

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Accountant (Generic)

DEPARTMENT: Finance Housing & Trading

DIVISION: Finance

UNIT: Accountancy

TEAM:

RESPONSIBLE TO: Principal Accountant

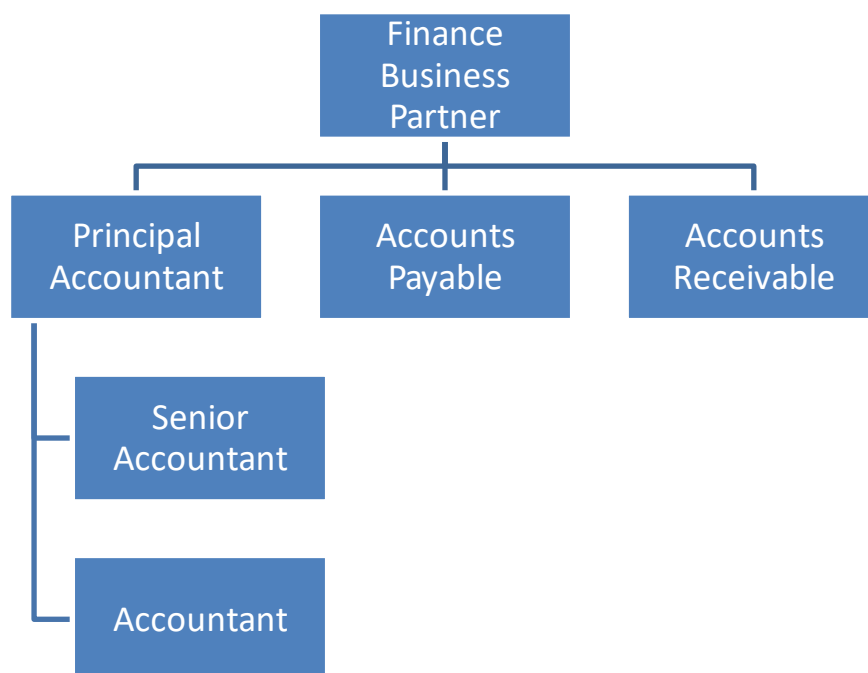
GRADE: M1

PURPOSE OF POST:

Provide financial support, advice and information to management within allocated functional areas.

ORGANISATION CHART:

Housing & Trading (TBC)



PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The percentages against these Principal Responsibilities are indicative and will vary depending on the specific work area.

	<u>%</u>
1. Prepare and co-ordinate annual revenue and capital estimates, work with budget managers to monitor those budgets throughout the year, and close the accounts on an annual basis for a distinct area of the Council's accounts OR for an area of specialism, and be fully responsible for the planning and maintenance of own workload and for projects in respect of this	50
2. Offer a professional service to customers (e.g Cost Centre managers, Chief Officers) in order to provide a quality financial and management information service, including advice, to customers of the Accountancy Section and ensure value for money for the Council.	30
3. Represent finance on inter- and intra-departmental working groups (e.g. Service Director's Management Teams), sub-committees, and some external groups and provide financial management and related expertise as and when required.	10
4. Undertake special project work as required, e.g. technical accounting, service reviews, systems and processes, financial procedures and strategies, to ensure Value For Money	7
5. Lead the groups in which post is located in the absence of the Finance Business Partner or Group/Principal/Senior Accountants.	3

DIMENSIONS:

Supervisory Management: N/A

Financial Resources:

- Advisory role over departmental and specific budgets
- Shared direct responsibility for grant claims
- Advisory role over capital budgets, pension and other tax returns
- Remote influence over entire Council budget

Physical Resources: N/A

Other: N/A

CONTEXT:

The role of Accountant is interchangeable within the Accountancy Service, as identified by the specialist work areas listed below. The post holder will provide advice, information, reports and analysis on the more complex aspects of the Council's financial position as a significant part of the provision of an Accountancy service for the Council and its staff.

The post holder will ensure that all work is performed and assessed according to the principles of Best Value, continuous improvement, and the requirement to obtain value for money for the Council. The post holder will 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 Best Value and Best Practice.

The post holder will be required to undertake on the job training to gain broad range of competencies in specialist areas and undertake training in IT finance systems,

The duties and responsibilities as outlined above give an indication of what is expected in the post. However, these may be subject to some variation as the Finance function evolves in line with the changing structure of the Council.

A flexible, innovative approach is an essential requirement of the post holder together with the willingness to respond constructively to challenge and opportunity.

Accountants will undertake generic activities but within one of the following specialist work areas;

Departmental Financial Support;

- Maintain and monitor revenue and capital accounts, prepare and co-ordinate estimates and final accounts for a distinct service(s),
- Monitor income, expenditure and outturn predictions, identifying and communicating unexpected budget variances, budget volatility and monitoring the validity of budget management decisions against accountancy rules and regulations,
- Make grant claims to maximise subsidy and grant income, strictly in compliance with Council policy and procedural requirements.
- Provide an accounting service for funding streams where the Council has Accountable Body status, including submission of returns to Government Departments as required
- Provide support and financial advice to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations
- Provide support and financial advice to individual service areas for specific projects, including provision of detailed reports and advice to assist with project management

Systems;

- Maintain and develop the integrity of the suite of financial systems, reconciling the General Ledger records to those of the feeder systems, investigating discrepancies and generating improved financial reporting systems,
- In conjunction with the Finance Manager (Systems) control the access to and security of the financial suite
- Assist in pro-actively developing systems and the use of IT to improve information in the financial suite when systems are upgraded.
- To write reports for a wide range of individuals from the financial suite using a wide range of tools including Crystal report writer and Business Objects
- To interpret the financial requirements of non-financial managers and other users and provide suitable data in clear reports.
- Assist the Finance Manager (Systems) in the application of a wide range of advanced skills in Excel spreadsheets, including the generation of pivot tables and the writing and running of VBA macros, in order to provide output with both the precision required of upload files and the formatting required of reports.
- To maintain and enhance interfaces from other systems into the main financial suite.
- Undertake specialist project work, including project management.

Capital & Technical;

- Maintain and develop the asset register module within the Financial system in line with current accounting requirements, utilising functionality to develop the system for accounting for capital across the Council
- Assist the Chief Accountant and Senior Accountant (Technical and Capital) in the preparation of the final accounts, ensuring knowledge of the latest financial accounting practice including IFRS is current.
Produce notes for the Statement of Accounts, carrying out technical financial accounting transactions and dealing with audit queries.
- Co-ordinate the quarterly capital monitoring process, producing reports for senior officers and the Executive. Produce ad hoc reports on capital expenditure as required for management reporting purposes
- Assist in the preparation of budget estimates for a range of central budgets, including asset management and capital financing accounts. Provide advice to departmental accountancy support on the impact of capital charges on their budget estimates.
- Maintain and develop the integrity of information in a range of control accounts, including pension and tax accounts
- Complete statistical Central Government periodic returns
- Maintain the grants register, ensuring that claims are submitted to the deadlines set by the grant-giving body. Co-ordinate the audit process for grants, liaising with Finance Managers, officers preparing claims, external auditors and grant-giving bodies

Forward Planning;

- Assist with all aspects of the co-ordination of the annual budgeting process, taking specific responsibility for the production of the estimates books.

- Responsible for the production of monthly advice to all cost centre managers on budget monitoring and outturn predictions, ensuring that the best possible advice is given.
- Assist with the co-ordination of monthly budget monitoring, in order to ensure that reports are made on time to the Corporate Leadership Management Team and the Executive.
- Monitor and evaluate Executive decisions to ensure approved budget changes are incorporated in the Council's financial reports and systems
- Assist in the co-ordination of the scales of charges process, liaising with departmental accounting teams to ensure that all proposed charges and income predictions are subject to challenge, are robust on a business basis, and are in line with legislation.
- Complete the revenue estimates (RA) and revenue outturn (RO) forms for return to central government, reviewing guidelines and taking advice from the Principal Accountant and departmental finance teams to ensure all income and expenditure is treated correctly and consistently in accordance with guidelines.
- Undertake complex analysis of financial information at a whole council level in order to produce estimates of the corporate and service impact of potential scenarios, for example pay awards and inflation options.
- Assist with the development and maintenance of medium term financial planning models.
- Co-ordinate the provision of consistent financial input to cross-cutting efficiency reviews as required.
- Research and produce financial and statistical data and input into the production of key financial documents and returns.

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::: N/A

Person Specification: 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	In depth demonstrable accountancy/financial experience at an advisory level and on complex issues within one area of specialism.	1, 2	Experience of working in a Local Authority or Public Sector financial environment	1, 2
	Demonstrable experience of using IT based financial management systems (preferably Civica Authority Financials) and the use of large spreadsheets (Microsoft Office).	1, 2	Some evidence of supervisory experience.	1, 2
	Demonstrable experience of undertaking and leading project based assignments.	1, 2		

Skills/Abilities	Able to persuade, influence and professionally advise others at a senior level, on complex financial issues. C	1, 2		
	Able to demonstrate high level and accurate complex numerical reasoning skills through complex financial calculations. C	1, 2		
	Able to contribute to strategic financial forward planning processes, financial training strategy and undertake evaluation and planning. C	1, 2, 3		
	Able to work on own initiative and as part of a team and adjust work roles to suit changing service demands. C	1, 2		
Equality Issues	Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and its integration into service delivery	1, 2		
Specialist Knowledge	In depth knowledge of accountancy principles and practice. C	1, 2	Some knowledge relevant to the specific work area, e.g. for Capital & Technical: knowledge of cash book systems	1, 2
	Working knowledge of or able to quickly assimilate accounting rules and regulations relating to Local Authority.	1, 2		
Education and Training	Full AAT qualification in Accounting or equivalent by qualification OR significant relevant demonstrable accounting experience. C	1, 2, 4	Part qualified Accountant (CCAB)	1, 2
Other Requirements	Able to visit establishments and attend meetings anywhere in Borough.	1, 2		
	Able to work outside normal office hours on an occasional basis.	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;

*Date JD last reviewed:
Date of JE Panel:*

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