



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Principal Accountant – Planning and Business Partnering

Department: Finance

Location: Headquarters, Winsford.

Post Number:

Grade/Role: PM3

Special Allowances: None.

Responsible to: Deputy Head of Finance

JOB PURPOSE

To lead revenue and capital financial planning, budget monitoring and business partnering, providing reliable forecasts and clear advice that support affordable delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan. To develop budget-holder capability, coordinate the planning timetable and strengthen evidence of value for money.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 Lead the planning and monitoring calendar, coordinating monthly forecasts, annual budget preparation, medium-term scenarios and financial contributions to service and workforce plans.
- 2 Provide finance business partnering to assigned senior managers and complex portfolios. Understand operational drivers, challenge assumptions and advise on corrective action while retaining budget-holder accountability.
- 3 Consolidate the revenue forecast and explain the movement from budget and previous forecasts. Distinguish actual expenditure, commitments, accruals, remaining activity, risks and opportunities; document assumptions and ownership.
- 4 Coordinate pay and establishment forecasting with People and payroll colleagues, using validated posts, FTE, pay points, start dates, vacancies and employer costs. Reconcile the treatment of vacancy provision and avoid double-counting savings.
- 5 Prepare the annual budget and medium-term financial model under the deputy's direction, developing options and sensitivities for funding, pay, demand and other material pressures.
- 6 Lead financial monitoring of the capital programme with project owners, linking cost, timing, financing and revenue consequences. Reconcile forecasts with Reporting and Control's asset and capital accounting records.
- 7 Line manage and develop the Assistant Accountant, agreeing portfolio responsibilities, quality standards and learning objectives. Coordinate agreed planning support from the existing PM1 with its line manager and escalate conflicts in available capacity.
- 8 Assess business cases, savings proposals and investment options using proportionate

whole-life costing, risk analysis and sensitivity testing. Ensure financial advice explains implications for service outcomes and affordability.

- 9 Maintain financial benefits and savings evidence with Service Improvement and budget owners. Distinguish cashable savings, avoided costs, service benefits and timing changes; support appropriate peer comparisons.
- 10 Produce clear monitoring reports, briefings and financial advice for senior leaders and committee papers. Present information as delegated, including uncertainty and the actions required.
- 11 Develop useful TechnologyOne and Power BI reporting requirements with finance systems and digital colleagues. Define measures, require reconciliation to the ledger and protect confidential information and role-based access.
- 12 Lead the Head of Finance's organisation-wide finance-literacy programme for budget holders and relevant managers, covering financial responsibilities, forecasting, reports and business cases. Provide induction, workshops, guides and drop-in support, with named finance contacts.
- 13 Support agreed month-end and year-end processes, coordinating necessary accruals and adjustments with Reporting and Control. Respect independent review arrangements and avoid taking over unrelated routine treasury or transaction work without a revised capacity plan.
- 14 Maintain current professional knowledge and provide cover for agreed planning and advisory activities. Escalate material risks and unresolved issues to the deputy and support the Head of Finance in meeting the Authority's reporting needs.

Core Responsibilities for Cheshire Fire Service Personnel

Personal Performance

To take responsibility for personal performance (including personal fitness) and the development of personal skills to ensure the required skills, knowledge and competence to fulfil the role.

Personal Accountability

To manage the areas of responsibility attached to the post or commensurate with the role in accordance with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation.

Core Values and Behaviours

To encourage and promote the values of Cheshire Fire Authority and comply with the required standards of conduct and so promote the Authority within the community by acting with integrity and honesty. Specifically:

- **Being Inclusive**
By acting fairly with integrity and respect and without prejudice.
- **Doing the right thing**
By holding each other to account for ensuring high standards of professionalism in everything we do.

- **Acting with compassion**
By being understanding and offering to help each other and to our communities with warmth, patience and kindness.
- **Making a Difference**
By making an impact in our organisation and in our communities in whatever way we can for as many people as we can.
- **NFCC Code of Ethics**

Putting our communities first
Integrity
Dignity and respect
Leadership
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality and Diversity

To promote, adhere to and implement the Service's Equality and Diversity Strategy/Policy and to work consistently to embed equality and diversity within the Service.

Health and Safety

To work in compliance with Service Health and Safety Policy to ensure that hazards are identified and risks assessed and controlled.

To be proactive in managing your personal health, safety and wellbeing and that of your colleagues.

Environment

To promote the Service's Environment Policy/Strategy by implementing working practices and procedures that ensure a sustainable approach to the use of resources and that resources are disposed of in an efficient and environmentally friendly way.

To work consistently to embed environmental considerations, energy efficiency and compliance with the Environment Management System (EMS) within the Service.

N.B.

Notwithstanding the detail in this job description, in accordance with the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's flexibility policy the job holder will undertake such work as may be determined by the Chief Fire Officer/Line Manager from time to time, up to or at a level consistent with the principal responsibilities of the job and in any location within the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Principal Accountant – Planning and Business Partnering

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications and Experience: CCAB-qualified accountant with current membership and evidence of continuing professional development. Substantial experience of budget preparation, management accounting and forecasting in an organisation with multiple budget holders. Evidence of constructive business partnering and influencing managers to address financial risks. Public-sector finance experience, CIPFA development or knowledge of local-government/fire-authority funding.	X X X	X
Technical knowledge and experience: Strong financial modelling, pay forecasting and scenario analysis, with accurate and traceable calculations. Ability to connect revenue, capital, workforce and cash implications and assess whole-life business cases. Ability to interpret ledger data, reconcile reports and explain material variances and uncertainty. TechnologyOne or Power BI experience, and practical understanding of governed reporting.	X X X	X

Personal Competencies: Clear communication, sound judgement and confidence to challenge respectfully and escalate concerns. Ability to supervise or coach colleagues, organise work and meet deadlines without compromising quality. Commitment to inclusion, integrity, confidentiality and collaborative public-service delivery. Experience of formal line management or leading improvements across teams.	X X X	X
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