**Job Description & Person Specification**

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| **Post Title** | Trainee Accountant |
| **JE Reference**  | W840 | **Grade**  | Grade D  | **SCP Range** | 9-11 |
|  | W841 |  | Grade E |  | 17-19 |
|  | W842 |  | Grade F |  | 23-25 |
|  | W843 |  | Grade G+ |  | 30-32 |

**Reporting line:**

Chief Accountant

Line Manager – Finance Manager

Trainee Accountant

**Job Purpose:**

The role is within the Accountancy Team, which is responsible for the provision of quality financial information for service departments to make effective decisions. The post of trainee accountant will be an important element of the development of the Council’s professional accountancy staff to ensure succession planning is embedded within the Accountancy Team. This post is supernumerary to the normal establishment posts within the accountancy team, and will report direct to Finance Managers to develop their skills, knowledge and practical experience of the Finance Function.

The role will also develop experience across a range of finance specialisms, including Treasury Management, Financial Accounts production, Financial Governance, capital programme planning, business case development, financial systems development and financial planning (budget monitoring and setting). The role will also support the Accountancy Team in providing financial oversight to the Council’s Corporate Implementation Plan and ambitious capital programme. The role will not have a fixed remit and will allow the trainee accountant to also be involved in other project and ad-hoc finance work. This will provide opportunities for personal development and will assist line managers in managing peaks and troughs involved in day-to-day teamwork.

The Trainee Accountant’s grade will be linked to successful progression through a professional accountancy qualification and the duties allocated to the post will be varied and developed depending upon the post holder’s level of experience and knowledge within the organisation.

This is reflected in the key duties and responsibilities below. As within any training contract, the Council will look for the post holder to gain qualified status at the earliest opportunity showing their ability to rise to the challenges of a professional accountant. Any exam fails may result in a review of the contract with the Council, with multiple fails likely to result in the training programme ending.

**Relationships:**

**Accountable to:**  Finance Manager and Chief Accountant

**Accountable for:** Primarily their own activities initially, but may have some limited staff management responsibility when approaching full qualification

**General:** The Council’s Executive Management Team, All elected Members of the Council (Including Cabinet Members), Directors & Assistant Directors, senior officers and nominated budget managers, other colleagues within Financial Services, Auditors, Inspection body representatives, Peers across other Public Sector bodies

**Key duties and responsibilities:**

1. **Providing Directorates with appropriate guidance and training on financial issues**

Within the Council, it is the responsibility of the Accountancy Team to provide a business partnering role which supports the financial planning process and provides support to cost centre managers. There is a requirement to ensure resources are used effectively to deliver key priorities and that any budget performance issues are identified and addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. In tandem it is also expected that trainee accountants can provide prompt advice and guidance as appropriate to all staff and managers, and to deal with enquiries arising, for example from members of the public and external agencies.

1. **Preparation of regular budgetary reports for presentation to the Executive Management Team, Directorate Management Teams and Committees in support of the Section 151 responsibilities**

Trainee accountants are required to perform regular budgetary control and reporting to Finance Managers. This will include the day-to-day liaison on budget and service issues and financial controls. Provision of other financial information to key stakeholders, including the support of financial planning and budget monitoring, coupled with supporting analysis of performance factors & cost factors which drive the financial performance of a budget area.

1. **Development of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

A key responsibility of the finance function is to provide an MTFP (a five-year financial strategy) for the Council which sets a organisation-wide budget, made up of key building blocks of the Council’s financial requirements. Trainee Accountants will support the financial planning for funding issues, service pressures and efficiency savings which will contribute to the development of the MTFP.

1. **Development of financial appraisal analysis and Business Case**

Support the input of financial analysis into the decision-making process and provided financial support to the development of Business Cases of capital investments and other service initiatives.

1. **Maintenance of the financial governance arrangements and accounting system including General Ledger and Purchase Ordering data**

The updating and maintenance of a robust financial system is of crucial important to the Council as this is the basis from which financial statements and performance figures are produced. Trainee accountants will work with Finance Managers to assist with tasks that will develop their knowledge of the development and maintenance of robust and transparent financial systems and support the development of financial reporting systems which add value to the financial management process of a budget manager.

1. **Administrative Duties**

Trainee Accountants will assist in other tasks which form part of the financial governance process, including areas such as cost accounting, management of balance sheet & holding codes, benchmarking, and analysis of financial data for further management accounting purposes.

1. **Treasury Management**

Trainee Accountants will be involved in supporting the Council develop and maintain an effective and robust Treasury Management process which ensures the Council invests its surplus cash securely, ensures liquidity and maximises yields. Furthermore, Trainee Accountants will gain experience and understanding on the mechanics behind how the Council’s capital programme is funded.

1. **Studies and Qualification Attainment**

During the period of their placement, Trainee Accountants will be expected to work towards a suitable accounting qualification. This will require studying with the provision of support and assistance from the accounting staff, including attendance at an accredited College Training Provider. Fees and costs of sitting the exam will be provided in addition to the allocation of study leave in order to study for the relevant exams.

1. **Corporate Responsibilities**

The council will make every reasonable effort to supply the necessary employment aids, equipment or adaptations to enable employees to perform the full duties of the job in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Likewise, staff are obliged to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equality of opportunity and fairness of treatment and delivery of service. In addition, all staff are expected to comply with General Data Protection Requirements at all times both in and outside of the workplace alongside compliance to Health and Safety policies.

| **LEVEL** | **REQUIREMENT** |
| --- | --- |
| **Grade D** | ***Upon Commencement of Professional Accountancy Qualification*** |
| * Assist in the preparation of budgets;
* Assist in budget monitoring through the distribution of Agresso Budget reports to budget managers, preparation of spreadsheets and interrogation of financial systems, offering challenge advice and support.
* Prepare grant claims under the direction of Accountants or Senior Accounting Support Officers.
* Prepare statistical and financial returns under the direction of Accountants or Accounting Support Officers
* Prepare basic audit and / or financial reports under the direction of accountants / auditors and support the responses to audit queries;
* Provide information to customers, auditors, and other relevant organisations on matters of financial procedure;
* Input, maintain and analyse data within financial systems.
* Generate reports from systems in order to advise and inform budget managers.
* Assist in projects and initiatives under the direction of accountants.
* Support the undertaking of tasks linked to financial governance such as procurement exercises, management of holding codes, reconciliations and balance sheet management.
* Manage own workload so tasks are delivered on time and to a high-quality standard.
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| **Grade E** | ***Passes or exemption at CIPFA Professional Certificate level or equivalent******Evidence of continuing professional development*** |
| * Preparation of budgets, including challenging and encouraging budget managers to find opportunities to achieve budgetary savings.
* Budget monitoring through issuing of Agresso reports, preparation of spreadsheets, interrogation of financial systems and identification of high-risk budget issues.
* Prepare basic grant claims.
* Prepare basic statistical and financial returns.
* Prepare and carry out audit assignments and investigations at an appropriate level;
* Prepare financial reports under the direction of accountants and ensure auditor queries are effectively responded to.
* Provide information and advice to customers, auditors, and other relevant organisations on matters of financial procedure;
* Provide support and information to elected members as appropriate;
* Advise accountants / auditors on issues relating to adherence to financial procedures, guidelines and standards.
* Support opportunities to drive continuous improvement in the provision of financial information to customers and ways of working across the Accountancy team. Advise and assist in implementation of service improvements as appropriate.
* Input, maintain and ensure accuracy of data within financial systems.
* Assist in contract management under the direction of accountants / auditors;
* Develop and generate reports from systems in order to inform budget managers and other customers;
* Supervision of administrative and clerical staff and other officers as appropriate;
* Carry out projects and initiatives under the direction of accountants.
* Represent the Directorate at meetings, working groups and other appropriate forums;
* To develop an understanding of current financial legislation and accounting technical standards & codes in respect of identified duties of the role.
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| **Grade F** | ***Passes at Professional Diploma level of CIPFA or exemption or equivalent******Evidence of continuing professional development*** |
|  | * Plan, co-ordinate and prepare budgets;
* Plan, co-ordinate and carry out budget monitoring for the team.
* Assist Accountants and Finance Managers to develop, refine and implement our financial strategies, action plans, policies & procedures and performance management processes, across the full range of outcome measures included within our strategic plans.
* Working across directorates to provide accountancy support to Budget Managers as they undertake their financial management tasks via Agresso, offering advice, analysis and challenge in order to inform Officers of their financial position and help them make effective decisions on the management of their budgets.
* Provide technical support in the preparation of the Council’s budgets, the calculation of funding options and the compilation of the year-end statement of financial accounts, financial returns and providing updates to aspects of the Council’s medium term financial planning.
* Prepare and complete grant claims.
* Assist service managers in identification of external funding and submitting bids;
* Prepare and complete statistical and financial returns;
* Plan, prepare, co-ordinate and carry out audit assignments and investigations for the team;
* Prepare, produce and present audit and / or financial reports at an appropriate level;
* Provide information and advice to customers, auditors, and other relevant organisations;
* Provide support and information to elected members as appropriate;
* Preparation and production of financial and audit reports to customers, service managers and Executive members within Directorates as appropriate;
* Provide proactive advice and ensure adherence to financial procedures, guidelines and standards;
* Maintain and develop financial systems;
* Undertake contract management as appropriate;
* Oversee the development and generation of reporting from systems for the team;
* Supervision of a team consisting of professional and administrative staff, including being responsible for the prioritisation and allocation of work to Finance Clerks.
* Carry out and implement projects and initiatives;
* Deputise for accountants / auditors as and when appropriate;
* Represent the Directorate at meetings, working groups and other appropriate forums;
* Advise and implement service improvements as appropriate.
* To develop an understanding of current financial legislation and accounting technical standards & codes in respect of identified duties of the role – and apply this to the production of financial information and advice provided to Budget Managers.
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| **Grade G+** | ***Passed the Strategic Stage of CIPFA and the CIPFA Portfolio of Work Experience to demonstrate full professional competence (INCLUDING INITIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)*** |
|  | * Lead on identified budget areas and the operational delivery of key aspects of the Accountancy Teams’ annual work programme, either directly or in support of the Accountant and Finance Manager direction. This will cover a whole range of financial outcomes required from the Accountancy Team.
* Deputise for Finance Managers and Accountants as required, assisting in the deployment of financial strategies, action plans, policies and procedures and performance management processes.
* Plan, co-ordinate and carry out budget monitoring for the team – including working with budget managers to identify options to effectively manage their budgets.
* Working across Directorates to provide advice, challenge and analysis of high-quality financial information to inform senior officers in order that they make effective and appropriate decisions as part of the financial planning cycle.
* Ensure the timely and accurate completion of grant claims;
* Work with service managers in developing business cases for capital expenditure and in order to attract external funding and ensuring accurate and timely submission of bids.
* Provide technical support in the preparation of the Council’s budgets, the calculation of funding options and the compilation of year-end statement of accounts including statutory financial returns, and supporting the production of annual Medium Term Financial Plans;
* Ensure the timely and accurate completion of statistical and financial returns.
* Lead on the production of financial reports and present findings as appropriate.
* Provide advice on, ensure maintenance of and implement a continuous improving approach to service delivery.
* Provide information and advice to customers, auditors, and other relevant organisations.
* Provide support and information to elected members as appropriate;
* Preparation and production of financial and audit reports to customers, service managers and Executive Members within Directorates as appropriate;
* Provide proactive advice and ensure adherence to financial procedures, guidelines and standards
* Maintain and develop financial systems;
* Undertake contract management as appropriate;
* Oversee the development and generation of reporting from systems for the team;
* Line manage appropriate staff and supervise a team consisting of professional and administrative staff;
* Oversee the execution and implementation of projects and initiatives;
* Deputise for accountants / auditors as and when appropriate;
* Represent the Directorate at meetings, working groups and other appropriate forums;
* Advise and implement service improvements as appropriate;
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**General/Corporate Responsibilities:**

1. To undertake such duties as may be commensurate with the seniority of the post
2. To ensure that the Council’s corporate Health & Safety policy is followed and training is undertaken in all pertinent health and safety procedures
3. To partake in the Council’s and Directorate’s staff training and development policies as well as the Council’s system of performance appraisal
4. To treat all information gathered for the Council and Directorate, either electronically or manually, in a confidential manner
5. All employees are required to demonstrate a commitment when carrying out their duties which promotes and values diversity and the equality of opportunity in relation to employees and service users which is in line with the Council’s Equality & Diversity Policy.
6. To be responsible for identifying and managing all risks associated with the job role through effective application of internal controls and risk assessments to support the achievement of Corporate and Service objectives
7. To ensure the highest standards of customer care are met at all times
8. To ensure the principles of Value for Money in service delivery is fundamental in all aspects of involvement with internal and external customers
9. To ensure that the highest standards of data quality are achieved and maintained for the collection, management and use of data.
10. To positively promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults and ensure that it is recognised that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; and to engage in appropriate training and development opportunities which enhance an individual’s knowledge and skill in responding to children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be in need of safeguarding.

**Last Updated:** December 2021 **Author:** Chief Accountant

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **JOB TITLE** | **GRADE** |
| Trainee Accountant  | Grade DGrade EGrade FGrade G+ |

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| **NOTE TO APPLICANTS**Whilst all points on the specification are important, those listed in the essential column are the key requirements. You should pay particular attention to those points and provide evidence of meeting them. Failure to do so may mean that you will not be invited for interview. |

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| **CRITERIA** | **NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS** | **\* M.O.A.** |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |  |
| **Level D****EXPERIENCE** | * Experience of Using Excel
* Experience of working in a customer service role
* Experience of Microsoft applications to process financial information
 | * Experience of using models and systems for complex issues
* Using Agresso
* Local Authority exposure and experience
* Working in a large complex organisation
 | A, I |
| **Level E****EXPERIENCE** | * Accountancy experience at an operational level
 | * Substantial Accountancy experience at an operational level
* Local Authority finance function exposure and experience
* Working in a large complex organisation
 | A, I |
| **Level F****EXPERIENCE** | * Substantial Accountancy experience at an operational level
* Local Authority exposure and experience
* Working in a large complex organisation
 |  | A, I |
| **Level G+****EXPERIENCE** | * Substantial Accountancy experience at an operational level
* Local Authority exposure and experience
* Working in a large complex organisation
* Experience of providing advice and support to senior budget managers
* Experience of computerised financial systems and identifying options to improve how financial systems delivery effective financial information.
 |  | A, I |
| **Level D****SKILLS AND ABILITIES** | Demonstration of a basic level of ability in all of the following areas:* Working to deadlines
* Competent Computing Skills – including use of Microsoft Office packages, emails and financial systems
* A commitment to customer care
* Good communication skills (written & oral)
* Ability to work without close supervision
* Experience of working within a team
* Problem solving skills
* Good Organisational skills
 | * Awareness of local government issues
* Experience of computerised financial systems
 | A, I |
| **Level E****SKILLS AND ABILITIES** | Demonstration of a **high level of ability in 4 of the following areas:*** Working to deadlines
* Competent Computing Skills
* A commitment to customer care and improvements to processes and service delivery
* Good communication skills (written & oral)
* Ability to work without close supervision
* Experience of working within a team
* Problem solving skills
* Good Organisational skills
 | * Awareness of local government issues
* Experience of computerised financial systems
 | A, I |
| **Level F****SKILLS AND ABILITIES** | Demonstration of a **high level of ability in 6 of the following areas**:* Working to deadlines
* Competent Computing Skills
* A commitment to customer care and improvements to processes and service delivery
* Good communication skills (written & oral)
* Ability to work without close supervision
* Experience of working within a team
* Problem solving skills
* Good Organisational skills
 | * Awareness of local government issues
* Experience of computerised financial systems and identifying options to drive improvements
 | A, I |
| **Level G+****SKILLS AND ABILITIES** | Demonstration of a **high level of ability in all of the following areas:*** Working to deadlines
* Competent Computing Skills
* A commitment to customer care
* Good communication skills (written & oral)
* Ability to work without close supervision
* Experience of working within a team
* Problem solving skills
* Good Organisational skills
 |  | A, I |
| **Level D****EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS/ KNOWLEDGE** | * Minimum of 5 Grade 4-9 at GCSE including English and Maths
* Above average performance at A-Level (Grades A\* - C in multiple subjects)
* Knowledge of preparation of Accounts and other statutory financial returns
* Awareness of the International Financial Reporting Standards
* Knowledge of the principles of computerised financial systems
 | * A vocational business or accountancy qualification
* Educated to degree standard
* Commencement of Professional Qualification
 | A, I, C |
| **Level E****EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS/ KNOWLEDGE** | The following requirements are in addition to qualifications required at Level D: * Working towards and progressing through stages of a professional accountancy qualification e.g., CIMA/CIPFA/ACCA – equivalent of certificate level – equivalent to completion of Professional Certificate Stage.
 |  | A, I, C |
| **Level F****EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS/ KNOWLEDGE** | The following requirements are in addition to qualifications required at Level D: * Working towards and progressing through stages of a professional accountancy qualification e.g., CIMA/CIPFA/ACCA – equivalent of certificate level – equivalent to completion of Professional Diploma Stage.
 |  | A, I, C |
| **Level G+****EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS/ KNOWLEDGE** | The following requirements are in addition to qualifications required at Level D: * Completion of all stages of a professional accountancy qualification e.g., CIMA/CIPFA/ACCA – equivalent of completion of Strategic Stage and submission of CIPFA’s work experience portfolio.
* Awareness of local government issues
 |  | A, I, C |
| **Level D****OTHER REQUIREMENTS** | * Flexible approach to work life balance
* Commitment to own continuous personal development
* Self motivated
 | * Full driving licence
 | A, I |
| **Level E****OTHER REQUIREMENTS** | Demonstration of a high level of ability in all of the following areas:* Flexible approach to work life balance
* Commitment to own continuous personal development
* Self motivated
* Commitment to provide a customer-focussed service, with a commitment to improve how services are delivered
 | * Full driving licence
 | A, I |
| **Level F****OTHER REQUIREMENTS** | Demonstration of a high level of ability in all of the following areas:* Flexible approach to work life balance
* Commitment to own continuous personal development
* Self motivated
* Commitment to provide a customer-focussed service with a commitment to identify options to improve service delivery and more cost-effective solutions.
 | * Full driving licence
 | A, I |
| **Level G+****OTHER REQUIREMENTS** | Demonstration of a high level of ability in all of the following areas:* Flexible approach to work life balance
* Commitment to own continuous personal development
* Self motivated
* Commitment to provide a customer-focussed service with a commitment to identify options to improve service delivery and more cost-effective solutions.
 | * Full driving licence
 | A, I |
| **Level D to G+****COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** | * Commitment to equal opportunities and the ability to recognise the needs of different service users
 |  | A,I |
| **Level D to G+****COMMITMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY/ CUSTOMER CARE** | * Commitment to provide a customer-focussed service
 |  | A,I |

**METHOD OF ASSESSMENT: (\*M.O.A.)**

A = APPLICATION FORM C = CERTIFICATE E = EXERCISE I = INTERVIEW P = PRESENTATION T = TEST AC = ASSESSMENT CENTRE

R = REFERENCES