

Role Title	Chief Accountant
Team	Corporate Accountancy Team
Job Family	Finance
Location	Waltham Forest Town Hall
Pay Range / Scale	PO 12 - £68,568 to £74,433 per annum

Purpose
<p>Heads of Finance will adopt a strategic business partnering approach to provide strategic support to the Council's Corporate Directors. Their key focus will be on supporting the corporate decision-making activities undertaken by Senior Managers and Members. They will be a critical friend to Strategic and Corporate Directors and will work closely alongside other colleagues. As a member of the Council's senior managers' group they will support a specific Council Directorate or Corporate Function.</p> <p>To maintain expertise in the main service portfolio areas to ensure that the Finance Service has the capacity to provide advice to members, the management board and the relevant service management teams.</p> <p>To lead the financial performance management framework for services in accordance with the national and local standards, service regulations and policies.</p> <p>To make a positive contribution to the corporate management of the department and council.</p> <p>Lead, develop, organise and control a professional service area ensuring the delivery of the service meets all Council, professional and legislative requirements. Support the Deputy Chief Finance Officer to deliver an effective and first-class Financial Accountancy Service.</p>

Generic Accountabilities	End Results/ Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and ensure service delivery within a complex / diverse service area. Control operational activities within the service area and ensure professional standards are delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is delivered to the quality, Council, professional and legislative standards required. Integrated Financial reporting service and delivery is informed by legislation, IFRS, UKGAP, SORP, LAAP Bulletins, capital directives and other regulations or Best Practice bulletins. Corporate strategies are effectively implemented within area of responsibility. External audits are managed effectively and we achieve a clean audit opinion. Service delivers excellent customer service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage responses to complex professional or politically sensitive issues within the area of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert opinion, advice, supports and interpretation is provided on all aspects of the area of responsibility, including major decisions. Major issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and complaints procedures are developed and managed. Complaints are effectively resolved. Customer outcomes are clearly understood and specified. Opportunities to improve delivery / capacity of provision are proactively identified and actioned. Expected operational efficiencies are realised.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops service plans to meet strategic business goals. Ensure compliance with all internal and external standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service plan and targets for area of responsibility are developed from Council's overall strategic directives and agreed and communicated within required timeframe. Strategic and operational input is provided to wider business planning and development, including liaison/links with all partners for which there is a financial interest. Progress against objectives is effectively monitored and delivered.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development and oversee the implementation of policy, systems, contracts, processes, performance criteria, standards, governance frameworks, and procedures within area of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies, procedures and controls ensure that the area of responsibility is compliant with all relevant legislation, codes, regulations, guidelines, standards and best practice. Promote and maintain public sector accounting standards. All statutory and regulatory policies are adhered to and successfully implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage responses to complex professional or politically sensitive issues within the area of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert opinion, advice, support and interpretation is provided on all aspects of the area of responsibility, including major decisions about financial strategy that potentially impact on all residents. Major issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion. Feedback and complaints procedures are developed and managed. Public Inspection and Fol requests are effectively resolved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise Directors, Members and others on issues relevant to the service area. Provide professional challenge and advice to colleagues, managers and partner organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert professional advice, interpretation, information, support and challenge are provided to Waltham Forest and external parties on the full range of accounting, legislative and strategic issues within the field of expertise. Responses to major corporate or partner initiatives / complex strategic or operational issues are managed effectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the necessary standards relating to safeguarding best practices/protocols are effectively communicated, monitored and maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding standards are monitored and maintained in compliance with Council policy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the development and delivery of continuous improvements in all aspects of the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements are developed and delivered effectively. Stakeholder requirements are met.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead, motivate and develop staff to create and maintain a highly competent and participative workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instrumental in ensuring a workforce development strategy is designed and delivered, including induction of new staff. The team is highly competent, effective, motivated and outcomes focussed. Recruitment, induction, development, performance reviews, employee relations and all HR processes and planning is completed to the required standards and timescales. Effective team meetings take place to required timescales.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, secure, deploy and manage the resources necessary for the professional service area to meet/exceed its objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources including, equipment, people, and systems are utilised optimally and efficiently. Annual budget is planned, developed and delivered. Value for money is maximised. Financial expenditure and financial integrity are controlled to assure regulatory and Council policy compliance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a risk management programme and advise on issues affecting Council service areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business threatening situations are recognised, planned for and managed or escalated as appropriate. Systems and governance are in place to respond promptly to critical events. Continuous service is provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in accordance with all policies and procedures which apply to the job and understand the reasons for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies and procedures are complied with.

Job Specific Accountabilities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee and ensure that the proper financial accountability of the Council is reported and that published financial statements meet statutory requirements and to oversee and manage the audit process to satisfactory conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead and be responsible for the annual co-ordinating and closure of the Council's and Pension Fund's Accounts in consultation with the Deputy Chief Finance Officer. To co-ordinate and publish a closing timetable promoting earlier close in line with proposed Government legislative timetable. To oversee the final accounts audit process acting as the Council's operational relationship manager with External Audit. To ensure there is effective integration between internal and external audit activities in consultation with Assistant Director of Finance- Internal Control
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead and be responsible for the interpretation of the accounting standards, incorporating professional codes of practice, the Accounts and Audit Regulations, the Accounting Code of Practice, the Best Value code and any other relevant regulations. Knowledge of the issues facing local government and those relevant to service/functional responsibilities, together with the legal, financial and political context of public sector management and the statutory responsibilities of this post Promote good accounting practice through the provision of technical guidance, training and support to finance staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and advise on all Financial Technical issues arising within Accountancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage and determine technical treatment of complex accounting rules including determination of Capital Financing strategy in consultation with Assistant Director of Finance - Accountancy. Interpret and implement directives vis a vis SORP, Capital Directives, LAAP bulletins and other technical / legal bulletins. To interpret and provide technical advice with regard to budget settlement and other revenue or capital proposals. Ensure compliance with standards of best practice and relevant regulations and ongoing development of the service. To identify and evaluate opportunities for projects to secure better outcomes for residents including option appraisal, due diligence, financing and accounting for proposed initiatives. Provide ideas and outstanding solutions to business problems. Continuously review the quality of service delivery Services are provided in the most efficient, innovative and effective way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure appropriate financial systems together with internal control are operated effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain the chart of accounts and the integrity of the General Ledger. Act as client in the development and maintenance of the Council's financial systems. Ensure all reconciliations and interfaces are efficiently executed, developed and maintained. To actively seek and lead on Financial Systems implementations to gain further efficiencies across the Council Desired skills transfer takes place between the systems partner and the in-house finance team. Develop trusted relationships with key stakeholders.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as principal adviser for accounting for tax liabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee timely returns for VAT and to ensure optimum recovery. To advise on all taxation issues and act as principal contact to HMRC To be responsible for the preparation of all policies and procedures relating to taxation (including VAT, income tax, payment to individuals, corporation tax etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare reports to the Audit and Governance Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report, train and present financial statement to members of Audit & Governance Committee Ensure that any technical content is presented in an appropriate manner. Attend board and committee meetings as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and advise on MTFS and the preparation of Revenue and Capital Budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that revenue implications arising from the implementation of Capital Financing strategies are fed into the budget setting process. To act as a 'bridge' between financial reporting requirements for statutory purposes and financial reporting for Management Accounting purposes. To be responsible for the production of an annual 'Forward' to the accounts outlining performance against management criteria. To play a major role with short, medium and long term financial planning and estimate process providing financial modelling, analysis and statistical inference.

Nature of Contacts

The Post holder will be required to:-

- Liaise with the Directors, Assistant Directors, senior managers and elected members;
- Report directly to the Director of Financial Services (Deputy Chief Finance Officer)
- Liaise with the managers and directors across the council on operational and strategic issues, and take a lead on individual assignments that may need to involve more than one team.
- Be the Council's main contact with External Audit.
- Represent the Finance Directorate; at inter departmental working groups and Audit and Governance Committee
- Represent Finance Directorate at external groups and organisations.
- Communicate with officers, elected Members, partner organisations, members of the public, service users and other relevant stakeholders.
- Work closely and in partnership with colleagues across the authority, the external auditor, internal auditors and the Council's external partners.

Additional Information

- Reports To: Director of Financial Services (Deputy Chief Finance Officer)

- Direct and ensure leadership on the closure of accounts for the relevant teams to ensure that quality standards and timescales are achieved including faster close year-on-year together with achievement of unqualified Audit and Value for Money opinion and gaining external recognition from the accountancy profession and business community.
- Take specific oversight and direct quality assurance work in relation to ensuring that income and expenditure accounts are accurate, all balance sheet items are reconciled and all holding accounts cleared on a regular and timely basis; ensure achievement of full monthly or quarterly closedowns of relevant areas; ensure production and presentation of financial management information, budget monitoring, trading reports, financial models etc which are accurate and timely, appropriate to the audience

Key Facts and Figures

- Appropriate DBS Clearance.

Resourcing

Budget responsibilities

- Council wide

Managerial responsibilities

- 1 x Group Accountant PO7-9
- 2 x FTE Principal Accountants - grade PO4-6
- 3 x FTE Senior Accountant – grade Scale 5-S02
- To advise and lead all finance staff in the production of statement of accounts

Information responsibilities

- safe keeping of confidential and/or sensitive information; Personnel data, sub-judice potential liabilities, HMRC data and all information gathered to determine disclosure.

Other responsibilities

- Maintaining and developing the Financial Systems and software applications used by the Accountancy Division; ICT equipment and software licences; PPE equipment for the team;

Competency Level: Senior Manager/Head of Service

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Substantial recent public sector experience of working at a senior level and managing technical and financial accounting issues in relation to public sector funding arrangements
- Leading and managing finance functions in a major organisation
- Substantial experience of working with senior managers, members and other key stakeholders, for example, external audit and external partners
- Experience across a range of financial disciplines
- Track record of challenging existing standards and practices leading to continuous improvement

- Planning, accounting and managing large complex financial budgets and other resources
- Technical experience of Financial Systems development and maintenance
- Experience of closing accounts and producing statutory statements and reports
- Experience of the MTFS process and budget production process for a large organisation
- Experience of public sector debt and investment management and use of financial instruments to finance large and complex capital programmes
- Substantial knowledge of the operational and strategic issues affecting Corporate Accountancy in the public sector, together with a good understanding of probity and ethics
- Exceptional relationship management skills, including ability to operate at all levels of management level
- Ability to deploy advanced interpersonal skills to inspire, motivate, coach and develop team members to high levels of performance
- Substantial experience of managing significant budgets and resources.
- Significant experience of writing reports, specifications and technical documents.
- Authority and credibility to build relationships influence and engage successfully with colleagues, partners and clients at all levels in complex or politically sensitive situations.
- Excellent research, analysis, interpretation and evaluation skills, demonstrating the ability to identify and diagnose complex problems/issues / requirements and develop innovative strategic solutions.
- Initiative, strategic and political awareness demonstrated in problem solving and decision making.
- Excellent time management skills to manage a complex workload prioritise and set deadlines and cope with conflicting and changing demands.
- Good ICT skills - both standard Microsoft applications and specialist systems.
- A commitment to equality and diversity, both as a leader and a service deliverer, with an ability to demonstrate personal leadership on the importance of diversity.

Indicative Qualifications

- Educated to degree standard or equivalent
- Relevant professional finance qualification – CCAB/CGMA Accountant
- Evidence of relevant recent and continuing managerial professional training and development

The above profile is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by employees in this role. It is not intended to be a detailed list of all duties and responsibilities which may be required. This role profile will be supplemented and further defined by annual objectives, which will be developed in conjunction with the post holder. It will be subject to regular review and the Council reserves the right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed.