

Job Description

Financial Accountant

Date: February 2020

POST: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANT
SERVICE: CORPORATE FINANCE
SECTION: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING
BAND: 12
REPORTS TO: Finance Manager (Financial Accounting)
RESPONSIBLE FOR: 5 people 4.8 FTE
TYPE: Hot desking in Basildon Centre

All Council posts are subject to National Joint Council (NJC) conditions of service.

Basildon Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and expects all employees, contractors and volunteers to share its commitment to prevent abuse, harm or exploitation.

Please note that the Council applies a robust recruitment vetting process.

MAIN PURPOSE

GENERAL INFORMATION

This role is within the Financial Accounting Team which is responsible for the treasury functions of the Council including managing daily cashflows and the provision of management information. Support is provided for both the General Fund and Housing capital programmes. In addition to treasury and capital the team has responsibility for other technical areas, which include VAT, leasing, Financial Regulations and other one off special projects that arise from time to time. These projects can cover both General Fund and Housing issues.

The Financial Accounting Team is responsible for:

- The timely and accurate production of the annual Statement of Accounts.
- The HRA and Housing General Fund revenue and capital accounting.
- The Housing and General Fund Services capital programmes and accounting for capital, including fixed asset accounting.
- Provision of financial services to the Council's wholly owned subsidiary Sempra Homes Ltd.
- In conjunction with Corporate Property Services the delivery of the Council's commercial asset acquisition strategy
- The prompt allocation of all Council income including reconciliation to underlying records.
- The transmission of all the Council's BACS files.

- Regular budgetary control with necessary reporting to senior management. Regular liaison with Cost Centre Managers on budget issues ensuring appropriate evidence of control is maintained.
- Provision of accurate and timely financial management information to senior management and Members whilst working with Cost Centre Managers to find financial solutions to service priorities.
- Policy, strategy and delivery in relation to Treasury Management (borrowing, investments cash flow, leasing and special financing) including control of the Council's cash management systems.
- Assisting with the preparation of Council Tax base and use of reserves to feed into the overall Council Tax Setting process.
- Contributions to corporate governance in relation to Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy, Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Notes.
- Other work such as VAT, IFRS and Collection Fund.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Corporate Finance plays a major role in supporting effective management of Council finances and secure stewardship of Council funds. This is achieved by providing financial advice on all corporate and service developments in order to support corporate decision making arrangements. The Service is responsible for development of the Council's medium term financial strategy and the annual budget setting process to ensure effective delivery of the Corporate Plan. The Service also has to be flexible to meet the demands of legislative changes and is required to be reactive to client needs and external influences.

Corporate Finance consists of the following functions: Financial and Management Accounting; Treasury Management and banking arrangements, Income Controls, Financial Systems, Creditors, and Banking Arrangements.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Support the Finance Manager in the development of the Council's Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy. Contribute as appropriate to the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. Deputise for the Finance Manager in their absence.
3. Effectively account for the Council's fixed assets and maintain the Council's asset register (total value in excess of £900 million).
4. Provide an effective VAT advisory service to the Council. This includes ensuring that VAT is correctly accounted for, the preparation of monthly VAT returns (£9 million per annum), the partial exemption calculation and liaison with HMRC.
5. Effectively manage the Council's Treasury service and cash management systems including investing and borrowing as appropriate. This includes arranging leasing finance where appropriate and accounting for such arrangements correctly.

6. Providing support to the Finance Manager in the delivery of the Council's commercial asset acquisition strategy (£150 million)
7. Providing support and direction to the teams delivering the Council's regeneration activities.
8. Preparation of the Council Tax base and business rates estimates to feed into the overall Council Tax and budget setting process. Including in year monitoring of the Collection Fund performance and outturn for AFR (turnover estimate £100 million per annum).
9. Be responsible for the preparation of the Council's Annual Financial Report (AFR) to the agreed timetable. To ensure the AFR complies with legislation and the Code of Practice. This includes liaison with external audit.
10. Be responsible for the delivery of financial services to the Council's wholly owned subsidiary, Sempra Homes Ltd. This includes preparation of statutory accounts, liaison with the company's external auditors, transactional services and budget monitoring.
11. Coordinate and deliver the Whole of Government Accounts, RO and RA returns.
12. The prompt allocation of all Council income and daily reconciliation to underlying records including to interface files from other Council systems.
13. The transmission of all BACS files and the printing of all Council cheques.
14. Responsible for the administration of the Council's responsibilities with regard to deceased people of the borough.
15. Responsible for the administration of the Council's corporate credit card arrangements.
16. Responsible for ensuring that financial appraisals of prospective tenderers are undertaken.
17. Liaison with Essex County Council concerning the Council's employer pension payments and accounting for pension liabilities.
18. Assist the Finance Manager in writing reports for Council meetings and senior managers as required and ensure appropriate financial information is provided on all reports generated by other departments.
19. Preparation of annual General Fund capital programme estimates (approximately £1 million per annum) and Treasury Management estimates (total borrowing in excess of £200 million) for presentation to Committees in line with agreed policies. This includes the financial appraisal of proposed projects.
20. Regular budgetary control and reporting to senior management and relevant business managers. To include day-to-day liaison on budget and service

issues and financial controls. Provision of other financial information to senior management and business managers, as and when appropriate.

21. To provide a business advisory role and guidance on financial matters and support to cost centre managers. There is a requirement to ensure resources are used effectively to deliver key priorities and that any budget performance issues are identified and addressed.
22. To present estimates and financial performance reports to Committees in line with agreed policies.
23. To provide specific advice on the financial implications of decisions, including for Committee Reports.
24. Provide prompt advice and guidance as appropriate to all staff, managers and Members of the Council, and to deal with difficult and/or complex enquiries arising, including those from members of the public and external agencies.
25. Represent the Service at Committees of the Council and brief Members as appropriate.
26. To be responsible for the accurate completion and despatch of all appropriate grant claims and returns (including government returns) by the due date (approximately 40 – 50 per annum). To ensure that all monies the team is responsible for that are due to the Council are claimed to maximise resources.
27. To manage human resource issues within the team, including responsibility for staff development and the identification and monitoring of performance and training needs.
28. To plan, coordinate, monitor and deliver all work assigned to the team, including communication of work related and general policy issues.
29. To ensure that relevant internal controls are in place within the Team and that they are adhered to and continue to be effective. Including the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations as appropriate.
30. To provide effective relevant training to both the Service and the organisation when required.
31. Maintain relevant performance indicators and measures for the team using corporate systems and support the Finance Manager in interpreting and acting upon the results as appropriate.
32. Represent the Service at relevant internal working groups and external user groups – leading and chairing such groups as necessary.
33. Have an up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation, professional practices and developments. Undertake system enhancement and development reviews as required to meet any changes to legislation or service provision.

34. Develop and introduce new financial methods and procedures that will continue to improve processes both within the Service and the Council as a whole.
35. Enforce and regulate the Financial Regulations and other specific policies (as, for example, set out in the Council's constitution) to ensure compliance including regular review of the Financial Procedures Notes.
36. Be up to date with all relevant Council policies, aims and management initiatives and ensure that all new developments by the team are in accordance with any corporate protocols or guidance.
37. Be committed to the aims and objectives of Corporate Finance and to be aware of their responsibilities in achieving these aims. Effectively promote and support a team approach to achieve this.
38. To promote positive communication across the organisation, encourage constructive relationships, including with the Council's key partner agencies.
39. Be part of multi-disciplinary teams as required to deliver corporate projects, involving working with other managers from other services and partner organisations.
40. Undertake all the duties within the framework of Equal Opportunities.
41. Any other duties appropriate to the post: These other duties must be equivalent to or below the salary and status of the role and, where appropriate, under the Equality Act 2010, due consideration must be given to any employees with a "protected characteristic".
42. You must cooperate in all matters relating to Health and Safety and implement all procedures for your job role. The identification of Health and Safety related risks within the working environment must be highlighted to your management.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Position Title:	Financial Accountant	Date Prepared:	February 2020
Department:	Corporate Finance	Band:	12

AF= Application Form	I = Interview	T= Test
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	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
1.	EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE			
1.1	Evidence of the ability to provide high level professional advice in a corporate setting	✓		AF/I
1.2	Proven track record in project, resource and people management	✓		AF/I
1.3	Evidence of taking responsibility for own personal and professional development	✓		AF/I
1.4	Evidence of the abilities required to support senior managers and members in a complex organisation	✓		AF/I
1.5	An in-depth knowledge of local government finance and general local government procedures.	✓		AF/I/T
1.6	Experience in producing written reports on complex issues tailored to the needs of different audiences.	✓		AF/I/T
1.7	Numerate with experience and ability to analyse large volumes of financial data and to interpret such data accordingly.	✓		AF/I/T
1.8	Possess excellent IT skills including technical experience of financial management systems and desk top analytical tools.	✓		AF/I/T
1.9	Relevant experience with Financial Management systems, particularly of the General Ledger and its associated feeders.	✓		AF/I/T
1.10	To be able to assess a dilemma logically and laterally and deal with it accordingly, including knowing when to refer the problem to more senior management.	✓		AF/I/T
1.11	Developed skills in prioritising work for themselves and their team.	✓		AF/I/T
1.12	Track record of improving the quality of service to customers.	✓		AF/I
1.13	Ability to cope with personal and organisational pressure, maintaining the quality of contribution when facing conflicting requirements.	✓		AF/I

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
1.14	Experience in training Council officers effectively on the use of financial systems and the application of financial procedures.	✓		AF/I
1.15	Right to work in the UK			AF/I
2.	COMPETENCIES			
2.1	Leading and deciding Takes control and exercises leadership. Initiates action, gives direction and takes responsibility	✓		AF/I
2.2	Supporting and cooperating Supports others and shows respect and positive regard for them in all situations. Puts people first, working effectively with individuals and teams, clients and staff. Behaves consistently with clear personal values that complement those of the organisation.	✓		AF/I
2.3	Interacting and presenting Communicates and networks effectively. Successfully persuades and influences others. Relates to others in a confident and relaxed manner.	✓		AF/I/T
2.4	Analysing and interpreting Shows evidence of clear analytical thinking. Gets to the heart of complex problems and issues. Applies own expertise effectively. Quickly learns new technology and skills. Communicates well both orally and in writing.	✓		AF/I
2.5	Creating and conceptualising Open to new ideas and experiences. Seeks out learning opportunities. Handles situations and problems with innovation and creativity. Thinks broadly and strategically. Supports and drives organisational change.	✓		AF/I/T
2.6	Organising and executing Plans ahead and works in a systematic and organised way. Follows directions and procedures. Focuses on customer satisfaction and delivers services or products to the agreed standard.	✓		AF/I
2.7	Adapting and coping Adapts and responds well to change. Manages pressure effectively and copes well with set backs.	✓		AF/I

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
2.8	Enterprising and performing Focuses on results and achieving personal work objectives. Works best when work is closely related to results and the impact of personal efforts is obvious. Shows an understanding of business and commerce.	✓		AF/I
3.	EDUCATION AND TRAINING			
3.1	Professional accountancy qualification with 3 years post qualification experience.	✓		AF/I/T