

# Job Description and Person Specification

ACCOUNTANT - SCHOOLS

A Lambeth to be proud of



**Job Title: Accountant - Schools**

**Department: Schools and Education**

**Division: Finance**

**Grade: PO4**

**Reports to: Group Manager – Schools and Education**

**Responsible for: up to 5 staff**

## **Context**

- To support the Group Manager for Schools and Education in the delivery of sound financial advice on all matters within the directorate and those which cut across the directorate. Ensure robust financial management frameworks are maintained to help enable schools to deliver exceptional outcomes within resource constraints. To provide proactive/responsive and customer focused business support and relationship management to relevant Heads of Service and Assistant Director level officers to ensure their financial needs are met.
- To lead/support and take ownership for the sound financial planning, management, closure of account, project support & advice, management accounting, reporting, statutory/statistical returns (including returns to government departments and tax returns), and coordination of financial arrangements for a given division/area across both revenue and capital (as appropriate). To lead/support on cross cutting areas and other duties that might be requested from time to time.
- To support the development of financial competence of budget holders and Assistant Directors within the relevant directorate/areas, as well as compliance in using the financial systems of the organisation.
- To drive and implement the changing role of finance in becoming a service that is proactive, takes ownership and maximises benefit from technological changes, focuses on becoming a data led, value adding professional advisory and support function whilst also ensuring appropriate controls are in place in relation to transitional processing.

## **Job Purpose**

1. Provide effective, responsive, proactive and valued business support relationships with given areas, work with and support them in achieving their outcomes while driving financial improvements and delivering excellent customer service. This includes taking ownership to see the outcome delivered and working collaboratively with other colleagues/services to do this, where necessary.

2. To proactively engage and work with senior management across the organisation, providing specialist professional and technical expertise to ensure effective financial planning, management and operational decision making, including support services in schools forum delivery with updates in financial analysis of Schools Block DSG.
3. To support and deliver all aspects of sound financial planning, management, closure of account, accounts production, reporting and statistical returns (including returns to government departments and tax returns) to the highest professional standards, collaborating with service and other professional colleagues where necessary, for given areas. To facilitate their internal and external scrutiny as appropriate. To lead and liaise directly with internal/external auditors on all matters relating to the preparation and audit of defined work area(s)
4. Lead budget monitoring and reporting for Lambeth Schools Finance in accordance with DfE/ESFA requirements of Schools Block funding and all schools grant requirements. Management of Locally Managed Schools Balances and accounting principles in consolidation of schools' accounts in accordance with the DfE financial regulations and preparation for Audit.
5. Prepare, review and submit grant applications, grant claims, financial and statistical returns to government departments, bodies and appropriate organisations
6. Ensure the council's accounts reflect the true accounting position and transactional postings to the chart of accounts are correct at source, for relevant areas.
7. Support updating and reviewing the school's finance policy and communicated to all Lambeth schools following all requirements of the ESFA and DfE. Responsibility for all elements of cash handling including collections and disbursements, banking, VAT management and deficit cash management control
8. To support the delivery and continuous improvement of financial systems, controls and processes across the council/given areas to capture and analyse financial information and so that any necessary adjustments are designed and implemented promptly, and they operate in compliance with financial policy and statute. Maximise benefits from technological changes through ownership/implementation of improvements and using data to drive professional value adding finance support/advice for the organisation
9. Support the development of financial competence, enablement and get buy-in from budget holders/Assistant Directors for given areas, so they manage their own day to day finances and forecast through the appropriate financial systems of the organisation on a regular basis.

10. Enable service users, through training, guidance, and other means (as you may decide is appropriate) to enhance knowledge and promote a culture of compliance with defined financial processes and controls. To ensure that the financial governance requirements are understood and accepted by the business and that the implications of non-compliance are made clear.
11. Taking ownership to provide pro-active financial advice and support for revenue and capital projects (including robust option appraisal) for given areas, working and collaborating with different service and professional functions to contribute to the success of projects, which is recognised by service managers and other involved - delivering excellent customer experience
12. To pro-actively develop strong links with officers internally, and in other organisations locally and nationally to facilitate benchmarking, information sharing and analysis. Represent the council's interests as required at appropriate working and benchmarking groups, both local and regional, as required.
13. Develop and maintain specialist knowledge and understanding of financial legislation and accounting standards, and take responsibility for implementing changes arising from new or amended legislation or financial policy, ensuring that the council's processes are compliant

## Responsibilities

All Council managers are expected to work in a way which meets the Council's Core Values and Behaviours and supports the achievements of the Borough Plan outcomes.

Accountant should:

- Develop effective, proactive and valued business support relationships with relevant Heads of Service/Assistant Directors that assists the directorates/divisions/areas in achieving their outcomes whilst driving financial improvements. This includes taking ownership to see the outcome delivered and working collaboratively with other colleagues/services to do this, where necessary.
- Actively contribute to becoming a pro-active team of finance staff that take ownership, personal responsibility, accountability and work in a collaborative manner to deliver a value adding, customer focused finance function, ensure outcomes are delivered which is positively recognised by service colleagues and others involved.
- Focus on effective management principles identifying ways to increase service efficiency by early intervention, service innovation, the involvement of stakeholders

- Champion efficiency, a performance culture, championing efficiency and value for money in relevant areas.
- Work with colleagues, partners providing specialist advice, information, resources, and ideas to support the development of effective delivery services for the benefit of service users and the community.
- Actively encourage and promote a culture of transparency and employee/stakeholder engagement, forming partnerships and developing effective working relationships with partners and service providers to support the successful delivery of services.

### Management Duties

- To foster a teamwork approach to all staff and encourage taking ownership, responsibility, pro-activeness, delivering excellent customer service, accountability, ensuring outcomes are delivered by working collaboratively with others and mutual understanding of the part each plays in the overall provision of service delivery.
- Make most day-to-day operational management decisions and to amend the work priorities of own service area in order to respond effectively to emerging issues and changing corporate priorities, referring only those with high impact or political sensitivity
- Support recruitment processes including the probationary period, setting of objectives and work plans, performance monitoring and management including appraisals and staff development including training needs analysis for teams across a range of different activities and technical specialisms in accordance with council policies and liP standards.
- To take personal responsibility for the good use of the council's resources appropriate to the job level and work area.
- To support the delivery of timely responses to queries from Councillors, Media and other stakeholders in accordance with council procedures.
- Support processes to ensure operational plans are in place to maintain business continuity, information security and risk management of activities within their remit.

### Generic Responsibilities

- Deputise for the Group Manager, as required

- Support managing and improving the functionality of financial systems, frameworks and processes, for given areas, to ensure data integrity, maintain financial control and allow the effective capture and analysis of financial information to meet user needs.
- Support processes to ensure that financial systems and processes across the council operate in compliance with financial policy and statute and any necessary amendments are designed and implemented promptly in response to framework changes or to any identified exceptions to governance and control standards.
- Co-ordinate/support responses to queries on financial matters in accordance with council procedures
- To work with external financial advisers and contractors (including be part of selection and appointment processes in accordance with procurement regulation and managing the contractual relationships to ensure expected performance or compliance) as appropriate to the role.
- To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Computer Misuse Act, the Health and Safety at Work Act, and other relevant legislation, as well as Council policies, procedures, standing orders and financial regulations.
- To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, taking responsibility, appropriate to the post, for tackling racism and all other oppressive and discriminatory practices, for promoting a positive recognition of differences and community cohesion and must at all times carry out their duties with due regard to the Council's policies on equalities and the staff code of conduct.
- To actively promote and uphold the Council's code of conduct, values, behaviours, priorities and service standards.
- To undertake other duties commensurate with this role and level of responsibility.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

<p>It is essential that in you can meet the following requirements for the role and be able to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A).</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confident scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with "Ticks" (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>			<b>Shortlisting Criteria</b>
<p><b><i>For link/career graded post, please mark knowledge, experience, and behaviours clearly for each grade.</i></b></p>			
<b>Key Knowledge</b>	K1	Good understanding of local government (or other appropriate public sector body) finance, funding, and financial techniques such as budgeting, monitoring, closure of account and options appraisal	✓A
	K2	Excellent communication, influencing and presentation skills and a pro-active approach to work, including identifying and resolving problems/issues	✓A
	K3	Ability to understand and interpret complex legislative and regulatory frameworks that apply to local government, including proven knowledge of schools financial processes and delivery of Dedicated Schools Grants in line with National Funding Formula	✓A
	K4	Understanding of the requirements of accounting standards, CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice, the Financial Management Code	✓A
	K5	Ability to interpret financial data/information, apply logic and judgement	✓A
<b>Relevant Experience</b>	E1	Experience in working at a senior appropriate level of local government finance for budget setting (both revenue and capital), monitoring, closure of account and project management	✓A
	E2	Experience of providing financial advice (and writing reports) to senior officers on a wide range of subjects and the Dedicated Schools Grant and other Schools Grants	✓A
	E3	Working with extremely large and complex budgets, financial systems and accounts	✓A
	E4	Proven track record of financial control and advice in local government finance or similarly regulated environment.	✓A
<b>Qualification</b>		There is an expectation that the postholder will be CCAB qualified, or hold an appropriate qualification or have significant work experience, there is an expectation that they will hold or be working towards a relevant qualification	✓A

## CORE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS



- Listen to the views of others and ask for their opinions making sure that everyone in my team inputs into the things that matter.
- Ensure fairness and justice is at the heart of my decision making and support to my team and others.
- Take time to build trust, building the respect of our stakeholders and ensuring as a team we take accountability for doing what we agree to do.
- Develop others and ensure we work as one team for Lambeth, encouraging everyone to play their part.
- Take positive action to ensure everyone in my team has opportunities to learn and grow at work.
- Encourage everyone to be themselves at work and value who they are.
- I am inclusive and actively celebrate diversity, recognising everyone in my team as individuals.

- Treat each member of my team with respect and dignity just as I would want for myself.
- Encourage each member of my team to do their very best work and am available to them to provide support and guidance.
- Personalise my support to each team members and look out for them, lending a hand wherever I can
- Encourage everyone to try and learn from mistakes and use integrity to take action with my team to put things right together
- Work with empathy seeking to understand each and every member of team, their unique perspective and circumstances and ensure everyone is heard
- Take the time to communicate, being honest, open and genuine and taking the time to get to know team members as individuals.
- Show compassion and patience recognising that everyone in the team has unique experience and celebrating the great work they do for Lambeth.
- Look after the health and wellbeing of my team members and encourage open and regular discussions about the issues that impact on them, working together to find solutions.



- I encourage and support my team to do the right thing even when it's tough and we communicate our decisions in a timely way.
- I ensure my team and employees take individual and collective accountability for performance and delivery, making sure that they have clear plans and performance objectives.
- I ensure my team plan ahead, getting the basics right and take swift action when problems arise.
- I encourage my team to be risk aware and ensuring that our decisions and actions are informed and understood and communicated to others.
- I provide regular, timely and constructive feedback to my team members on their performance and behaviours and act quickly when performance is not on track.
- I share my learning, knowledge and skills with others through coaching and mentoring and encourage others to do the same.
- I ensure that my team and I put residents, communities, customers and their needs at the centre of everything we do.
- I encourage my team to learn and grow and ask questions to find the information they need to do their jobs.

# Accountability behaviours



One Lambeth  
CONNECTED BY PURPOSE

# Ambition behaviours



One Lambeth  
CONNECTED BY PURPOSE

- Am proud of our borough and my team and encourage everyone in the team to aim for the highest possible standards of excellence in everything we do.
- Encourage my team to be flexible and try new things when it's appropriate to do so and tell me what could be improved.
- Promote a one team for Lambeth approach reaching out to our stakeholders to face our challenges together.
- Encourage and support my team to be courageous for our residents and communities and stop at nothing to ensure they have the best possible outcomes.
- I make time for the team to Innovate and look for creative ways to do things better, being curious about possibilities.
- Positively challenge and encourage the team to collaborate and look for solutions together across service and team boundaries.
- Make time for my team to grow and develop taking advantage of opportunities to learn from each other and others. We plan our learning and career growth.