

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Principal Accountant (Generic)

DEPARTMENT: Customer & Commercial

DIVISION: Finance

UNIT: Accountancy

TEAM:

RESPONSIBLE TO: Finance Business Partner

GRADE: M5

PURPOSE OF POST:

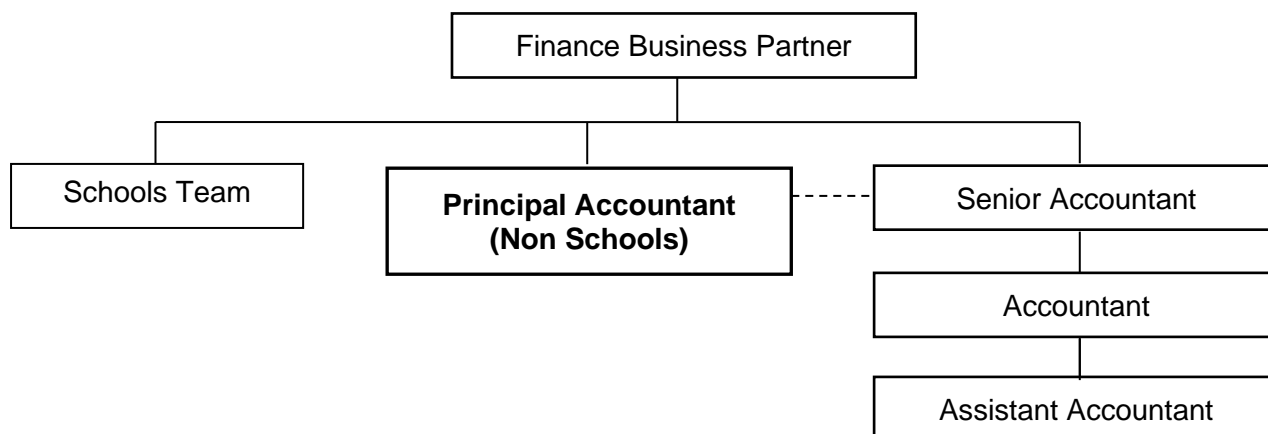
To lead, co-ordinate and be accountable for the provision of enabling, customer-focussed accountancy and financial management services relating to the departments served by their finance teams.

To ensure that all estimates (revenue and capital) and accounts (revenue, capital and balance sheet) are accurate, timely, consistent with corporate financial policy, practice and guidance, best professional practice and all pertinent legislation and financial regulations.

To deputise for the Finance Business Partner as required, and provide high quality financial advice to managers whenever needed.

ORGANISATION CHART:

Children's Family & Education and Population Wellbeing Departments (Excluding Housing and COD Service areas)



PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- | | <u>%</u> |
|--|----------|
| 1. Lead, co-ordinate and be accountable for budget monitoring of revenue capital and balance sheet accounts, and of all trading accounts and business plans that relate to the departments for which the service team is responsible. Accountability for ensuring that all monitoring predictions are made by the most appropriate managers based on the best information available, and in line with the corporate timetable and instructions, and that written reasons for variations are provided in accordance with the timetable, concisely and accurately, in a format appropriate for a committee report and as requested by Corporate Finance. | 20 |
| 2. Undertake specialist project work of a complex nature, preparing reports, representing accountancy services on working groups including some external groups and providing financial management and related expertise as and when required. | 15 |
| 3. Lead, co-ordinate and be accountable for the preparation of revenue and capital estimates (including trading), budget profiling, and scales of charges for the departments for which the Principal Accountant's service team is responsible. Accountability for ensuring that the team meets all targets, milestones and quality criteria in corporate and departmental timetables and instructions. | 15 |
| 4. Lead, co-ordinate and be accountable for the preparation of all revenue, capital and balance sheet accounts for which the service team is responsible, including trading and limited company accounts where required, in accordance with the Council's accounting policies, | 15 |

legislative requirements, and all guidelines and timetables issued by Corporate Finance.

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 5. | Manage the process for finding savings in the departments supported by the finance team, taking responsibility for managing, monitoring and keeping up to date a savings tracker in a corporate format, working with the service departments and the finance team in order to do so. | 10 |
| 6. | Provide professional advice, support and challenge to budget holders, senior managers, chief officers and members through quality financial information and provide effective solutions to ensure value for money is obtained. Undertake continuous professional development to ensure professional standards are maintained and best practice is strengthened. | 10 |
| 7. | Continuously review the provision of information and advice by the team to all its stakeholders – departmental management teams, cost centre managers, corporate finance, the people of Luton, etc. – assess how it can be improved, and, working with other team members as appropriate, plan implement and review improvements. | 5 |
| 8. | Accountability for ensuring that the team meets all statutory requirements for information, adheres to all Council guidelines and timescales for responses to information requests and complaints, provides information to auditors (external and internal) in accordance with their requests and timescales, that all information required for grant claims is provided in time to enable the Council to claim the maximum to which it is legitimately entitled. | 5 |
| 9. | Deputise for the Finance Business Partner as required in the provision of strategic Business Partnering advice, and the management of the Finance team. | 5 |

DIMENSIONS:

Supervisory Management: Financial Resources:

Matrix management of Service Finance Teams

Contributory influence over the Departmental Service Budgets for which the Finance Team is responsible – (TBA when Gross Spend and Income, and Cap Prog by new Dept. has been mapped)

Physical Resources: Other:

N/A
N/A

CONTEXT:

The post holders will be accountable for their team's delivery of all core financial and management accounting processes and information. As such, the post holders will

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*Date JD last reviewed: DG Aug 2016
Date of JE Panel: 15/09/16*

need to be enabling, problem-solving individuals with an excellent understanding of service department needs, financial and management accounting requirements and standards, corporate finance requirements and the other demands placed on the staff in their teams. They will need to work closely with all the staff in their departmental service team, not only on the tasks for which they are directly accountable in their job descriptions, but also on enabling team members to work more efficiently on other tasks and to reduce other requirements in order to free up time to ensure that key targets are met.

The post requires demonstrable project management, problem solving, influencing and negotiation skills within a challenging environment. The post holders will need to be able and ready to undertake any aspect of the work programme when needed in order to deliver the results required, as well as managing the delivery of others.

The post holders will need to work extremely closely with corporate finance colleagues, ensuring that corporate and service finance are one effective corporate team, as well as ensuring that they and their teams provide a truly exceptional enabling service to the departments that they serve. The post holders will also need to appreciate the increasing demands on key managers in service departments as savings requirements increase. This will require innovative thought on how demands on managers can be reduced while maintaining standards of budget monitoring and management.

The post holder must ensure that all work is performed and assessed according to Lean principles, continuous improvement, and the requirement to obtain value for money for the Council.

Seek to contribute to the continuous review of all accountancy strategies, policies and procedures in response to the rules and regulations as laid down by Central Government, Accountancy bodies, and the Council in terms of revenue and capital expenditure, always seeking to ensure Value For Money and Best Practice.

Ensure that policies, procedures and activities are revised and/or implemented in a way that makes sure of equality for all in the way the service is delivered and also reflects the Council's commitment to work in active partnership with the community to regenerate Luton and improve the quality of life for all its citizens.

Physical Effort: N/A

Working Environment: Office based

Person Specification: PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT

This acts as selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of person and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential (E) :- without which candidate would be rejected

Desirable (D):- useful for choosing between two good candidates.

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give <u>clear examples</u> of how you meet the <u>essential and desirable</u> criteria.				
Attributes	Essential	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Experience	Substantial experience gained in a complex environment of accounting functions including budgeting, monitoring, year-end closure, financial modelling and planning.	1, 2	Experience of working in a Local Authority or Public Sector financial environment	1, 2
	In depth experience of using IT based financial management systems and the use and development of integrated spreadsheets to produce financial and management information.	1, 2, 5	Some experience of the provision of public sector Unitary financial services such as Adults Social Care, Childrens Social Care, Public Health and working with Health Partners	1, 2
	Demonstrable experience of reviewing and improving financial processes and procedures.	1, 2		
	Substantial experience of providing high quality financial and strategic advice at a senior level.	1, 2		
	Substantial experience of successful project management	1, 2		
Skills	Numerate and analytical with the ability to interpret, present or write complex financial reports and presentations to non-experts in a clear and comprehensible manner. C	1, 2, 5		
	Extensive spreadsheet, word-processing and financial system IT skills.	1, 2		
	Substantial management skills - Able to lead, motivate, enthuse, inform and develop a group of staff C	1, 2		
		1, 2		

	<p>Substantial communication skills – able to communicate with non-accountants, and negotiate, persuade and influence at a very senior level C</p> <p>Able to manage projects and processes using problem solving and project management techniques & able to manage change and respond flexibly to situations to meet tight deadlines. C</p> <p>Substantial organisational skills - able to plan and organise the work of the team and able to meet conflicting work demands, targets and deadlines. C</p>	1, 2		
		1, 2		
Equality Issues	Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of equality issues and legislation and its integration into service delivery.	1, 2		
Specialist Knowledge	In depth knowledge of accountancy principles and practice.	1,2	In depth knowledge of Local Government funding mechanisms and Accounting Codes of Practice	1, 2
Education and Training	Qualified accountant (CCAB) - i.e. CIPFA, CIMA, ICA, ACCA – or part-qualified with extensive experience and able to demonstrate continuing professional development. C	1,2,4		
Other Requirements	Able to visit establishments and attend meetings anywhere in Borough and, on occasion, further afield (approximately once a fortnight), with occasional working outside normal office hours.	1,2		

(1 = Application Form 2 = Interview 3 = Test 4 = Proof of Qualification 5 = Practical Exercise)

We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equalities Act (2010) to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Job-holder will ensure that Luton Borough Council's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to;

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- (i) Equal Opportunities
- (ii) Health and Safety
- (iii) Data Protection Act (1984 & 1998).