



Recruitment of Service Director – Finance (Deputy s151)



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Welcome to Wakefield



Wakefield's RhubarbFest

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining Wakefield Council at an important and exciting point in our journey.

Wakefield is a council with strong foundations and a clear sense of ambition. Serving a district of more than 350,000 residents across our city, towns and rural communities, we play a vital role in shaping the future of our places and improving outcomes for the people who live and work here. Our Corporate Plan, Building a Fairer Future, sets out a

clear focus on thriving communities, inclusive economic growth, better health and wellbeing, and a greener and more sustainable district. Finance sits at the heart of that ambition.

Over the past year we have taken important steps to stabilise our financial position and strengthen our foundations. We are now moving into the next phase of our journey – building a modern, forward-looking finance function that enables better decision-making, stronger financial resilience, and greater impact for our communities.

To help us achieve this, we are creating additional senior capacity within the Finance Service and are recruiting to two key roles: Service Director – Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) and Head of Financial Management.

If you join us, you will play a central part in shaping the future of finance at Wakefield.

You will lead the continued development of our financial strategy, strengthen business partnering across the organisation,

and support the delivery of sustainable budgets and effective financial governance. Just as importantly, you will help us transform how finance works – moving from a largely traditional model to one that is more digital, more analytical and more strategically focused.

These roles offer the opportunity to make a genuine impact. You will work closely with the Corporate Management Team, elected Members and colleagues across the organisation to influence decisions, support transformation, and ensure that public resources

are used to deliver the best possible outcomes for our residents.

Wakefield is a place with real momentum. We have a strong leadership team, ambitious regeneration and growth plans, and a shared commitment to modernising how we operate as a council. For the right individuals, this is an opportunity not only to contribute to that journey but also to shape it.

If you are a finance professional who wants to play a visible leadership role in a council that values innovation, collaboration and strong financial stewardship, we would be delighted to hear from you.

I hope this pack gives you a helpful insight into Wakefield Council, the opportunities these roles present, and the contribution you could make here.



Sarfraz Nawaz
Wakefield Council

About Wakefield



Castleford Market

The City

We are a district of over 350,000 people with a diverse range of city, urban and rural communities.

We've huge strengths in our health and care, manufacturing and logistics, and arts and creative sectors. All part of our £8 billion economy.

We're proud of our heritage of making and creating. Our place at the heart of Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region which makes our connectivity by road or rail hard to beat. And our 10,000 local businesses.

We're home to some great attractions. We've got Pontefract Racecourse and Hemsworth Water Park. The internationally recognised Hepworth Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and National Coal Mining Museum.

And we've got two Super League teams,

Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and Castleford Tigers.

Our 16 local nature reserves mean we've got more than anywhere else in West Yorkshire. 70% of our district is greenbelt. That makes our area a great place both to live and work.

And we've a growing regional profile as a key part of the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

The Council

We're one of the five metropolitan Councils in West Yorkshire. And one of ten districts within the wider, thriving Leeds City Region.

We've got a great team of over 5,000 staff who help us to deliver a wide range of services. Including supporting the education of our young people, caring for vulnerable children and adults, and providing support to residents when they most need it.

We invest in our places, maintain local highways, and make sure we keep our communities safe and clean.

We've 63 elected Councillors who oversee and scrutinise how we provide vital public services for our communities.

Labour's Cllr Denise Jeffrey is our Council Leader. Decisions are taken by our Cabinet, appointed by the Leader and comprised of Councillors from our majority political group. And our cross-party Scrutiny Committees look at how we're delivering for local people.

They scrutinise work in our Children and Young People, Adults and Public Health, Regeneration, Environment and Economic Growth, and Transformation Directorates. Those sit alongside a strategic Chief Executive's Unit.

The Opportunity

Service Director – Finance (Deputy s151)

Salary up to £103,463

Wakefield Council



County Hall, Wakefield

Wakefield Council is a large and ambitious authority serving more than 350,000 residents across a diverse district of city, towns and rural communities in West Yorkshire, focused on strengthening communities, growing their economy, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering a greener and more sustainable district.

Finance plays a critical role in enabling those ambitions.

We are now supporting the council in appointing a Service Director – Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) to shape the next phase of their financial journey.

Reporting to the Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), you will lead the Council’s Financial Services

function and will provide strategic leadership across financial management, audit and risk, and revenues and benefits, while supporting the development and delivery of the council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

This is a highly visible role at the heart of the organisation. You will work closely with the Corporate Management Team, elected Members and senior colleagues across the Council to ensure robust financial stewardship, informed decision-making and effective financial governance.

You will also play a key role in modernising their finance function – strengthening business partnering, improving financial insight, and embedding a culture where finance operates as a trusted strategic

advisor across the organisation.

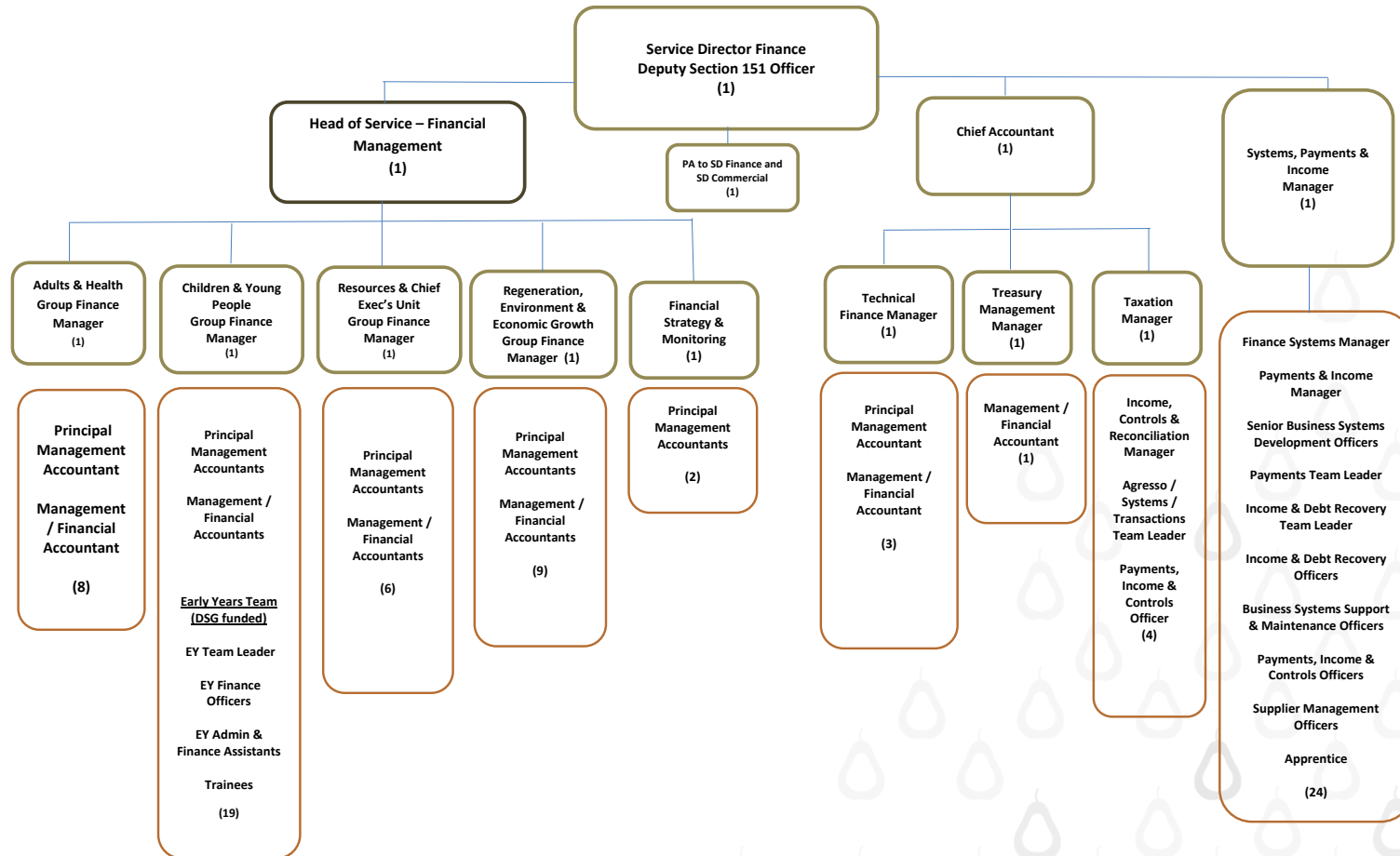
We are looking for a CCAB or CIMA qualified finance professional with:

- finance leadership experience within local government or a similarly complex organisation
- A track record of delivering financial strategy, organisational change and service improvement

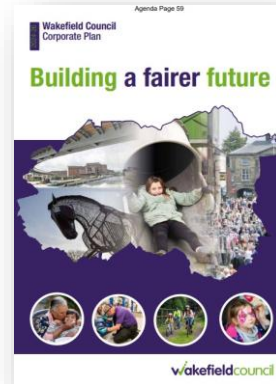
A collaborative leadership style and a commitment to developing high-performing teams.

This is an excellent opportunity for either an aspiring finance leader or an ambitious Deputy S151 looking to take on a broader leadership role in a large and forward-looking authority.

Proposed Structure Chart



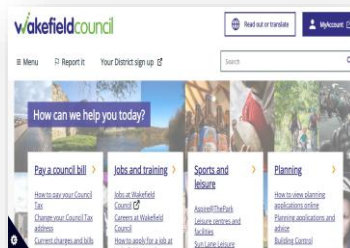
Further Reading



[Wakefield Council Corporate Plan](#)



[Wakefield District Plan](#)



[Wakefield Council Web Site](#)



[Wakefield Council Finance](#)



[Wakefield Council Budget](#)

Job Description

Service Director – Finance (Deputy s151)

Salary up to £103,463

Wakefield Council

Overall Purpose of Post

The role leads and directs the Council's financial services, ensuring robust financial systems, strong governance, and the effective use of resources.

Acting as Deputy Section 151 Officer, it supports the Corporate Director (Resources) (Section 151 Officer) in safeguarding public funds and ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

The post provides strategic leadership across Financial Management, Audit and Risk, and Revenues and Benefits, maintaining a clear focus on strong financial stewardship and effective decision-making.

This role is a key leader in driving the modernisation of financial systems,

processes, and culture to create a forward-thinking, agile finance function to position finance as a trusted advisor and strategic partner across all services by ensuring compliance with all relevant financial regulations, professional standards, and best practice.

Key Responsibilities

Service Delivery

To lead the effective financial management of the Council's resources. This includes taking the lead role in developing and maintaining the Council's medium term financial plans, budget setting, monitoring and management (including capital programme), working in collaboration with the Corporate Director (Resources), Chief Executive, CMT, Leader of the Council and

Cabinet Members. This also includes the preparation of the key financial reports for the Council during the year, including the Budget Setting report for Budget Council, the Financial Outturn.

Ensure accurate and timely reporting on conclusion of the financial year and in-year budget monitoring and update reports.

Make arrangements for the proper administration of the totality Council's financial affairs, working with the Section 151 Officer, to ensure compliance with the Chief Finance Officer protocol and providing assurances as such to the Audit & Governance committee on an annual basis.

Take a lead in ensuring that there is a robust financial control environment in place across the council. Supporting the

Job Description

Council's Section 151 Officer in ensuring the Council's financial accounting arrangements and production of the Annual revenue and rolling capital budgets for the Council to ensure the provision of systems for monitoring expenditure against budget provision.

Effectively manage and monitor budgets within designated areas whilst ensuring that the Council maximises resources by securing additional investment and increased efficiency when the opportunity arises.

Maintain a long-term financial strategy to underpin the authority's financial viability within the agreed performance framework.

Take the lead in implementing financial management policies to underpin sustainable long-term financial health and reviewing performance against them.

Report to Council on both the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of financial reserves and ensuring compliance with the prudential capital regime.

Be the principal point of contact for liaison with the council's external auditor. Approval of the annual statutory statement of accounts and their presentation Audit Committee.

Enable the hosting arrangements of Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and West Yorkshire Joint Services, including ensuring that the Section 151 Officer is able to discharge their responsibilities effectively, deputising where required.

Provide professional and timely advice to senior colleagues and Elected Members on whether particular decisions are likely to be contrary to the policy framework or budget of the council.

Support the designated Section 151 Officer to act, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service, to report to all members and the external auditor if there is, or is likely to be, unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget.

Maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit for accounting records and

control systems.

Be the Council's representative to the West Yorkshire Directors of Finance Group and other regional finance forums.

Develop, manage and monitor the Council's integrated financial strategies with particular

regard to treasury management, capital programme financing, reserves strategies and pension

liabilities.

In conjunction with the designated Section 151 Officer, ensure the effective management of cash flows, borrowings and investments of the authority's own funds or the pension and trust funds it manages on behalf of others; ensuring the effective management of associated risks; pursuing optimum performance or return consistent with those risks.

Provide briefings, professional advice and liaison on financial matters with the Leader and the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder(s).

Job Description

Contribute to wider Council agendas and ensure service delivery is aligned to corporate priorities outlined in the Corporate Performance Plan and the Community Strategy.

Promote open and effective communications with the Council's key partners and stakeholders supporting key relationships and establishing strong, externally focussed relationships with partner organisations.

Lead and be responsible for and deliver cross cutting projects that impact across the council at the direction of CMT or the Corporate Director (Resources).

Management Responsibilities

Leading and directing the finance function so that it makes a full contribution to and meets the needs of the business.

To take over all responsibility for the Council's Finance Service providing clear leadership for staff and ensuring performance is adequately managed in

accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Effectively manage and monitor budgets within designated areas whilst ensuring that the Council maximise resources by securing additional investment and increased efficiency when opportunity arises.

Promote a positive attitude towards all health and safety and welfare issues, ensuring that all staff are aware of and observe both statutory and authority requirements as ways of achieving a safe working environment.

Ensure the Service meets the requirements of good governance as stated in the Council's Constitution, policies and procedures.

Manage organisational change related to initiatives to support improvements in service.

Involving and engaging staff in all aspects of service development, encouraging innovation and the spread of new ideas.

Provide effective supervision and performance management reviews and plan training in accordance with identified need.

Develop and implement a performance culture which allows the service to deliver agreed objectives consistently, effectively and efficiently.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and scope of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Employees (Supervision):

- Direct Line management responsibility for up to 6 direct reports.
- Indirect management of the Financial Services staffing structure, approximately 250 posts.

Job Description

Financial:

- £8.5m Financial Services budget.
- £381m Council Wide budget & collection fund.
- External borrowing to the value of c.£400m and daily management of the Council's cash flow.
- Oversight of the Council's capital programme – currently c.£400m.

Customers and Clients:

- To provide professional and technical advice to elected members and senior officers of the Council including the Corporate Management Team (CMT) meetings, Cabinet meetings and joint Cabinet/CMT strategy meetings.
- Senior Managers and Board Members at West Yorkshire Joint Services
- To maintain excellent internal and external communications with Members,

Senior Officers, Stakeholders and Partners, voluntary and private agencies, staff and advisers of national organizations, other local authorities, police, health trusts, community groups, government departments, regional and sub-regional agencies, other agencies with which the Council works in partnership.

- To support existing and develop new partnerships.
- To represent the Council on local, regional and national bodies as required.

Working Conditions:

- Mainly office based, with requirement to travel to other sites to meet operational demands when required.

Characteristics of the post:

- Employees are encouraged to participate in training activities in order to enhance their own personal development.
- This is a politically restricted post.
- The postholder will need to be able to make decisions quickly and in response to service needs.
- The nature of the job will require flexibility and necessitate being part of an out of hour's rota. for on call which may occasionally extend to evening and weekend work.
- The postholder will need to exercise discretion in handling highly confidential information.
- The postholder will need to be able to lead project teams and to establish good working relationships at all levels both internally and externally.

Person Specification

Please find below the qualifications, experience and technical skills required to undertake this post. Each criterion will be assessed at application (A), interview (I) or test (T) as indicated below.

Qualifications/ Training

CCAB or CIMA qualified accountant with significant evidence of continuous learning and professional development in leadership and digital finance. (Essential).

Management qualification. (Desirable).

Knowledge

- Knowledge of strategic financial issues in relation to Section 151 responsibilities. (Essential).
- Thorough understanding of local government finance and how it works. (Essential).
- Thorough understanding of corporate and partnership working. (Essential).
- Knowledge of and demonstrable evidence of working in line with CIPFA

principles for Chief Finance Officers. (Essential).

- In depth understanding of Section 151 statutory responsibilities. (Desirable).
- Knowledge of national and local government, public sector policy and developments. (Desirable).

Experience

- Senior finance leadership within local government or similar organization and/or including significant experience of working at a senior financial management level within a large multi-functional organisation. (Essential).
- Experience of successful financial management and participation in the formulation of innovative financial strategies, objectives and policies. (Essential).
- Successful experience of leading, developing and motivating a team of finance professionals within a large multi-functional organisation. (Essential).

- Working effectively in a political environment and engaging with cabinet/members as appropriate. (Essential).
- Substantial experience of applying analytical thinking and creativity to resolve complex financial and organisational challenges. (Essential).
- Evidence of success in developing and implementing strategies and change management programmes across both organisational and partnership boundaries. (Desirable).
- Understanding of commercialisation and income generation strategies. (Desirable).
- Process mapping/ lean methodology experience. (Desirable).

Person Specification

Leadership

- Creates a vision and direction that challenges and looks beyond the obvious. Inspiring and motivating others to achieve by driving change and leading by example.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to influence, negotiate and establish credibility for the service, to enhance its reputation, and to form positive relationships.
- Ability to employ a range of leadership styles which focus on achieving results in terms of outcomes for managers and customers.
- Proven ability to manage in a time critical, efficiency driven environment.
- Ability to challenge both up and down the line in an appropriate way to suit the situation and deliver the right outcomes.
- Able to plan and structure work to ensure objectives are achieved within required timescales, anticipating contingencies and making best use of available

resources.

- Strong business planning and management skills, including planning competing priorities and resources.

Forward Planning & Delivery

- Ability to plan and develop the service in line with organisational and service specific visions and plans.

Communication

- Ability to communicate complex information both orally and in writing in a clear, articulate, balanced and succinct way.

Customer Focus

- A commitment to respond to service user and partnership needs and proactively manage expectations.

Continuous Improvement

- Proven ability to evidence achievement and continuous improvement.

Managing Successful Delivery

- A successful track record of leading

strategic policy development and implementing strategies to drive continuous improvement with evidence of managing change.

- Ability to find and implement creative and innovative solutions to complex problems.

Focus on Citizens

- A successful track record of leading strategic policy development and implementing strategies to drive continuous improvement with evidence of managing change.

Decisive Problem Solving

- Ability to find and implement creative and innovative solutions to complex problems.

Successful Team & Partnership Working

- Evidence of working in a multi- agency environment to promote collaboration and achieve efficiencies through effective partnership working.

Next Steps & How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

Please apply by submitting a CV and Supporting Statement (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 Supporting Statement 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 via our website.

Please upload 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.

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

Key Dates

Applications deadline	Sunday 19 April 2026
Technical Interviews	Thursday 23 April (Teams)
Final Interviews	Wednesday 29 April (In Person)

For questions or a confidential discussion, please contact:



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on 07805 226301 or
andrew.tromans@penna.com

Penna Executive Search

At Penna, we connect exceptional professionals with leadership opportunities that make a real difference.

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**Any questions?
Please don't hesitate to contact us**



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