

# CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

**Chief Financial Services Officer**

**Prepared for Folkestone and Hythe District Council**

**October 2022**



Penna

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## Welcome Letter

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in Folkestone and Hythe District Council. We have recently been ranked fourth in the Best Not for Profit Companies to work for in the UK and that's not by accident - our people are our biggest assets and our 'one team' culture delivers great services for our residents.

We've also launched our new corporate plan, Creating Tomorrow Together 2021 – 2031, which sets out our key service ambitions for the district over the next 10 years and outlines our priorities for action to make Folkestone and Hythe an even better place to live, work and visit:

- Positive Community Leadership
- A Thriving Environment
- A Vibrant Economy
- Quality Homes and Infrastructure

We are recruiting for three new finance roles who will be at the forefront of robust financial governance alongside playing a key role working with departments in delivering our ambitious plan.

Whilst we have three roles available at this time, one has been newly created and another become vacant after our current postholder retires after 40 years service with us. So needless to say, we are a great team and have some really exciting work ahead with many ambitious projects to get involved within, such as the Otterpool Park Garden Town. This is a unique opportunity to get involved in such a project at its early stages, and to be part of the team considering the financial and technical implications as it progresses. We need you to have a positive, proactive attitude and be able to deliver success in partnership with colleagues & elected members.

I hope that the unique range and scale of the ambitious and exciting projects proposed in our district will encourage you to make an application to join our finance team, to further your career and to gain unique experience.

If you have the vision, energy, creativity and enthusiasm for required, combined with a passion for the public sector then please make an application to join us.

For more information on this opportunity, please contact our recruitment partners at Penna in the first instance.

Kind regards,  
Charlotte

## About Folkestone and Hythe District Council

Folkestone & Hythe District Council serves more than 53,000 households and 5,000 businesses in one of the most diverse, vibrant and well-connected parts of Kent's south coast.

Under an hour away from London via High Speed rail, Folkestone is the civic heart of the district and the base for the council headquarters. The residents of Folkestone & Hythe are represented by 30 councillors covering the districts' 13 wards. The current political composition of the council is: Conservatives - 11, Green Party – 6, Labour Party - 5, Liberal Democrats - 3, UKIP – 2, and Independents - 3.

The council's corporate plan - Creating Tomorrow Together – outlines our bold ambitions to 2030 and our focus on fostering a vibrant economy and a thriving environment whilst demonstrating positive community leadership and ensuring our residents, tenants and leaseholders benefit from quality homes and infrastructure.

Exciting changes are happening in the district, including rapid expansion in the number of homes and jobs – our new Garden Town will deliver up to 10,000 new homes and land for business use over the next 30 years.

Several other high profile proactive development projects are also being pushed forward by the council including the regeneration of key town centre sites and the creation of a new leisure centre.

Our council is transforming and modernising with digital first principles and an inclusive attitude to agile and remote working. This coupled with our regeneration ambitions, long-term vision and sound financial management means we are in a strong position to positively shape our future for the benefit of all residents.

To find out more about our council please visit [folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

## About Folkestone and Hythe

Folkestone and Hythe is an extraordinary place to live, work and visit.

Twenty-six miles of stunning coastline extend from the creative buzz of Folkestone and the elegance of Hythe to the big sky country of Romney Marsh and the UK's only desert at Dungeness. Unique landscapes, art, heritage, culture and foodie experiences combine to create an extraordinary place which also happens to be one of the sunniest places in the UK.

The district regularly enjoys national coverage – particularly Folkestone with the recently restored Harbour Arm becoming a popular destination for events, music, eating and discovering the history of the area. Internationally renowned is the Folkestone Triennial, an arts festival held every three years, where site-specific artworks are commissioned around the town. Select pieces are retained after each event creating a cultural legacy that draws in thousands to an ever-growing collection of public art - from pieces by Anthony Gormley to Yoko Ono.

Folkestone & Hythe is also well connected with the M20 running through the district and providing easy access to local towns and villages, the national motorway network, Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover. The district also has excellent connectivity to central London too via high speed rail services, with trains between Folkestone Central and London St Pancras taking as little as 54 minutes.

To find out more about Folkestone & Hythe please visit <http://www.folkestoneandhythe.co.uk/>

## Advertisement

### **Chief Financial Services Officer**

#### **Folkestone & Hythe Council**

£64-78k plus £4,200 car allowance

Folkestone & Hythe is a vibrant, connected and energetic district located on Kent's south coast. Thanks to the high-speed rail, it's just under an hour away from London. And it's where you'll find some fantastic benefits, including corporate memberships and reward schemes, an Employee Assistance Programme, the Local Government Pension Scheme, and much more.

#### **About the role**

As our Chief Financial Services Officer, you'll manage a broad portfolio of work that includes Corporate Debt, Business Rates, Housing Income Recovery, Insurance, Risk Management and of course the core Accountancy function. The Finance team mostly work remotely and come into the office on the first Tuesday of every month. You'll bring a similarly flexible approach, and you're happy to attend Committee meetings several times a month.

Your focus will be on providing strong leadership, as well as maintaining effective financial administration and stewardship. By ensuring compliance, you'll help meet our statutory, regulatory and professional obligations. You'll lead the budget monitoring and preparation of the Council's annual financial statements activities. And you'll lead the teams who are advising our Members and senior leaders on the financial implications of what we're doing now and in the future. We have an ambitious agenda and there will be the opportunity to play a key role in considering the financial implications for the Council of our Garden Town project Otterpool Park.

#### **About you**

We're looking for someone who brings at least five years' experience of successfully leading teams in local government or public sector finance. You know what it takes to maintain a strong, effective performance culture. And you understand how to navigate a large, complex political environment and work with elected Members.

In terms of technical capability, you bring a CCAB (Accountancy) qualification, as well as the detailed knowledge required for effective budget monitoring and the preparation of financial statements. You understand current thinking, best practices, feasibility, project scoping, business planning and delivery. Plus, you have a track record of delivering successful budget and year-end processes, and managing relationships at every level.

Applications will be considered as they are submitted.

We reserve the right to close the vacancy once enough suitable applications are received

#### **How to apply**

For further information or to apply please click [here](#).

For a confidential discussion, please contact Andrew Barton on 07922 386432 or [andrew.barton@penna.com](mailto:andrew.barton@penna.com)

## Job Description

<b>Job Title</b>	Chief Financial Services Officer
<b>Behavioural Framework Level</b>	4
<b>Grade</b>	K
<b>Reports To</b>	Director – Corporate Services
<b>Politically Restricted Post</b>	Yes
<b>DBS Requirement</b>	Basic

### Responsibilities

- To ensure compliance with the statutory, regulatory and professional obligations of the authority with regard to maintaining effective financial administration and stewardship for the Council and related organisations.
- To lead the budget preparation, budget monitoring and preparation of the Council's annual financial statements activities and ensure they are completed to the specified standards and deadlines.
- To lead the teams professional advice to Members and to service management on the financial implications of current and proposed service delivery activities.
- To support the Director of Corporate Services in ensuring that matters related to Otterpool Park LLP are financially appraised, being the lead client contact for engaged consultants and ensuring that the council has robust financial governance arrangements in place to safeguard public funds.
- To manage the arrangements for funding agreements with Otterpool Park LLP to enable the council to discharge its duties as lender.
- To oversee the monitoring of financial arrangements within Otterpool Park LLP to enable the council to discharge their duties as a corporate body, ensuring the Director of Corporate Services is aware of any material concerns.
- To support the Director of Corporate Services with managing the relationship with Internal and External Audit
- To ensure the team are adequately skilled and experienced to provide professional support (for example, financial modelling, options appraisal and business planning) for new initiatives and opportunities to enable informed decision-making. To oversee this advice and provide technical expertise where required for more complex initiatives and opportunities.
- To remain aware of current best practice and legislation/regulation with regards to financial matters affecting the authority and implement change or required action to address them.
- To lead the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- To ensure that financial reporting is accurate, relevant and timely to support effective decision-making and meet statutory responsibilities.
- To collaborate with other Chief Officers to ensure the service area is supporting teams to deliver the objectives of the Corporate Plan.
- To oversee and lead the preparation of the annual budget including the Medium Term Capital Programme, Collection Fund projections, Budget Strategy, Reserves and Council Tax setting, ensuring all financial implications have been considered and CLT/members made aware of implications or risks in the decisions proposed.
- To ensure that the teams within the posts remit, comply with the requirements of corporate functions such as service planning, including monitoring delivery against targets/deadlines and taking action to address shortfalls in performance.
- Lead, develop and motivate finance staff, by providing direction, identifying emerging issues and determining priorities.

- To lead the management of the succession plan for the finance team.
- To lead finance input into the Annual Governance Statement.
- To undertake any required procurement activity within the service area in a timely manner and within the requirements of the Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Standing Orders and the Constitutional requirements.
- To have oversight over the management of the Public Inspection to the Accounts period of inspection and responsibility for ensuring compliance with the regulations.
- To ensure the council has adequate insurance cover in place and that claims are managed appropriately.
- To ensure that the council has adequate arrangements in place for the recovery of corporate, housing, council tax, and business rates debts.
- To ensure the council is compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to NNDR.
- To ensure that the specialist teams with their remit work constructively with the Case Management team to deliver high service standards to residents and businesses within the district.
- To oversee the councils annual council tax and NNDR billing.

### **Autonomy**

- This is a senior management role within the Council and the post holder will be expected to have a very high level of autonomy to manage their workload and priorities with minimal managerial direction
- The post holder will have the independence to lead and shape the specialist area, consulting as appropriate with CLT and Cabinet for discussion, development and approval.
- The post holder will be working across a range of projects and will be expected to demonstrate the relevant initiative to oversee their development and execution.
- The post holder must have the expertise and confidence to not only make decisions relating to financial matters affecting the authority, but be prepared to justify their advice/recommendations/decisions under scrutiny and challenge. The post holder must also be prepared to present sometimes under contentious circumstances to committee meetings attended by the public and press with confidence and authority.
- The postholder will be expected to take decisions within the approved scheme of delegation such as journal transfers, budget virements, write offs, BACS and cheques release, Bankline urgent payment releases, late payments, release of reserves, VAT returns, Pooling of Capital Receipts return, NNDR relief awards, loan and investment decisions for treasury management.

### **Role specific qualifications, experience and knowledge**

- CCAB (Accountancy) qualification
- Minimum of 5 years' experience of leading teams to deliver successful outcomes in a relevant field.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in a Local Government or Public Sector finance team.
- Demonstrable track record of delivering successful budget processes resulting in a balanced budget being set and sound collection fund estimates and accurate council tax setting and billing.
- Demonstrable track record of delivering successful year end processes including the preparation of financial statements, and external audit.
- Understanding of feasibility, project scoping, business planning and delivery.
- Knowledge of 'current thinking' and best practice approaches to inform strategic decision making.
- Experience in successfully working in a large complex political environment and reporting to / work with elected Members



- A demonstrable record of establishing and maintaining a strong and effective performance culture.
- Experience of successfully managing relationships with internal and external audit teams.
- Evidence of success in building, enhancing and maintaining the reputation of a specialist area.
- Knowledge of NNDR requirement and legislation (desirable).
- Demonstrable experience of leading and delivering successful change programmes (desirable)
- An in-depth knowledge and understanding of Local Government Finance.
- Detailed knowledge of mechanisms for effective budget monitoring.
- A technical accounting understanding of Group Accounts.
- Experience of managing financial arrangements with a subsidiary company arrangement (desirable)

### Corporate Expectations

- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.

### Specific Responsibilities

<b>Staff</b>	Overall responsibility for the Finance team
<b>Financial</b>	Responsibility for overseeing budgets and the deployment of resources relating to all aspects of the team and its schedule of work. Responsibility for the management of the financial arrangements of the authority.

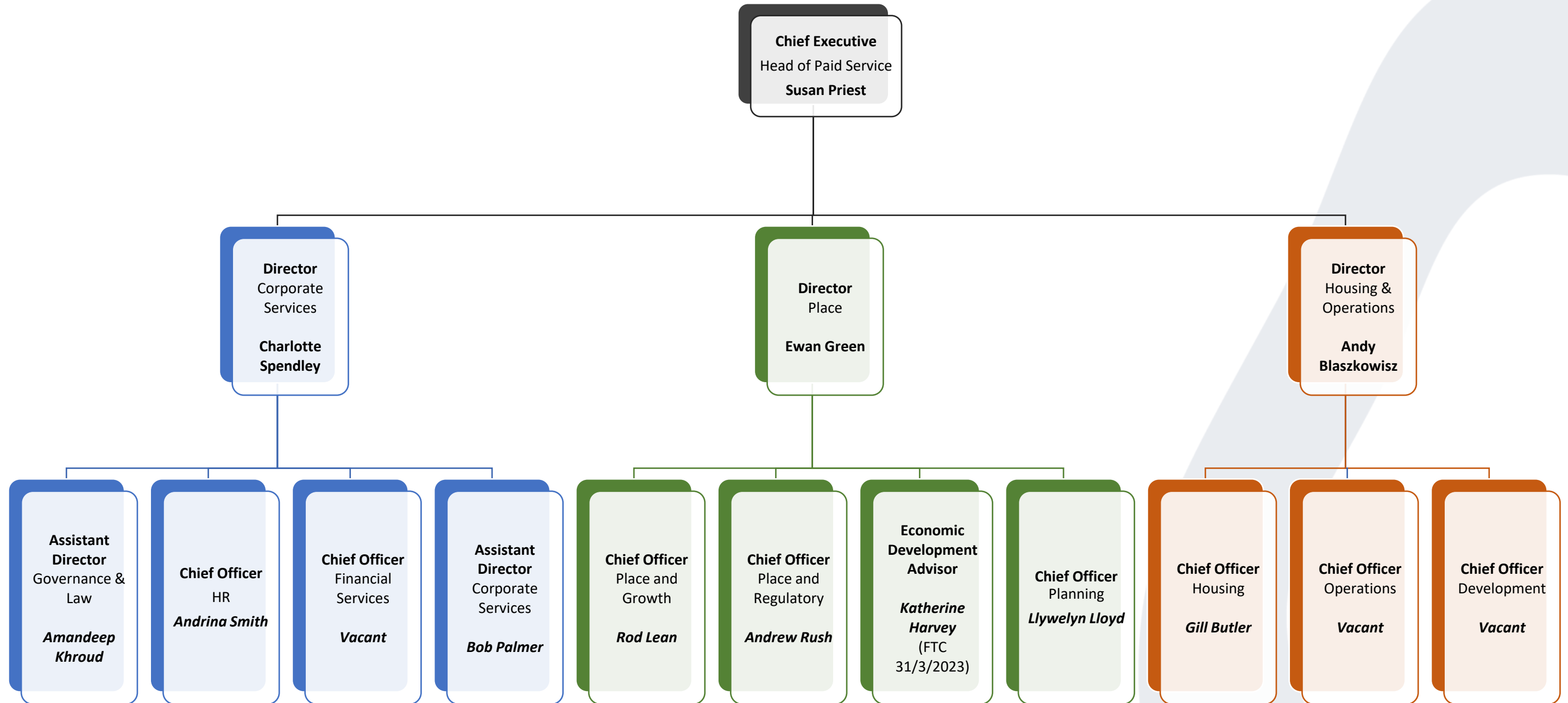
### Generic Role Profile: Chief Officer

Role purpose and commercial focus	Knowledge and skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be the Council's lead professional expert providing advice to the Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team with a focus on supporting the delivery of key corporate projects and priorities.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with the Corporate Leadership Team of the Council and stakeholders to develop and deliver the objectives of the Corporate Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The post holder will be self-sufficient in the role, with detailed expertise underpinned by significant theoretical and authoritative knowledge in organisational and business concepts with the ability to apply knowledge to develop innovative solutions to highly complex problems.</li> <li>• Formal training / qualifications (typically degree / masters / chartered professional qualifications) may be applicable or</li> </ul>

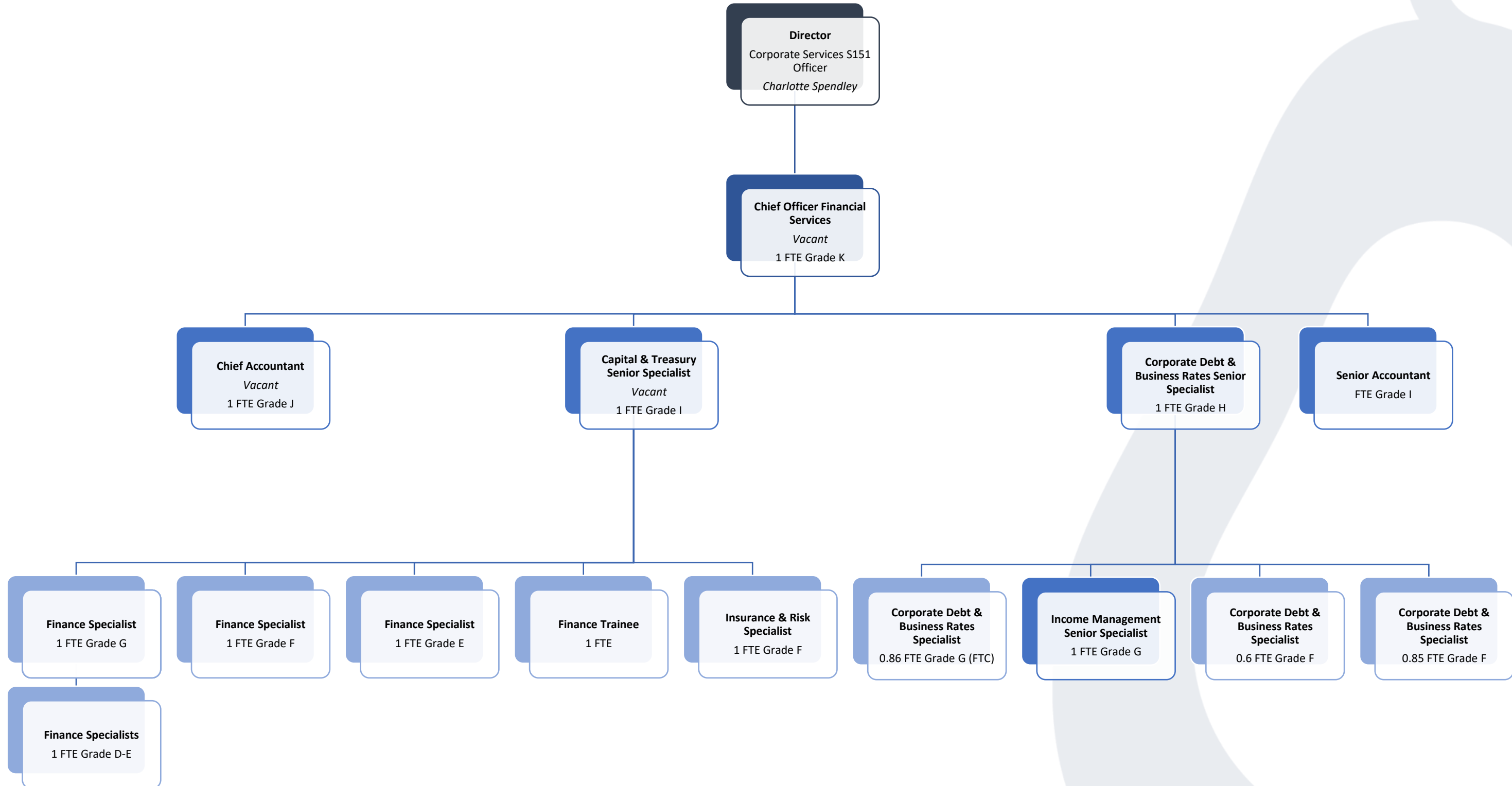
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive, lead and manage change within the relevant specialist area at pace ensuring involvement and engagement with key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Work with the political leadership to advise, support, challenge and deliver their vision. In particular, to work closely with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of any Committee's where the post holder is the lead officer providing advice and guidance.</li> </ul>	<p>expertise may have been obtained through extensive relevant experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant management skills including resource planning and project management</li> <li>• Significant experience of setting and monitoring budgets across the relevant service area and accounting for very large expenditures to ensure delivery within available financial resources</li> <li>• The post holder will be expected to have advanced theoretical and practical knowledge across a relevant service area plus detailed organisational knowledge and awareness of the political environment</li> <li>• Knowledge of advancements in the relevant specialist areas including different delivery models and the use of digital technology</li> <li>• The post holder will require excellent business analytical skills and an ability to retain complex information in order to translate strategy into delivery plans and programmes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organising and forward focus</b></p>	<p><b>Communicating and Influencing</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for establishing policy, performance monitoring and reporting frameworks over the medium and long term, and delivering on-going improvement.</li> <li>• Lead change programmes within the specialist area responding to complex and changing situations by using creative problem solving and bringing new thinking, delivery mechanisms and solutions to the council.</li> <li>• To keep up to date with and implement any changes in so far as they apply to the role, be they new or amended legal requirements, internal or external policies or any council or delegated decisions</li> <li>• Frequent reporting will be required, including reviewing reports from officers within the specialist area, which will vary but include analysing business cases, realisation of benefits data, strengths &amp; weaknesses of proposals and ideas or requirements for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of building well developed relationships with elected members.</li> <li>• Experience of building sound and productive multi-agency, cross-council partnerships, engaging others in a credible, persuasive way in order to influence the desired outcome.</li> <li>• Ability to resolve a wide range of issues relating to the specialist area which may be complex and contentious whilst tailoring the response to the appropriate audience (eg members of the public or member of parliament) accurately with tact and diplomacy</li> <li>• Develop and present reports/presentations to the Head of Paid Service and the wider CLT/SMT to create buy-in and support in setting the council's future direction.</li> <li>• Develop detailed reports, documents and presentations for a range of audiences ensuring accuracy of information and data</li> <li>• Represent the Council at county and national meetings, conferences and events.</li> </ul>

Scope of role	Demands of role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role has a very major responsibility for the relevant specialist area in the development of strategies and policies which may have impact upon the wider council</li> <li>• The post holder has considerable discretion over their specialist area with accountability for decisions made</li> <li>• The post holder has responsibility for the management of a number of employees within the relevant specialist area including reviewing the working practices and allocation of responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a highly demanding and high profile role subject to high levels of scrutiny of recommendations and decisions both internally and externally.</li> <li>• Adept and resilient at managing resistance to change.</li> <li>• The post holder will be subject to unavoidable interruptions which may create conflicting demands on work plans and agreed deadlines.</li> <li>• The post holder is expected to produce strategies and long term plans for their specialist area which will have numerous wide ranging and very complex aspects to be taken into consideration.</li> </ul>

## Senior Management Structure Chart



# Finance Structure Chart



## How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and Covering 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; and that where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications you 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.
- 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.
- At any point throughout the process our retained consultants at Penna will be happy to help you with information, insight and guidance about the process and our clients.

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Date	Activity
<b>Closing Date</b>	Friday 18th November 2022
<b>Shortlist Meeting</b>	Monday 28th November 2022
<b>Psychometric Online Testing</b>	W/C 28th November 2022
<b>Stakeholder Panels &amp; Final Interviews</b>	Monday 12th and Wednesday 14th December 2022

To apply for this role, please click [here](#).

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact Andrew Barton on 07922 386432 or [andrew.barton@penna.com](mailto:andrew.barton@penna.com)