

Role Title	Principal Finance Officer
Job Family	Finance
Competency level	Principal Officer/Manager
Pay Scale	PO3
Purpose	
The Principal Finance Officer will provide business-focused strategic financial advisory and support services in the assigned area. The post holder will be required to: • provide financial and performance data; • provide financial advice and support; and • support closure of the organisation's accounts. The post holder must be able to apply their technical knowledge, and their knowledge of systems, processes and best practice to provide support to services, the Finance service and other stakeholders. They will provide the organisation with a comprehensive technical accounting service in accordance with its corporate financial policy and practice, and all relevant statutory and regulatory guidance. The post holder will be expected to be committed to a scheme of job rotation.	
Generic Accountabilities	End Results/ Outcomes
Provide advice and make recommendations based on up to date knowledge and analysis / evaluation of information. Manage escalated or complex customer issues within the relevant area.	Expert advice, information, interpretation and support are provided on the full range of technical / professional issues within the area of responsibility. Issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion. Risk to the Council is minimised.
Contribute to the development of service plans to meet strategic business goals.	Strategic and operational input is provided to wider business planning and development. Customer needs are identified. Services meet legislative and policy requirements.
Research developments in relevant area. Collate process and analyse information / data. Translate outputs into advisory reports / documents / actions as appropriate.	Relevant information / data are managed efficiently and accurately. Accurate and relevant information / reports / documentation are produced. Trends and issues are identified and prioritised.

	Statutory and procedural obligations are fulfilled. Management decision making is supported.
Lead on the development, implementation, maintenance and management of systems, policies, procedures and / or standards within area of responsibility.	Changes to systems, policies and / or procedures are identified and recommended. All updates, amendments, developments are tested and approved prior to delivery. Customers receive prompt, accurate policy / procedural updates. Service standards are improved.
Work closely with others to support/Manage the development and delivery of improvements in processes and procedures.	Identifies gaps in service provision/highlight policy issues and makes recommendations to resolve the issues. Agreed improvements are developed, delivered and evaluated. Issues and recommendations are brought to the attention of senior managers. Benchmark against best practice authorities and centre of excellence.
Prepare and present a full range of reports (both standard and non-standard) covering area of responsibility.	Reports are prepared, distributed / presented to the appropriate committee/ to the required standards and timescales. Evidence based recommendations are made.
Manage a portfolio of Projects and Reviews. Lead on specific projects as required.	Projects are delivered to agreed specification, timescales and budgets. Change initiatives are successfully integrated and implemented across all impacted service areas. Value for money is achieved. Ongoing savings secured.
Co-operate with and support colleagues.	Colleagues are supported. Required information is provided.

Act in accordance with all policies and procedures which apply to the job and understand the reasons for this.	All policies and procedures are complied with.
Carry out all duties and responsibilities with reasonable care for the health and safety of self and others and report any potential hazards or unsafe practices to line manager.	Work is carried out in a way that is safe and without risks to health.
Job Specific Accountabilities	End Results/ Outcomes
Adaptability Adjust, modify, or change in response to new circumstances, challenges, or changing environments, remaining flexible, open-minded, and capable of evolving in order to thrive and succeed in varying situations.	Uncertainty in the operating environment is navigated successfully. Change is fully embraced and supported. Role is performed to a high standard even in unfamiliar or unexpected conditions.
Judgement Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, both individually and collectively, avoiding “group think” and optimism bias.	Sound, evidence-based decisions are made. Timely and appropriate risk-based decisions are made.
Communication and the ability to influence Deliver competent written and verbal communications, including presentations.	All messages are communicated clearly and ‘jargon’ free.
Time management Demonstrate good time management skills.	High quality work is delivered within agreed timelines.
Business writing Structure reports effectively, including building a convincing executive summary with compelling arguments and good conclusions and summary.	Meaningful information is delivered in a clear, concise and effective manner. Reports contain effective organisation of ideas and clear expression of thoughts in writing.
Financial accounting and reporting Analyse and report financial transactions and clearly and accurately.	Accurate accounting records are maintained.
Financial management Consider profitability, expenses, cash and credit in the context of an organisation fulfilling its objectives.	Profitability, expenses, cash and credit factored into organisational decision-making.
Treasury management Day-to-day management of the organisation’s cash flows and long-term	Organisation’s financial assets, liabilities and cash flow are managed effectively to optimise liquidity, risk and return.

financing goals, and the organisation's liquidity.	
Risk management Ensure the organisation's risk management framework and risks are managed effectively.	Uncertainty is controlled. Better decision-making is supported and better outcomes are secured.
Performance measurement, management and improvement Performance is measured and managed effectively, and areas for improvement are identified to ensure that organisational performance is optimised.	Organisation is supported to evaluate performance, set strategic goals and enhance operations.
Financial systems Deliver, develop and exploit relevant resource management systems and processes to support the organisation's financial policy, regulations, information requirement and end-user population.	Financial systems are resilient and fit for purpose. Financial systems support the organisation to achieve its objectives.
Planning, forecasting and budgeting Provide planning, forecasting and budgeting support to the organisation, including setting targets, communicating assumptions, coordinating budget preparation and challenging assumptions.	Organisation is supported to plan effectively.
Management reporting and analysis Deliver, discuss and report on the organisation's operations and financial conditions, including challenging reporting quality/correctness issues, as appropriate.	Services are provided with appropriate management information. Management information is high quality and accurate.
Internal financial controls Implement a control framework for the organisation.	Integrity of operations, and financial and accounting practice is ensured.
Professional qualifications and awareness of public sector finance standards Have appropriate professional qualifications and awareness of public sector finance standards for the role, which may be different and (amongst other factors) dependent on length of service and training history. <i>Specific qualifications for this role are set out in the Indicative Qualification section below.</i>	Finance team is appropriately qualified.
Building relationships	Effective relationships with others are built and maintained.

Build trusted and reliable relationships with individuals, teams and organisations, both within the organisation and externally.	
Key activities	
Key activities for the Principal Finance Officer include: • Supporting the provision of customer-focused accountancy and financial management services as per the business partnering model approach. • Providing support for the annual budget setting and medium-term financial planning processes. • Assisting with the preparation of detailed revenue and capital expenditure and income budgets that meet corporate and departmental objectives. • Supporting the efficient and effective provision of a comprehensive financial management function, including all aspects of the annual estimates process, budget maintenance, monitoring and control. • Supporting the preparation, analysis and provision of accurate financial management information, including budget monitoring reports and forecasts, promptly highlighting any risks and trends, in line with the council's policies and procedures. • Assisting with the efficient and timely completion of specific tasks within the annual closing of accounts process and ensuring that information presented in the financial statements complies with the CIPFA Code of Practice and reporting standards. • Supporting effective liaison with external and internal audit through the Chief Accountant. • Completing statutory and other returns, supported by clear and appropriate workings, in line with statutory requirements, and liaising with government departments and agencies as required. • Providing support to other areas of Finance, as directed by the Principal Accountant, Head of Finance, or Chief Accountant.	
Nature of Contacts	
The post holder will be required to: • represent Finance within the organisation; • communicate with officers, elected members, partner organisations, members of the public, service users and other relevant stakeholders; and • work with colleagues across the organisation, the external auditor, internal auditors and the organisation's external partners.	
Procedural Context	
Reports to Finance Business Partner/Senior Finance Business Partner/Head of Finance/Chief Accountant depending on team structure. Act within guidelines and standard procedures with discretion to allocate or otherwise organise work to meet service delivery requirements. Works within laid down procedures but needs to deal with day-to-day problems without always referring to others. Decisions will be made based on Council procedures. Occasionally the post will be expected to work from other locations	
Key Facts and Figures	
Standard DBS check required.	

Enable others to understand changes and developments in relevant area and learn new processes / procedures.
Resourcing
Budget Responsibilities: None
Supervisory Responsibilities: None
Knowledge, Skills and Experience
Essential: • Demonstrable financial accountancy skills and knowledge of technical accounting principles and standards. • Excellent numeracy and analytical skills with the ability to draw conclusions and develop recommendations from data. • Ability to implement sound and prompt solutions in the event of real, or potential, reconciliation difficulties in key systems. • Ability to encourage effective budgetary control and to assist in the identification of corrective strategies to contain expenditure within budget. • Ability to assist with monitoring progress against timetables and to implement corrective strategies in the event of slippage or potential problems. • Ability to assist in identifying potential changes to systems or processes to improve the timeliness and robustness of the reconciliation process. • Ability to think critically, apply innovative and creative thinking to address service challenges. • High attention to detail and accuracy. • Knowledge of the key issues relating to local government financial management and the key challenges facing local authorities in the current financial climate. • Experience of building relationships and working effectively with a range of internal and external stakeholders. • Good presentation and report writing skills and the ability to communicate clearly, including the ability to distil complex financial advice into appropriate formats and write clear and concise reports. • Experience of working in a complex organisation with competing priorities and the ability to manage workload and meet stakeholder needs. • Significant experience of using MS Office Word, Excel and PowerPoint).
Indicative Qualifications
AAT qualified or equivalent work experience and training
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.