

Harlow Council Job Description

Job Title: Finance Business Partner (Housing)

Post Number: AC0024X

Grade:

15

Date:

June 2025

Directorate:

Finance

Location:

Civic Centre

Responsible to:

Finance Service Manager

Job Purpose:

The Finance Business Partner (Housing) is responsible for actively managing, informing and monitoring key financial data and information to ensure that financial management is maintained to the highest standard across a range of services allocated to the role. Services are delivered through an advisory led, business partnering model designed to support service managers in achieving their service goals within agreed finance policies. Active finance system development and reporting is required to enable effective service support.

Collaborative working with other members of the Finance Team and all other staff is essential to ensure that issues are identified and addressed, liaising with Finance Leaders as required, achieving service standards, goals and balance of risks.

The budget areas supported by this role will flex to maintain balance across the team, but this role will focus on support for the Housing Revenue Account, General Fund Housing, Harlow Trading Services (HTS) transactions and relationship.

Delivery Role within agreed timetable, policies and standards:

- Managing team resources to meet requirements, ensuring coverage of services during peak and leave periods, ensuring effective separation of duties.
- Provide comprehensive revenue and capital accounting support for allocated services, focused on budget preparation and monitoring, closure of accounts and provision of financial support to services areas to maximise the use of resources allocated to them.
- Represent Finance and the s151 officer through attendance at meetings, support for projects, provision of advice, modelling and contribution to / creation of reports for Cabinet and Executive Management Team.
- Provision of training for service users.

Support Roles within agreed timetable, policies and standards:

- Provide support for the timetabling and delivery of the budget preparation process led by the Finance Service Manager.
- Support the development of effective financial policies, strategies and Financial Management System to fully meet the regulatory and service needs of the Council.

- 1.0** Annual Final Accounts
- 2.0** Preparation of Annual Budgets
- 3.0** Budgetary Control
- 4.0** Completion and Submission of Returns
- 5.0** Treasury Management
- 6.0** Staff Supervision
- 7.0** Provision of Financial Advice and Information
- 8.0** Service Development
- 9.0** Financial Management System
- 10.0** Exchequer Services
- 11.0** Other duties appropriate to the role
- 12.0** Statement of Health and Safety

Breakdown of tasks:

1.0 Annual Final Accounts

- 1.1** Responsible for the production of final accounts for Housing Revenue Account, Housing and other allocated accounting tasks detailed within the agreed annual Closedown Timetable and standards for all areas covered by the section, maintaining an awareness of current codes of practice and ensuring that deadlines set within the Timetable are observed and achieved throughout. The post-holder will undertake higher-level closedown tasks as agreed with Finance Leaders.
- 1.2** Work with the Finance Business Partner (Corporate Finance) to manage the final accounts timetable and related issues, resolving any identified issues.
- 1.3** Undertake technically complex areas of work ensuring that accurate and detailed papers are prepared to support work.
- 1.4** Work with Service Managers to ensure all relevant information is obtained; work alongside all other members of the Finance team in sharing information to achieve consistency and task allocation to achieve tight timescales.
- 1.5** Ensure that all closure of accounts tasks allocated to the post-holder and to their section are completed on time, reconciled and checked, supervising team members as necessary.
- 1.6** Contribute to the accounting needs relating to the Council's Group of companies.
- 1.7** Contribute to the update of year-end process guidance notes and training for non-Finance officers.
- 1.8** Respond to auditors' queries at interim and final stages of the audit of the accounts and financial systems and controls in a timely manner that will support the audit of the annual accounts being completed to timetable. This may extend to responding on behalf of other Finance colleagues in their absence as far as practically possible.

2.0 Preparation of Annual Budgets

- 2.1** Production of revenue and capital estimates and comprehensive budget papers for the HRA, General Fund Housing Services and other services as allocated in the budget preparation timetable, ensuring that they are in line with the budget strategies determined by the Council and that they are fully understood and properly implemented.
- 2.2** Compile budgets based on agreed cash limits and an appropriate level of challenge to ensure that budgets are based on agreed parameters, policy and service requirements and reflect agreed service changes.
- 2.3** Manage and co-ordinate technically complex areas of budget preparation work, ensuring that accurate and detailed budget preparation working papers are prepared to a high standard, including General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme, Reserves, Maintenance of Invest to Save Funds and Salaries.
- 2.4** Support preparation of budget setting reports required for approval by Cabinet and full Council, plus any associated reports and information required to achieve an agreed budget and HRA rent level within the agreed timetable and in line with statutory deadlines.
- 2.5** Ensure that salary estimates are based on information drawn from the agreed establishment salaries estimates in line with the process agreed with the Finance Service Manager.
- 2.6** Work with service managers in compiling reviews and updates of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan within agreed policies and strategies.
- 2.7** Manage virement control, responding to needs determined by senior line managers and operating within limits set by the Council's Financial Regulations.

3.0 Budgetary Control

- 3.1** Deliver detailed revenue and capital budget monitoring and compilation of management accounts for all allocated services throughout the year.
- 3.2** Adopt a business partnering style of delivery in all contact with service managers.
- 3.3** Work with Service and Budget Managers to support them in managing their budgets, preparing budget monitoring projections and challenging patterns of income/ expenditure that indicate potential savings opportunities and need for reallocation of budget resources within their remit.
- 3.4** Work with services to ensure that the Capital Programme is kept up to date to reflect the actual position.
- 3.5** Support services to explore and develop options for changes in budgets to reflect changing service delivery models, ensuring that cash limits, financial regulations and standing orders are adhered to.
- 3.6** Advise services on adhering to the Council's standing orders and financial regulations when reviewing budgetary control reports and by advising the client at the design stage of any new project.
- 3.7** Support services when they are undertaking budget monitoring, determining the current and forecast budget position and, as part of this exercise, reviewing the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- 3.8** Support services in building quarterly budget monitoring reports for Executive Management Team and, subsequently, Cabinet.
- 3.9** Support services in producing monthly summary budget monitoring statements for the Director of Finance and onwards to Executive Management Team, including the writing of covering reports.
- 3.10** Provide advice on virement control to ensure any requests comply with the limits in the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 3.11** Advise services on whether to enter into a leasing arrangement alongside other options and monitor any leasing arrangements entered into.
- 3.12** Manage and co-ordinate monitoring and reporting of grants received by the Council.
- 3.13** Manage and co-ordinate recharging appropriate costs to appropriate organisations and projects i.e. Harlow Trading Services (HTS) and capital projects.
- 3.14** Maintain and reconcile control accounts, holding accounts and suspense accounts relevant to specific tasks relevant to this role.
- 3.15** Support the management of Purchase Orders on the Financial Management System to ensure they reflect an accurate representation of service manager requirements.

4.0 Completion and Submission of Returns

- 4.1** Manage and co-ordinate the process of completing allocated Financial & Statistical Returns. Assist others in completing the same by providing appropriate financial information.
- 4.2** Have an awareness of the impact that data submitted in returns may have on the Council's financial position and funding settlements and take action accordingly.
- 4.3** Where such returns support the remittance and / or receipt of funds, to monitor that such transactions have taken place when due.

5.0 Treasury Management

- 5.1** Undertake the review of end of day cash balance calculation and authorise the daily Treasury Management paperwork when required.

6.0 Staff Supervision

- 6.1** Responsible for ensuring that all working practices adopted by the Team comply with and deliver the agreed policies.
- 6.2** Responsible for verifying and approving the work undertaken within the Team when required for audit and general financial control purposes.
- 6.3** Manage and motivate the staff and monitor the work in the Team, allocating and managing tasks and ensuring balance of workload across team members.
- 6.4** Undertake assessment of workload and service delivery needs, identifying areas of development for team members. Ensure that Personal Performance Plans are completed for each staff member and monitored on a regular basis, ensuring that a realistic approach is taken in the setting and monitoring of goals and objectives.
- 6.5** Engage positively in training and development ensuring personal skills are developed and improved and to encourage team members to undertake appropriate training and development activities.
- 6.6** To be involved in activities of the Finance Team which includes (but is not limited to) attending regular team meetings and working collaboratively with other staff as required.
- 6.7** Provide support for staff recruitment, conduct and disciplinary matters where necessary as directed by your line manager.

7.0 Provision of Financial Advice and Information

- 7.1** Provide financial advice and information to officers and Members, in response to queries and as required. This will include general advice, formal budget monitoring and advising service managers on Financial Regulations, virements, etc. and include, for example, advice on new projects / service developments and initiatives.
- 7.2** All engagements as detailed in section 7.1 must be provided on a Business Partnering basis, ensuring that they actively influence day to day decisions, shaping strategy and directing business activity taking into account broad influencing factors.
- 7.3** Identify training needs of services and liaise with other Finance Team members to ensure that appropriate training is provided within a reasonable time period. Engage with managers periodically to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of training and address any gaps identified as necessary.
- 7.4** Use judgement and initiative to provide an efficient and effective advice and support service to services, referring to senior finance team members where decisions are complex and may have a significant impact for the Council.
- 7.5** Undertake financial modelling as required for services as required.

8.0 Service Development

- 8.1** Input to the improvement and development of the organisational finance processes and the Financial Management System (FMS) to bring about improvements to the whole financial management system enabling all users to be financially confident.
- 8.2** Work collaboratively with services to continuously identify improvements in reporting and usage, reporting any findings back to the systems team for support in implementation.

9.0 Financial Management System

- 9.1** Support the process of ensuring that the FMS and supporting systems deliver appropriate services that meet the needs of service managers and regulatory requirements.
- 9.2** Provide FMS training to users to be self-sufficient users of the FMS.
- 9.3** Contribute to the development of FMS training for budget preparation and management.
- 9.4** Issue FMS reports to service users, when required.

10.0 Exchequer Services

- 10.1** Authorise and release Accounts Payable payments.

11.0 Other duties appropriate to the role.

- 11.1** Prepare and / or input into reports as a representative of the S151 to Committees and internal meetings of officer / Members, as required.
- 11.2** Manage and co-ordinate mainstream service accounting activity and delivery.
- 11.3** Provide effective support for the relationship with Harlow Trading Services (HTS) and any other trading partners.
- 11.4** Undertake financial searches and vetting of companies for contract tenders and business cases as required.
- 11.5** Prepare and process journals and coding corrections or authorise journals raised by another team member in line with the agree process.
- 11.6** Provide a timely and accurate response to internal auditors' queries and assist with their reviews of the service, as required. Action allocated audit recommendations within agreed timeframes.
- 11.7** Provide input and support for special projects.
- 11.8** Respond to Freedom of Information Requests.
- 11.9** To undertake other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, knowledge and experience of the post holder.
- 11.10** All employees are expected to show a commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- 11.11** All employees are expected to have regard and operate within the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and customer care.
- 11.12** All employees are expected to adhere to requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and The Data Protection Act 2018 and comply with measures to protect the confidentiality of information in accordance with Council policies and procedures.
- 11.13** All employees are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to all relevant Council Policies and Procedures.
- 11.14** This job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list but to indicate the main responsibilities of the post. It will be reviewed periodically to take into account changes and developments in service requirements.

10.0 Statement of Health and Safety

- 10.1** Harlow Council is committed to the provision of high quality health and safety standards. In order to achieve this all staff employed by the Council have the following specific responsibilities, which are consistent with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:
- 10.2**
 - To take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons who may be affected by what you do or fail to do.
 - To co-operate with Harlow Council in order to enable statutory requirements to be implemented.
 - Not to intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.