

Financial Accountant

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Job Description

Job Title Financial Accountant

Location Civic Offices

Grade/Salary Range RG7 (scp 33-39) gateway at scp 36

RG8 (scp 39-scp 45) gateway at scp 42

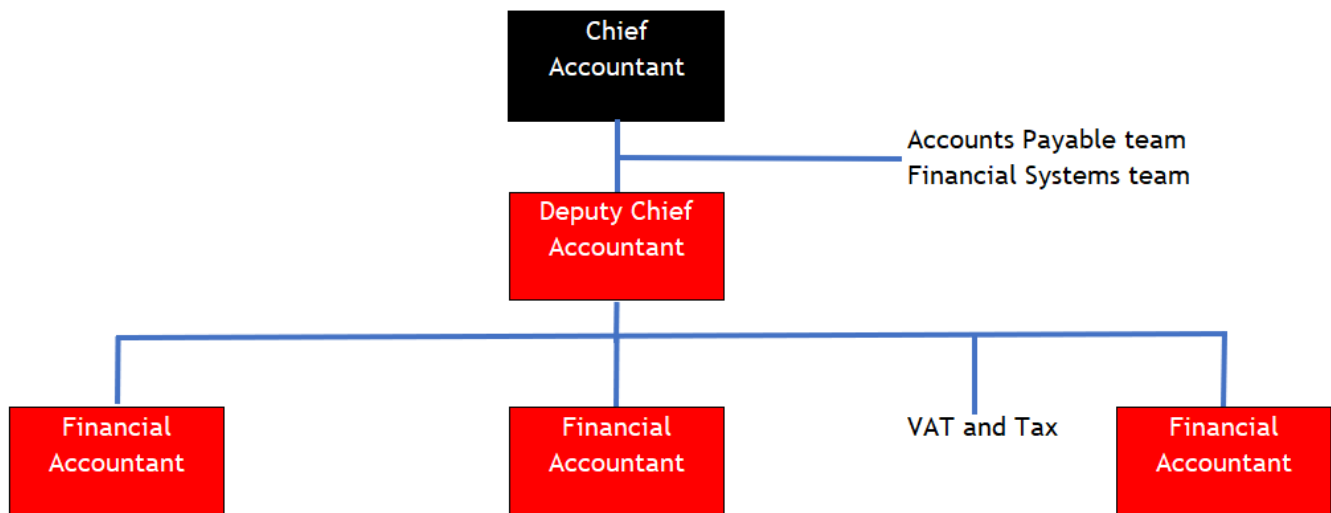
Service/Directorate Finance/Directorate of Resources

Job Purpose

1. To manage and maintain the financial accuracy of the General Ledger and ensure robust controls are in place supported by complete and accurate working papers.
2. To support the delivery of the annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the CIPFA Accounts Code with an understanding of the impact of IFRS in the public sector, ensuring high standards of compliance with external guidelines and requirements, statutory or otherwise, reliably meeting set deadlines.
3. To support the Chief Accountant and Chief Financial Officer to resolve issues arising as part of the Final Accounts process with external auditors.
4. To work with the Deputy Chief Accountant to implement and maintain improved technical accounting practice and standards within RBC. This will require influencing the wider Finance Team to drive improvements, set and subsequently maintain internal technical accounting standards, systems and processes to ensure that the Council can swiftly and accurately report its financial performance, both monthly and annually, to support decision-making, scrutiny and good custodianship of public resources.

Designation of Post and Position within Departmental Structure

1. This post reports to the Deputy Chief Accountant and will work closely with other Financial Accountants within the team.
2. Supporting the Deputy Chief Accountant to ensure that the required professional standards are met in full.
3. Supporting the Deputy 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. With the Deputy Chief Accountant, assist with setting and maintaining internal standards for technical accounting procedures and processes to ensure integrity of the Council's Accounts and maintaining adequate internal controls;
2. Contribute to the delivery of the annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the CIPFA Accounting Code and the statutory timetable by managing the production of statements/disclosure notes as allocated by the Deputy Chief Accountant;
3. Liaise with the external auditor as required in their scrutiny of the Council's reporting arrangements and other activities;
4. Contribute to maintaining the accuracy of the balance sheet (including provisions, reserves and accruals) and that control accounts are actively managed throughout the year to ensure that year-end closedown is completed swiftly and accurately with no material errors;
5. Assist with the preparation of all of the required reconciliations on a routine basis to ensure accuracy and reporting to the prescribed timetable;
6. Work with the Financial Systems Team to ensure the integrity of the General Ledger system and Chart of Accounts, in conjunction with interface systems, to deliver accurate and timely reporting from the system;
7. Support the Chief Accountant in delivering changes to the Council's finance systems and associated processes;
8. Assist as directed with the submission of corporate grant claims on behalf of the Authority, ensuring that signatories to claims can place reliance on their accuracy;

9. Influence and manage relationships with stakeholders (teams, functional, external) to enable the successful delivery of activities and projects in the role of maintaining the Council's Financial System integrity and functionality;
10. Develop subject matter expertise within areas of responsibility, including keeping up to date with internal and external development in relevant business/regulatory areas;
11. Have a working expert knowledge of relevant finance and business end to end processes (eg collection fund accounting process mapping, end to end communication from business areas to the central finance team);
12. Prepare reports for and advise Member groups and other relevant officer groups;
13. Carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall function commensurate with the grading and level of responsibility of the post.

Subject Matter Expertise

In addition to the above, the following responsibilities will be allocated to the post holder by the Chief Accountant from time to time to support their professional development to become a technical subject matter expert in one of three main areas: General Ledger Controls, Capital Accounting, and Technical Accounting Code Compliance.

1. To manage the General Ledger control environment including investigation and monthly reconciliation of all taxation, suspense and holding accounts for the Council.
2. To manage the operation of financial controls for system based Intercompany Accounting transactions between the Council and wholly owned companies, ensuring Service Level Agreement performance standards are maintained with a full audit trail available.
3. To be the lead technical financial advisor to manage the provision of all VAT taxation accounting requirements including reviewing the impact of partial exemption and ensuring VAT claims are completed within deadlines.
4. To manage the completion of monthly bank and income system reconciliations, and to provide guidance to ensure best practice is undertaken across wider finance teams and Directorate colleagues in the operation of suspense and holding accounts.
5. To be the lead financial advisor for Capital Accounting, managing the accounting Fixed Asset register.
6. To be the lead contact with professional advisors and ensure compliance with accounting codes of practice for technical accounting areas (eg Fixed Asset Valuers Advisors, Pension Fund advisors and Actuaries, Legal and Treasury Advisors)

Pay Progression Criteria

Gateway progression criteria RG7 (scp 37 - scp 39)

1. To develop and implement a significant change to financial accounting procedures which produces a positive and measurable beneficial impact on the capacity of the Finance Team and / or quality of the advice given.

Gateway progression criteria RG8 (scp 39 - scp 42)*

*See also qualification gateway progression criteria below for RG8 - Full and current membership CCAB

1. To undertake and assist with the completion of complex research projects, produce detailed analytical work summarised to provide sound financial advice and recommendations.
2. To influence excellent collaborative working and communications between finance staff and key customers, external advisors and auditors by creating a with an aligned purpose and outcomes.

Gateway progression criteria RG8 (scp 43 - scp 45)

1. To operate confidently in place of the Deputy Chief Accountant as required, for example reviewing codes of practice and financial regulations to provide financial advice to colleagues and budget holders on matters of accounting transactions, or providing reasoned and evidenced explanations to key stakeholders such as auditors.
2. To evidence significant financial control improvements through positive feedback from internal/external audit or other stakeholders over a consecutive 12-month period.

Scope of Job (Budgetary/Resource Control/Impact)

1. The post holder will work within a small 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: Depending on the allocation of subject matter expertise responsibilities which will be in place for a significant period to enable sufficient knowledge and experience to be gained, this post will be responsible for the line management of the following posts: Reconciliations Officer, Accountancy Assistants. 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>If *, does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with vulnerable adults?</i>	NO
<i>If *, does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with children?</i>	NO
<i>What other security/safer recruitment clearances are required for this post? (excluding standard identity/work permit/education qualification checks)</i>	N/A
<i>Is this post "politically restricted"?</i>	NO
<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. CCAB (or equivalent) qualified accountant or working towards full qualification within one year.
2. Evidence of continuous professional development. This includes engagement in continuing training and development activities provided by expert external advisers and CIPFA to ensure the Council remains up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation, organisational procedures, policies and professional codes of conduct in order to uphold standards of best practice.

Pay Progression Criteria

Gateway progression criteria RG8 (scp 40 -scp 45)

1. Full and current membership of professional CCAB (or equivalent) accountancy qualification

Experience

1. Significant experience of working within a Finance function
2. Experience of supporting financial process improvements.
3. Experience of working in corporate finance / banking/treasury/control reconciliations activities.
4. Experience of working across a diverse staff group to gather evidence and approval of key financial transactions.
5. Experience of effective budget or financial management of transactions.
6. Significant experience of effectively building partnerships and working co-operatively with a broad range of internal and external contacts and groups.
7. Significant experience of public sector finance frameworks especially in local government
8. Hands on experience of the technical accounting requirements of a local authority, preferably via a close down process or corporate accounting function.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities & Competencies

1. Knowledge of legislative requirements, government guidance and accounting best practice.
2. Demonstrable strong interpersonal skills and the ability to effectively communicate at the highest level, including the ability to negotiate, influence, persuade and challenge

3. Highly developed expert skills in accounting procedures and methodologies.
4. Excellent communication skills, including presentation and report writing skills, particularly in the presentation of financial concepts and information in the format appropriate to a wide range of circumstances and audiences.
5. The ability to provide strategic financial advice which will influence policy decisions
6. The ability to build effective relationships with partners.
7. The ability to design and implement systems and procedures with appropriate internal controls.
8. Pragmatic and analytical approach to complex problem solving.
9. Evidence of Continuing Professional Development.
10. Ability to learn quickly, developing expert knowledge and applying expertise for the benefit of the Council.
11. Fastidious about detail, but also able to see the “big picture”.
12. Confident in managing own time and a self-starter.
13. Resilient.
14. Demonstrable commitment to equality of opportunity and anti-oppressive strategies in employment and service delivery.
15. A commitment to multi agency and partnership working.
16. 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.

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.