

Deputy Chief Accountant

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Job Description

Job Title Deputy Chief Accountant

Location Civic Offices

Grade/Salary Range RG10 (scp 50 to scp 53)

Service/Directorate Finance/Directorate of Resources

Job Purpose

1. To manage the production of the annual Statement of Accounts.
2. To manage the relationship with External Audit and key stakeholders to ensure accurate information and explanations are provided in a timely manner.
3. To maintain the integrity of the chart of accounts, balances, transactions and controls that facilitate all aspects of statutory and management reporting.
4. To provide technical accounting advice to Council staff to ensure that best practice and relevant accounting standards and guidance is followed.
5. To analyse and provide advice on potential impacts of changes in accounting codes of practice.
6. To deputise for the Chief Accountant in matters concerning financial accounting, accounts payable and financial systems administration and developments.

Designation of Post and Position within Departmental Structure

1. This post reports to the Chief Accountant and will work closely with other senior Financial Accountants within Finance.
2. Working alongside the Finance Leadership Team to ensure that the required professional standards are met in full.
3. Supporting the Chief Accountant with the provision of working papers as part of the annual Statement of Accounts process, and the reconciliation and monitoring of control accounts.
4. Influences through standard setting, documenting of guidance notes and setting of and reporting to timetables etc. the whole Finance Function

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. To manage and coordinate the production of the annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the CIPFA Accounting Code, the statutory timetable and other relevant guidance ensuring that recommendations are minimised.
2. To manage the professional training and produce process notes on setting and maintaining internal standards for technical accounting procedures and processes to ensure that all accountants and appropriate staff in Directorates follow best practice.

3. To liaise with the Council's External Auditor in their scrutiny of the Council's accounts ensuring that the audit process is as efficient as possible and complete working papers that are available for audit scrutiny.
4. To respond to Audit recommendations in a timely way and ensure that all advisory actions are implemented and subject to ongoing review to ensure compliance and standards are maintained.
5. To ensure monthly bank reconciliations are completed and suspense accounts are cleared on a regular basis and cleared by the year end to ensure all appropriate transactions are recorded in management accounts.
6. Ensure the regular production and sign off of all required reconciliations in accordance with the prescribed timetable, including the clearing suspense accounts in a timely manner.
7. To prepare briefing reports in response to technical accounting consultations from CIPFA and government departments as required.
8. Working with the Financial Systems Team, ensure that the General Ledger system and Chart of Accounts are maintained and complies with accounting presentation standards that deliver accurate and timely reporting from the system.
9. To support the continuous improvement of the finance system to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the finance team and manager self-service.
10. VAT is correctly accounted for and re-claimed from HMRC within deadline, and financial inspections are responded to quickly to good customer relationships are maintained.
11. Manage accurate and timely VAT and tax accounting and reporting and secure relevant advice from the Council's tax advisers as required.
12. To liaise with the Accounts Payable and Financial Systems teams, ensuring appropriate controls are in place.
13. To support and ensure that arrangements are in place and maintained for effective joint planning and working with key stakeholders across all service areas.
14. To seek out and implement process improvements that enable the Finance team to operate more effectively and improve finance self-service.
15. To support the Council's financial control framework by reviewing control exception reports and compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
16. To represent the finance team in all internal and external stakeholder meetings, encouraging financial improvements and increased financial accountability through self-service.
17. To advise the Chief Accountant, Director of Finance, Financial Planning and Strategy Manager, directorate staff and elected Members of a financial matters arising including changes in legislation or guidance from Government.
18. To manage and ensure excellent working relationships across the Directorate and Council wide and with both Internal and External Auditors, responding quickly and effectively to recommendations.

19. To support finance leadership to ensure consistent delivery of agreed Council financial strategy.
20. To support effective scrutiny and challenge within the Directorate to ensure appropriate and efficient budget spend other financial opportunities and VFM are realised.

Scope of Job (Budgetary/Resource Control/Impact)

1. The post holder will manage a statutory financial reporting team and will also influence many other roles through good working relationships with:
 - The Finance business partnering teams
 - Strategic Finance and Planning Team
 - The whole Finance Team, by setting and maintaining standards
 - External Parties, including the external auditor
2. Staff Responsibility: This role will line manage three Financial Accountants specialising in Capital Accounting, General Ledger Controls & Reconciliations, and Technical Accounting Code Compliance, and the VAT & Tax Accountant. Good relationships with all staff are essential to support the operation of financial controls and transactions.
3. Budgetary Responsibility: None
4. Impact: The post holder is responsible for contributing significantly to internal technical accounting standards and the maintenance of them throughout the Council, hence this role will indirectly impact the reputation of the Council through ensuring the good custodianship of the Council's resources.

Special/Other Requirements/Responsibilities of this Post

<i>Level of DBS check required for this post</i>	No Check Required
<i>What other security/safer recruitment clearances are required for this post? (excluding standard identity/work permit/education qualification checks)</i>	Not applicable
<i>Is this post “politically restricted”?</i>	Yes
<i>Responsibility for Health & Safety:</i>	LEVEL 2
<i>Please specify responsibility for implementing the Council’s risk management strategy as it applies to the service, ensuring risks to service delivery and specific projects or initiatives are recognised and that actions are taken and monitored to mitigate risks identified</i>	N/A
<i>Please specify any other Statutory Duties and/or responsibilities of this post not already covered in the “Main Duties & Responsibilities” above</i>	None

Person Specification

Qualifications/Education/Training

1. Full and current membership of professional CCAB (or equivalent) accountancy qualification
2. Evidence of continuous professional development

Experience

1. Substantial experience of working at a senior level within a Finance function and of budgeting, closedown and providing financial information / advice directly to senior finance and non-finance officers at all levels including chief officers.
2. Substantial experience and expert knowledge of applying and ensuring compliance with accounting standards.
3. Substantial experience of taking personal responsibility for delivering successful projects through carrying out / overseeing financial analysis/modelling.
4. Substantial experience in delivering financial advice at a strategic level across wide ranging and complex services.
5. Proven ability in effective budget / financial reporting at senior level.
6. Significant experience of managing and developing individuals and teams within a large and diverse staff group.
7. Track record in successfully delivering a customer focused service.
8. Experience of effectively building partnerships and working co-operatively with a broad range of internal and external contacts and groups.
9. Significant experience of Committee work for Members, managing effective reporting and relationships with Members, and work for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, or for similar groups involving elected Members.

Skills, Abilities & Competencies

1. Expert knowledge of financial modelling techniques and principles and ability to design develop and implement such models.
2. Expert knowledge of accounting controls, procedures and methodologies.
3. Pragmatic and analytical approach to problem solving.
4. Proven ability to design and implement systems and procedures with appropriate internal controls.

5. Demonstrable strong interpersonal skills and the ability to effectively communicate at the highest levels within organisations.
6. Excellent communication skills, particularly in the presentation of complex financial concepts and information in the format appropriate to a wide range of circumstances and audiences.
7. Demonstrable commitment to equality of opportunity and anti-oppressive strategies in employment and service delivery.
8. Excellent communication and negotiating skills with the ability to present complex issues in a simple and easy to understand way for internal and external audiences.
9. Ability to manage conflicting demands to tight timescales.
10. Ability to work flexibly, including attending evening meetings if required.
11. Evidence of Continuing Professional Development.
12. An understanding of and empathy for the local government democratic progress.

Specific Working Requirements

1. Hybrid working environment with a mix of office working in central Reading and homeworking according to the needs of the service.
2. The post is 37 hours per week (within a flexitime scheme) but varied working patterns will be considered. There will be occasional evening meetings and the postholder may be required to work additional hours during peak workloads.
3. At this level, the post holder will have significant contact with and senior officers of the Council and other clients along with Elected Members as required. As one of the lead officers for this area, the post holder may have contact with the public through engagement led by the Council as well as planned and unplanned communication with local media.

Team Reading Leadership and Management Behaviour Framework

In addition to the qualifications, experience etc above, you will also be expected to role-model the Team Reading values through your behaviour with peers, employees, customers and partners, and set a great example to others on a day-to-day basis by doing so. This is explained further in our Leadership and Management Behaviour Framework below.

TEAM Reading

The Team Reading values aim to create a more engaged and motivated workforce who take pride in what they are doing and have faith in and support those around them. Great leadership and management behaviour is at the heart of achieving this. We are committed to ensuring that our leaders and managers behave in a way that inspires, motivates and supports employees, creating better working relationships, greater collaboration and an organisation which provides excellent services to the people of Reading.

Central to this framework are our Team Reading values



T.... works together as one Team

The Council's leaders and managers will champion and inspire a culture which ensures that all employees across the organisation work together to provide excellent outcomes for Reading residents

How we expect our managers to behave
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work collaboratively with colleagues, customers and partners to build effective relationships and networks to achieve common goals and excellent services for Reading residents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead by example, be visible, open and honest and effectively communicate the vision and values of the Council whilst seeking the opinion of others through meaningful, two-way communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inspire others by being enthusiastic and positive; recognising, promoting, celebrating and rewarding innovation and success by engaging with and supporting employees to meet the Council's objectives.

E.... drives Efficiency

The Council's leaders and managers will create an environment in which resources are used efficiently and employees' skills are developed and used effectively

How we expect our managers to behave

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continuously review performance to ensure resources (e.g. staff, money and equipment) are allocated in a fair and consistent manner, deploying the skills and expertise available to maximum effect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To actively seek out best practice and encourage opportunities to improve efficiency and outcomes for Reading residents through the use of new technology and income generating activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take active responsibility for budget and performance management, identifying and implementing opportunities for creating savings and efficiencies and delivering value for money.

A.... is Ambitious

Our leaders and managers will be ambitious, aspiring to deliver excellence and inspire and support others to reach their potential

How we expect our managers to behave
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To celebrate success and empower others through support and effective performance management; showing appreciation for effort and recognition for outstanding work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore and challenge ways of working with a view to achieving ongoing, continuous improvement in service delivery and outcomes for Reading residents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inspire confidence in others, encourage talent and embed a learning culture, identifying and responding to the development needs of others.

M.... Makes a difference to Reading residents

Our leaders and managers will inspire a culture in which the customer is the focus and where change is welcomed as an opportunity

How we expect our managers to behave
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To proactively engage and consult with customers, challenge inequality, promote diversity and implement new and improved ways of working.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continuously monitor service delivery, customer feedback and demand failure to improve services, whilst being sensitive to the collective and individual needs of our customers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To welcome, own and manage change and to aspire towards excellence in all areas, whilst being supportive and sensitive to the needs of individuals.