

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Accountant
Service Area / Team	Finance
Reports to	Accountant
Grade	TBC
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Basic

ROLE PURPOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To provide high quality professional financial support and advice to the Council and subsidiary companies at both Officer and Member level.

KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To be a member of and provide input to the Finance Team in a climate of continuous improvement and change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Responsible for the financial aspects of relevant service areas as assigned by the Chief Officer and/or Chief Accountant, providing support to allocated Chief Officers and budget managers including all aspects of revenue monitoring and budget preparation, providing information for external reporting and ensuring guidelines are sent out to key staff in line with year-end closedown timetables.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide line management to the Assistant Accountant including managing and monitoring workload and performance and supporting training to ensure high levels of customer service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Act as a mentor to the team, supporting personal development by undertaking regular 1-2-1 meetings and performance reviews with the Assistant Accountant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist the Chief Accountant in the preparation of the budget, including preparation of salary budgets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist the Chief Accountant with the preparation of the final accounts to an extremely high quality, delivered within all reporting deadlines including all necessary financial statements, working papers and provide assistance to auditors as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To be the finance lead on various projects across the council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide expert technical advice, support, monitoring and reporting for the relevant allocated service area(s) which may include, but is not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Manage or prepare (as appropriate) annual and quarterly government returns by statutory deadlines eg Whole Government Accountant (WGA), Revenue Outturn (RO) & Revenue Actual (RA), Quarterly Revenue Outturn (QRO) and Capital Outturn Report (COR). ii. Manage the production of final accounts by the statutory deadline (eg expenditure and financing analysis, IAS19 adjustments, balance sheet controls and auditor queries. iii. Responsibility for s106 and CIL monitoring, budgeting and reporting ensuring that the process is delivered in an efficient manner with high levels of service to all customers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Oversee the Councils and trading companies VAT financial and legislative requirements, ensuring all returns are completed on time with minimal voluntary disclosures. v. Ensure any future VAT responsibilities are identified in a timely manner and the council / trading companies are compliant within required deadlines. vi. Responsible for various partnerships, ensuring that all partnership monitoring and budget setting is delivered to a high standard. vii. Ensure the financial activities of the council / trading companies meet the requirements of HMRC in accounting for VAT. viii. Provide specific expert advice on VAT consequences of new projects or changes in work practices, including partial exemption, in line with statutory guidance and legislation. ix. Provide cover for treasury management where needed, including daily treasury functions and investment management. x. Maintain a high level of knowledge on the Finance system and its capabilities, ensuring knowledge is passed to the Assistant Accountants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To lead and co-ordinate the preparation of budgets in accordance with the approved budget timetable for relevant service areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reviewing salary estimate calculations with budget managers. ii. Reviewing growth and savings proposals. iii. Reviewing Capital growth bids. iv. Reviewing fees and charges with budget managers v. Preparing reports for the Corporate Leadership Team and agreeing final schedules for publication. vi. Calculating annual contract inflation. vii. Preparing centrally determined costs including insurance, mobile phones and expenses costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To lead on the monitoring of budgets and ensure accuracy of coding in accordance with the prescribed deadlines, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Monitoring expenditure and income projections against budgets and provide a robust challenge to budget managers where necessary. ii. Checking the accuracy and validity of projections. iii. Meeting with relevant budget managers and heads of service to review and agree their projections, including salaries, and identify and resolve queries. iv. Ensuring budget variations are reported in a timely manner in accordance with the Council's constitution and Financial Procedure Rules. v. Producing monthly, quarterly and any other required periodic budget monitoring reports for Committee meetings. vi. Authorise journals, budget virements and bank payments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To provide financial information and advice, summary briefings including the financial implication on CLT and Committee reports, and detailed analysis to service managers and budget holders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To manage and maintain the Council's recharge model including co-ordinating percentage allocations for all staff, preparing calculations twice yearly for budget preparation and final accounts, updating budget codes and resolving issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To co-ordinate the Public Inspection period, logging requests, allocating requests to Assistant Accountants and other officers, collating and validating returned information and responding to queries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To complete statutory returns, grant claims and other information requests (including FOI requests) in accordance with prescribed timescales.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To carry out any other related duties as may be directed from time to time by the Chief Officer or Chief Accountant.

SPECIFIC ROLE DEPENDENT TASKS

Accountant – HRA (in addition to relevant key tasks and responsibilities set out above)

- To be the key contact for financial advice on HRA related matters, ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.
- To provide financial information and advice, summary briefings including the financial implication on CLT and Committee reports, and detailed analysis to service managers and budget holders.
- Brief the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury) and Chief Accountant on technical changes to the HRA statutory environment.
- Lead on the preparation and setting of the HRA revenue and capital budgets, including rent setting, service charges and fees & charges, in accordance with the approved budget timetable.
- To produce the HRA annual budget setting report, with recommendations on rent increases, to be presented and approved by full Council.
- Obtain information, collate data and review assumptions to support the Chief Accountant in the preparation of the HRA Business Plan.
- Provide support, in conjunction with the Chief Accountant, on financial modelling and options appraisals for new HRA development opportunities to enable informed decision making.
- Lead regular budget monitoring meetings with budget managers to review the HRA revenue and capital budgets, expenditure and income etc.
- Provide support to the Housing team budget managers with responsibility for HRA rental income, updating the financial reporting system as required.
- Prepare the quarterly HRA budget monitoring reports for Committee meetings.
- Lead on the closure of the Council's HRA accounts and prepare the HRA Statement of Accounts in accordance with the approved year-end timetable and statutory deadlines, including (but not limited to) preparing and calculating year-end accounting entries, contributing to the primary accounting statements, producing disclosure notes for the Statement of Accounts relating to HRA and Treasury and preparing high quality working papers to support the audit process.
- Work closely with the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury) to ensure HRA fixed assets are recorded on the register accurately and that HRA capital expenditure and financing is accurate.
- Evaluate the year-end HRA capital expenditure and financing position, providing accurate figures to the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury).
- Prepare financial information for the external audit for HRA & Treasury to ensure the timely completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- Lead on the preparation of financial information and forecasts in relation to the HRA for inclusion in Council strategy documents.
- In conjunction with relevant key senior officers, prepare financial information for HRA capital projects and prepare & maintain the 5 year medium term capital programme for the HRA.
- Complete and submit statutory returns such as LAHS and NROSH, grant claims and other requests for information from external bodies in accordance with prescribed timescales.
- Complete the pooling of capital receipts annual returns and provide the required information to the external auditors.
- Maintain and reconcile specified control accounts in accordance with agreed timescales.
- Provide line management to the Assistant Accountant including managing and monitoring workload and performance and supporting training to ensure high levels of customer service.
- Authorise bankline payments.

Accountant – Oportunitas, Charities, s106 & CIL (in addition to relevant key tasks and responsibilities set out above)

- To be the key contact for financial advice on s106 and CIL related matters, ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements.
- Support relevant service areas with reconciliations of service-related financial data related to s106 and CIL to the finance system.
- Keep accurate management information and records of relevant debtor/creditor balances related to s106 and CIL which reconcile to the general ledger and associated agreements.
- Support the administration and monitoring of s106 and CIL charges, allocations and spend.
- Perform indexation, as required, for s106 and CIL balances based on data supplied by relevant service areas.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of relevant s106 and CIL legislation and take a proactive approach to relevant changes, updating colleagues and recommending revised procedure and practices if required.
- To be the key contact for financial advice on Oportunitas Ltd and Charities for which the Council is a corporate trustee, ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements including - but not limited to - the Companies Act 2006 and Charity Act 2011 and any related guidance.
- To provide financial information and advice, summary briefings including the financial implications on CLT and Committee reports, and detailed analysis to service managers and budget holders.
- To provide financial information, advise and hold briefings to CLT, portfolio holders, Trustees and the Board of Directors pertaining to the Company or Charity, as appropriate.
- Brief the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury) and Chief Accountant on technical changes to the Companies Act 2006 and/or Charities Act 2011 statutory environment.
- Lead on the preparation and setting of the Oportunitas and Charity budgets, including rent setting, council tax special expense, fees & charges, intra-group transactions, recharges & dividend payments as appropriate, in accordance with the approved budget timetable.
- To produce the Oportunitas annual budget setting report to be presented and approved by the Board of Directors and Cabinet.
- To produce Charity annual budget setting report(s) to be presented and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Obtain information, collate data and review assumptions to prepare the rolling 5-year Oportunitas Business Plan, including assumptions around the returns to the Shareholder and dividend payments.
- Lead regular budget monitoring meetings with budget managers to review the Charity and Oportunitas revenue budgets, expenditure and income etc.
- Provide support to the relevant Operations teams, updating the financial reporting system as required related to the Oportunitas and/or Charity accounts.
- Prepare the quarterly Company budget monitoring reports for Board meetings and associated Cabinet reports.
- Lead on the preparation and closure of the Oportunitas Ltd accounts in accordance with the approved year-end timetable and statutory deadlines, including (but not limited to) calculating year-end accounting entries, preparing the primary accounting statements, producing disclosure notes for the Statement of Accounts and preparing high quality working papers to support the audit process.
- Lead on the preparation and closure of the Charity accounts in accordance with the approved year-end timetable and statutory deadlines, including (but not limited to) calculating year-end accounting entries, preparing the Statement of Financial Activities,

balance sheet and producing disclosure notes for the Statement of Accounts and preparing high quality working papers to support the audit process.

- Lead on ensuring that Charity fixed assets are recorded on the fixed asset register accurately and that Charity capital expenditure, asset valuations and financing is accurate. Ensure that all movements and journals are communicated to the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury).
- Work closely with the external valuers to ensure Oportunitas fixed assets are recorded on the fixed asset register accurately and that any Oportunitas capital expenditure, asset valuations and financing is accurate. Ensure that all movements and journals are communicated to the Principal Accountant (Capital & Treasury).
- Prepare financial information for the external auditor for Oportunitas & Charities to ensure the timely completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- Ensure relevant external filings i.e. with Companies House and the Charity Commission are completed in accordance with prescribed timescales and associated laws / regulations.
- Maintain and reconcile specified control accounts in accordance with agreed timescales.
- Provide line management to the Assistant Accountant including managing and monitoring workload and performance and supporting training to ensure high levels of customer service.
- Authorise bankline payments.
- Undertake VAT tasks including reconciling and calculating the monthly VAT return, calculating the annual partial exemption figure, dealing with coding errors and specific service area arrangements, providing guidance on VAT and liaising with external VAT consultants.
- Monitor income and expenditure for the Council's subsidiary company, including recharging appropriate costs to / from the council, preparing quarterly VAT returns, preparing interim financial accounts for Board meetings, producing the year-end company accounts and assisting with the audit process.
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CORPORATE EXPECTATIONS

- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by considering their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Person Specification

Post Title: Accountant

Important Information for Applicants:				
The criteria listed in this person specification are the requirements for the post. Where the method of assessment is stated to be the application form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, you may not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.				
Factors	Criteria	Means of Assessment		
		Application	Interview	Test
Qualifications	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A – C Maths and English GCSE, Level 2 literacy and numeracy (or equivalents) or recent and relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency in English and Maths. ▪ AAT qualified as a minimum or CCAB part qualified Accountant 			
	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CCAB qualified Accountant. 			
Experience and Knowledge	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 years recent and relevant experience within a financial environment, ideally within local government ▪ Experience of working in a customer facing environment. ▪ Detailed knowledge and experience of operating MS Office systems such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. ▪ Experience of computerised financial information systems. ▪ Experience of budget setting, monitoring and closing of accounts. ▪ Knowledge of VAT and how it applies to local authorities and companies. ▪ Experience of financial activities relating to the HRA (<i>for the Accountant – HRA role</i>) ▪ Detailed knowledge in order to ensure that financial record-keeping arrangements are managed in line with legislation, the council's Constitution and current professional standards. 			

	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Previous experience of local government final accounts ▪ Experience of Treasury management ▪ Experience of delivering GL systems, particularly bespoke reporting ▪ Management experience 			
Skills and Abilities	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to work as part of a team ▪ Ability to operate on own initiative with minimal supervision ▪ Excellent written and oral communication skills required to effectively liaise with stakeholders, customers and colleagues at every level and through a range of mediums. ▪ Ability to communicate financial issues with non-accounting staff ▪ High level of attention to detail and accuracy ▪ High level of self-motivation and a drive for high achievement ▪ Competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office ▪ Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development ▪ Ability to adapt and proactively organise and prioritise work effectively in order to meet deadlines and maintain high standards at all times. ▪ Ability to demonstrate a professional and customer orientated approach ▪ Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to operate and build excellent working relationships at all levels ▪ Ability to analyse complex financial data and present to non-financial recipients. ▪ Willing to take a flexible approach to duties to support the team 			
	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to develop creative and innovative solutions to meet customer needs 			