

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

<u>DIRECTORATE</u> Corporate Services	<u>DIVISION</u> Financial Management	<u>SECTION</u> Business Partner Team
<u>JOB TITLE</u> Service Accountant	<u>GRADE</u> Career grade JM1-2	

1. JOB PURPOSE

To support the delivery and development of effective and timely management financial management to Services, in accordance with appropriate professional standards and codes.

DIMENSIONS

The post-holders are responsible for providing financial support, analysis and advice in respect of specific services within the council's budget.

This post will have direct day to day supervisory responsibility for a member of staff.

2. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Providing accounting and financial support and advice services which:

- a. comply with financial regulations, standing orders and code of best practice
- b. are cost effective and of the required quality
- c. are in accordance with all relevant legal, professional and locally determined standards and procedures
- d. are completed within the required timescale
- e. support the service directorate in the delivery of its aims and objective

Responsibility for supporting and challenging budget holders during the monthly monitoring cycle ensuring variances are explained and unexpected movements minimised

Lead officer for the calculation and presentation of cost and volume statistics for the service, to be consolidated into monthly monitoring and forecasting reports and MTFP.

Develop a good working relationship with the service you support, building up a good knowledge of service priorities in order to be able to understand the type of support they require.

To provide timely and business focussed financial advice, tailored to the needs of the service.

Support the delivery of the key financial processes of budgeting, monitoring, preparation of final accounts and MTFP for the services you support. Ensure that Services are engaged in the processes and financial and non-financial information are consolidated and deliver a consistent message.

Prepare and submit various Government returns, CIPFA statistical returns and Grant claims.

To influence and promote best financial practice and compliance with the relevant accounting, statutory, external grant funding and financial regulations and procedures.

To contribute to the development and delivery of appropriate training, information and advice to service managers to enable them to understand their financial responsibilities and to fulfil them.

To liaise and work closely with other members of the finance team to develop best practice and to deliver integrated professional finance services that enable service budget managers to meet their service delivery targets and business needs.

To focus on the needs of the customer and provide timely business focused advice

Ensure financial regulations and procedures are adhered to and promote financial best practice

Interpret, apply and explain technical policies, procedures, guidance and legislation

Analyse and propose workable solutions to problems and explain complex technical information (including financial risks) to internal and external customers

Be able to influence, persuade and negotiate required outcomes, ensuring innovative solutions and challenging existing practice.

To be aware of and understand the council's Equality Scheme and ensure at all times that the duties of the post are carried out in accordance with the policy

3. SUPERVISION AND WORK PLANNING

The postholder is responsible for supervising the work of a Finance Officer. This involves planning the workload and timetables to ensure deadlines are met and monitoring progress accordingly to ensure targets are achieved.

Targets will be agreed during the annual appraisal process but the post-holders will be expected to prioritise their own workload and duties on a daily and weekly basis within this framework, and, in particular, to ensure that activity is focussed on strategically important and material issues, with routine and transactional activities undertaken in the most efficient and appropriate way.

4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Please see separate person spec

5. JOB CONTEXT

To deliver high quality financial reporting to managers, members and external bodies as required. To assist in the management of the team to ensure that the services for which the team is responsible are delivered to a high level of quality and in a manner responsive to the business needs of the Council.

6. GENERAL

This job specification only contains the principal accountabilities relating to these posts and does not describe in detail all the duties required to carry them out.

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
CAREER GRADE SPECIFICATION

DIRECTORATE: Finance and Resources	SECTION: Financial Management
POST TITLE: Service Accountant	GRADE: Career grade JM1-2

Accountant JM1-2	M1	M2
Qualifications	Newly Qualified Member of recognised accountancy body under s113 of the LGFA 1988 (includes CIMA)	Member of recognised accountancy body under s113 of the LGFA 1988 (includes CIMA)
Post Qualification Experience	Newly qualified	Post qualification experience to demonstrate competence in delivering and reviewing multiple annual budget cycles
Management, influence and drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to manage ongoing work, additional work delegated from manager and tasks that come from outside the team. • Takes personal responsibility for meeting deadlines and prioritising. • Ability to lead on finance projects aimed at developing & improving governance, financial systems or processes. • Ability to build effective relationships with all level, creating trust and confidence both in the team and the service supported • Ability to explain complex financial information • Ability to interpret risks and impacts of changes in services and process within directorates • Ensure an understanding of what the service is aiming to deliver, and what the key opportunities and threats are. • Demonstrate a 'can-do' approach and ability to identify new ideas and ways of working • Day to day management of lower graded staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adopt all appropriate skills in managing personal workload, including considering the business need/ role of finance in reviewing the urgency of tasks. • Ability to supervise and motivate both team members and the wider team and manage team workloads. • Ensures that the team follows financial procedures/ regulations. • Ability to manage conflicting priorities, negotiate additional support where required, and to manage performance of direct reports.

	where required	
Self development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps up to date with relevant legislation, guidance and developments and provide briefings to senior managers and colleagues Attend training to develop management skills and the context of the organisation Lead items for discussion at team meetings Ensure full engagement in the Objective setting and review process Prepare in advance for 1:1 sessions by providing appropriate evidence for tasks carried out well, identification of issues that need further action or support from Line Manager/Business Partner Proactively seek new ways of providing service solutions - such as through learning from other "best practice" examples Actively engage with others across the service to share best practice and knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas of self-development required to move to the next level Promote themselves within the service as a provider of innovative solutions Work across peers and Senior Accountants to share best practice Continuously review tasks undertaken and working papers to ensure they are efficient and effective and are actually required - offer alternative solutions.
Technical Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to explain, provide guidance and proactive challenge to senior managers on finance policies, practices and procedures to others. Comprehensive application of financial accounting requirements Specific technical knowledge to support key roles, activities or tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to apply review financial accounting & risk management and how these should be applied to service context.
Analytical and IT skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and develop complex spreadsheets for detailed analysis of the data and present in a variety of formats. Ensure that working papers align to legislation and guidance and also deliver outputs required by key stakeholders such as External Audit or Govt Depts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to make effective use of a number of data sources to obtain all appropriate data for a project, including a number of uncertainties, scenarios and presenting the effect of the inherent risk in each option Use available tools to carry out detailed data analysis and presentation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an ability to analyse the end results and make recommendations. • Provide financial information for reports on monitoring, projects and/or support financial modelling for business cases. • Create and design procedure notes on key aspects of roles or tasks • Demonstrate the ability to create and share IT solutions which can provide service efficiencies or improve financial governance within the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake analytical reviews of forecasts, monitoring and year-end working papers and provide written narratives to explain movements
Presentation and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on the completion of clear accurate workings for more complex tasks undertaken (including closedown and budget-setting) • Ability to respond to feedback and make appropriate amendments. • Design and deliver the training of finance and non-finance staff. • Ability to consider the method of communication adopted, and how this ensures that the message is effectively received & outcomes achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide targeted and effective feedback. • Lead and oversee the design and delivery of the training of finance and non-finance staff, including Senior Managers and responding to service feedback • Be able to explain complex financial information clearly to service managers and explain the impact on their monitors or closure position.
Strategic business focus (planning & Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take individual responsibility for raising the profile of good financial management across NSC • Have excellent and in-depth understanding of the service and the budget issues and communicate these within the team to ensure that financial issues are widely shared. • Improve the monthly forecasting and challenge all aspects of monitoring to ensure that forecasts are based on robust foundations. • Provide forecasts to senior finance managers with regards to financing resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Engagement with the Service to improve quality of information that feeds into the monitor. • Challenge BMs to improve the monthly forecasting to ensure stable forecasts are based on robust foundations and future impacts are taken into account in the MTFP and budget setting process. • Ability to undertake financial modelling exercises (complex costing and volume, restructures or business cases), and support managers in how

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to undertake financial modelling exercises (e.g. staff costings), and support managers in how these feed into the budget & integrated planning process.• Considers alternative solutions and other potential cost/ income implications• Take responsibility for specific areas within the Council's financial accounts throughout a full budget cycle, e.g. capital monitoring, financing, collection fund, group accounts, S106• Completion and submission of monthly, quarterly and annual statutory returns complying with legislative requirements and guidance	<p>these feed into the budget & MTFP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considers and challenges managers in providing alternative solutions and other potential cost/ income/ risk/ financial implications and in depth knowledge of all current legislation/regulation/standards that will affect the relevant areas of finance business.
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