JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Corporate Accountant
Directorate	Finance and Procurement
Reporting to	
Grade	10
Evaluation ref:	RP140

Role purpose

Working to both the Chief Accountant and Strategic Accountant, this role is a highly technical accountant focussed on ensuring the integrity of the financial data in the finance system, as well as ensuring control processes and accounting knowledge are known and adhered to. The post holder will take the lead on the closedown and production of certain aspects of the annual financial statements, through to managing these elements with external auditors.

The role will manage the completion of a variety of statutory returns and work on efficiency improvements to end to end systems and processes, responding to changes with the latest national guidance and legislation.

Accountabilities

- **Preparation of Revenue and Capital Final Accounts -** Prepares, consolidates, and challenges information required for periodic committee reports or executive level briefing notes.
  Reconciles service information back to the finance system and budget position.
  Providing financial and technical support and advice to budget holders and Finance Managers on specific budget areas in developing in year forecasts and financial performance.
  Attending appropriate finance related meetings to report on financial performance and identify current and future spending pressures and areas of concern.
- **Production of Accounts** - Supports the Chief Accountant in the production of the annual financial statements. Taking a specific lead on areas of work from production and reconciliation of accounts notes through to the audit preparation and audit review.
  Prepares and provides advice, guidance, and training on the closure of accounts.
  Manages the accounting procedures for closing service accounts within specific areas of responsibility, providing explanations for variations and recommendations for use of balances.
  Consolidates and challenges information and supporting paperwork provided by Finance Business Partners to support the integrity of the financial accounts.
- **Capital Accounting / Asset Register -** Ensure the authorities financial Fixed Asset Register is compliant with capital accounting regulations. Using the register to prepare and post the entries to maintain, and subsequently report on,

the asset values. Prepare and process capital closing entries ensuring assets values and capital related income is appropriately treated.

- **Group Accounting** – Support the Strategic Accountant in the production of the Councils Group Companies annual and management accounts. Ensuring compliance with relevant standards and regulations and creating the supporting papers for the relevant Boards and Committee requirements.
- **Collection Fund Accounting** – takes a lead on the accounting and financial planning of the Collection Fund, finalising in the statutory year end reporting. Includes supporting the financial budget setting assessments mid-year and the completion of the necessary financial models and returns to Central Government.
- **VAT** - Taking a lead role in the submission of the Council's monthly VAT claim, and associated compliance checks.
  Monitoring the Council's VAT Helpline and ensuring the Council's VAT Manual is kept up to date with the latest legislative changes. This will include developing more innovative ways of ensuring all Finance staff have a better understanding of the basic VAT rules.
  Represent the Council at quarterly VAT sessions run by the Council's external VAT consultants to ensure any legislative changes are considered and feedback to the Chief Accountant and areas of concern.
- **Financial Advice / Training** - Stays up to date with the latest regulatory and financial legislative/ Codes of Practice changes. Understanding the impacts and supports senior officers in managing and the deploying of changes to process and systems.
- Supporting the Chief Accountant with staff training, with a specific focus on technical accounting processes, system coding and VAT.
  Undertake financial assessments and advise services on the business's viability against proposed procurement contracts.
- **Statutory returns -** Prepares, reconciles, and submits statutory returns to government. Being the named contact for queries and actively resolving any benchmarking data discrepancies when consolidating with other local authorities. Example returns; Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) and Capital Outturn and Estimates (CO/ CER).
- **Reconciliations** - Responsible for undertaking corporate control and suspense reconciliations, such as banking and cash management. Managing where system and integration coding impact; designing and implementing efficiency changes.
- **Technical Research and Major Projects -** Undertakes ad hoc projects and assignments requested by senior managers within the Group that involve investigation and interpretation of financial information and reporting of findings. Often being of high profile to Directors or the Head of Service. Oversees specific information systems used within the team and the Service, for example, the post holder may represent the Group at D365 finance system meetings.

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- **External responses -** Liaises with external auditors and central government to provide explanations to queries and variance justifications. Is a key contact with HMRC on VAT related queries. Leads responses to FOIs for the Finance department.
- **Staff management -** Manages and develops members of staff within the teams. Regularly reviews progress against targets and performance indicators and manages performance through the implementation of annual appraisals, training, and development plans.

	Essential	**Desirable**
Knowledge		
Extensive knowledge of latest financial accounting standards and highly skilled at intercepting them.	x	
Experience		
Experience of leading system implementation and improvements, within a control framework.	x	
Experience in the production of highly technical accounts financial production	x	
Experience managing varying levels of stakeholders, both internal and external	x	
Experience of training or presenting guidance	x	
Supervising experience and skills, including contributing to the senior management of an organisation where required	x	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
AAT	x	
Part study towards CIPFA professional qualification		x
Evidence of work related continuing professional development	x	
Skills		
Ability to interpret technical information	x	
Clear and concise communication	x	
Attention to detail and accuracy when working with numbers	x	

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Working Conditions

This role involves working within a dynamic and supportive local authority environment. Candidates should be prepared for the following conditions:

- **Work Hours:** Standard working hours are 37, with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events.
- **Location:** The primary work location is County Hall, with opportunities for remote work as per organisational policies.
- **Travel:** Some travel within the local area may be required for meetings, site visits, and community engagement activities.
- **Work Environment:** The role involves working both independently and as part of a team, with access to modern office facilities and resources.
- **Health and Safety:** Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees.

Dimensions of the role

Management of up to 6 direct reports.

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: 21/10/2024