabling Services Strategic Business Partnering – Transformation

Purpose of Job

- With the council needing to go through significant change to address the budget challenges, the focus of this role will be to establish a finance service that is fit for purpose to support and enable the Council to be a sustainable organisation. The role will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Enabling Services Leadership Team, working closely with members.
- The Director of Finance will be an exceptional leader, manager, and accountant, with hands-on experience of local authority finances, being able to translate strategy and vision into operational activity and improvement. The postholder will be a member of a professional body with up to date continuous professional development.
- The postholder will be responsible for all financial systems and processes, including assessing effectiveness, efficiency, and value for money of the systems.
- The postholder will also be actively involved in and bring influence to bear on all material business decisions to ensure the information and evidence to base the decision is accurate, easy to understand, and transparent. The postholder will also ensure the decisions have considered medium to longer term financial implications, opportunities, and risks as well as the alignment to financial strategy.
- The postholder will lead on the operational implementation of the council wide financial improvement plan reporting to the appropriate transformation or improvement group. Following the work of this group the postholder will lead on the promotion of sound financial management across the organisation, ensuring public money is safeguarded.
- The role will be responsible for the strategic and general management of the finance division in line with priorities set out in the Medium Term financial strategy, Corporate Plan, Improvement and Transformation Plans and Directorate Plan.
- The postholder will be the Deputy S151 Officer and be expected to deputise for the S151 Officer in their absence, and for approving certain grants and reports on behalf of the S151 officer.

Key Accountabilities & Duties

- Lead the implementation of the Council's financial vision and strategy with long term oversight of the Council's financial position working alongside Council's Transformation Programme
- To lead on the delivery of council wide finance improvement plan ensuring effective demonstration of the improvement by clear key performance indicators.
- Responsible for the effective management of the Councils budgets, providing guidance to other Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service to assist them in planning and managing their capital and revenue budgets.
- Directly responsible for the management of the Finance Division budget.
- Build and promote a culture of excellent financial management and value for money across the organisation.
- Provide useful, accurate and understandable financial advice to our customers and stakeholders.
- Lead the medium term budget setting process and the annual council tax setting process ensuring an integrated and collaborative approach across the Council.
- Ensure the budget setting process is fully integrated and supportive of the council wide business planning process.
- Provide a strategic overview of the council's financial performance with a focus on improving the key financial indicators, assessing, and interpreting benchmarking information working with the Data Team.
- Take responsibility for the accurate production of the council's balanced medium term budgets working alongside directorates, ensuring budget holders are fully involved with the assumptions behind the service budgets.
- Ensure the integrity of the information contained within the financial ledger, and the information aligns with the information in other parts of the council's main systems.
- To ensure a strong and well-trained treasury management function that deals with the council's cash balances with value for money and security in mind.
- To deliver a strong operational finance service including accounts payable, accounts receivable (debt management), and financial business support.
- Ensure there are adequate arrangements in place to deliver the council's accurate financial statements each year to an excellent standard.
- To ensure the appropriately skilled finance function including an effective succession plan for key specialist posts.
- To ensure there is a robust capital project evaluation programme to support the Council's Capital Board in decision making and defining the council's capital strategy.
- To ensure grant and financial returns are completed in an accurate and timely manner and that the implications of these returns are assessed and communicated.
- Lead and direct the development and implementation of the:
 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - Financial Management Improvement Plan
 - Capital Strategy
 - Treasury Management Strategy
 - Debt Management Policy
 - Supplier Payment Policy

Core Responsibilities & Deliverables

Budget responsibilities

- Directly responsible for the management of the Finance Division budget

- To deliver Finance services within budget.
- Responsible for the effective management of the Councils budgets, providing guidance to other Executive Directors, Directors, and Heads of Service to assist them in planning and managing their capital and revenue budgets.
- To comply with the Council's financial policies and requirements.
- To identify and propose opportunities for innovation, commercialisation, cost savings, cost recovery or income generation.

Member Relations

- Work with Members to ensure that they have the necessary financial information and training to fulfil their roles.
- Interpret and advise members on financial implications of national and local policy.

Staff Management

- Support and encourage staff to be creative and committed to finding solutions.
- Support and encourage staff to be self-aware and work with direct reports to establish personal improvement plan.
- Ensure effective communication with colleagues and service users to improve satisfaction with the service, directorate, and the council.

As a member of Senior Leadership Team

- Play an active role in the development of corporate plans working collaboratively with colleagues to ensure delivery of the Council's visions and priorities.
- Role model the council's values and behaviours, leading by example and being open to constructive feedback.
- Represent Southampton externally, ensuring strong public relations, and promoting Southampton as a city of opportunity.
- Ensure all duties are undertaken with compliance to legal and constitutional framework.

Operational Effectiveness and Compliance

- To operate in accordance with HR policies and practice.
 - To undertake continuous improvement activity to improve the effectiveness of services.
 - To comply with all Council policies in relation to Health and Safety and Information Governance.
 - To escalate risks and issues which may impact any aspect of performance or the Council's reputation.
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- Deliver an effective Service and taking responsibility for performance
- The effective management of personal workload.
- Ensure that records are maintained, and reports are completed to a high standard and within the specified timeframe
- Commit to the protection and safeguarding of adults with care and support needs, and value and respect their views and needs.

Organisational Capability

- To participate in team and Council wide activities to improve involvement and communication.
- To participate in and to use the appraisal and performance contract process to develop personal contribution and develop capability.
- To take responsibility for personal development including any continuous Professional Development.
- To work with others in the team to develop change readiness.
- Participate in and work in partnership with a range of multi-agency services

Person Specification

Essential Qualification(s)

- Fully qualified CCAB or CIMA accountant

Essential Skills, Knowledge & Experience

- Proven track record gained in large diverse organisation which demonstrates achievement of positive change and delivery at a senior level.
 - Demonstrable record of successfully achieving and managing change, including influencing, and negotiating with key stakeholders.
 - Experience of delivering an effective finance service across diverse organisation.
 - Comprehensive knowledge of local government, its finances, procedures and practices.
 - Comprehensive knowledge of the political workings of a council and its relationship with central government.
 - Ability to develop and sustain effective team working and partnerships with internal and external partners.
 - Excellent interpersonal, networking, advocacy, oral, written and presentation skills.
 - Excellent research, project management and report writing skills.
 - Effective personal style – is a collaborative team player, is comfortable with complexity, is open and honest; is responsive and flexible and a good communicator.
 - Ability to promote and provide creative and innovative solutions using technology within the Council and among partners.
 - Ability to research and interpret national and local policy, forecasting trends and understanding the financial implications of these policies, and communicating these implications to a variety of stakeholders.
 - Displays an awareness and commitment to the vision and priorities of the Council and Southampton.
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- To promote, adhere to and influence the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practices.

Core Behaviours

- Takes personal accountability and holds others to account
- Takes responsibility for own development.
- Listens to and respects the opinions of others.
- Asks for, reflects upon and acts on feedback.
- Works collaboratively with others to deliver the best outcomes.
- Actively seeks opportunities for improvement in organisational processes and activity.
- Builds understanding and commitment to transformational change.
- Sets standards for customer service.
- Builds relationships of trust and alliances with customers groups.

Additional Requirements

1. The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this job description may vary over time. Postholders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, scope and grading of the post.
 2. The post holder must have the ability to understand the needs of a multi-racial society and be prepared to implement the Council's Equality Policy at a level appropriate to the job and must at all times carry out his/her responsibilities with due regard to the Council's Equal Equality Policy.
 3. The post holder is required to be familiar with the Directorate's Health and Safety Policy and be aware of and observe any part of the policy related specifically to the duties and responsibilities of the post.
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How To Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and Cover Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.
- Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications please make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.
- Please share with us in your Cover Letter the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details.
- Please return your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.
- Following long listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.
- Asking for adjustments – we’re committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to consider doing anything differently during the application, interview, or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us,
- Please contact Andrew Tromans on 07805 226301 for a confidential discussion or for any information, insight or guidance about either the role or recruitment process.

Please note the key dates in the recruitment process:

Closing Date	17 th November 2024
Longlisting meeting (applicants do not attend)	w/c 18 th November 2024
Technical interviews (remote, via Teams)	w/c 25 th November 2024
Shortlisting meeting (applicants do not attend)	w/c 2 nd December 2024
Final Interviews (in person, in Southampton)	w/c 9 th December 2024

To apply for this role, please visit the following link to upload your CV and Cover Letter:
<https://execroles.penna.com>