



Penrith Town Council

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR
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JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Responsible Financial Officer

Salary Level:

- 37-41 SC3 dependent upon experience and qualifications range.
- Employer superannuation contributions at 17.5%
- Employee contribution rates are in LGPS Bulletin 182 circa 5.50%

Contract Type: Permanent after 12 weeks probationary period

Hours: Part time up to 16 hours pw – remote working and office working with a bi-monthly evening meeting (working pattern is flexible)

Team:

Reporting Line: Town Clerk

Partnership working:

Services and Contracts Manager – weekly payments, risk and contract management, tender process, grants scheme and clerk to Finance Committee.

Economic Development Officer- grants scheme, committee budget

Deputy Town Clerk – Planning Committee budget

External: Lamont Pridmore - Payroll, Pensions, HMRC, bank payments

Overview

Penrith Town Council has achieved the Quality Standard of the Local Council Award Scheme and currently, holds the General Power of Competence. The Council currently employs two full time and five part time officers. All the officers are experienced in local government. The officer teamwork incredibly well, collaborating to provide and develop effective Council services to make a difference in Penrith.

In pursuit of these aspirations, the Council strives to meet its statutory obligations competently and since it was established, in May 2015, has continually reviewed its financial operations to ensure best practise for internal control, compliancy with legislation, cash management and business continuity.

The Council outsources payroll, pensions, electronic payments, VAT and budget reporting to an external accountancy services to Lamont Pridmore. The Responsible Financial Officer would be expected to develop an effective working relationship with the external accountancy service.

You will develop the annual draft budget and precept application working closely with each committee, provide regular budget reports to the committees, coordinate closedown for year-end and liaise with the Council's internal and external auditors.

Legal Framework

Town and Parish Councils are required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appoint a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to manage their financial affairs. The RFO is described in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, section 2(2) (a) as: "the person who, by virtue of section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, is responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of a relevant body or, if no person is so responsible, the person who is responsible for keeping the accounts of such a body".

The Regulations impose specific duties on the RFO to:

- (i) Establish a sound system of internal control and arrangements for the management of risk (section 4(1));
- (ii) Carry out an annual review of the system of internal control and to prepare and publish an annual statement of internal control (section 4(2));
- (iii) Determine the accounting records and ensure they are maintained in accordance with proper procedures and are kept up to date (section 5); and
- (iv) Determine the accounting control systems and ensure that they are observed (also section 5).

KEY OUTCOMES

Support the Council to deliver the Council's corporate policies and priorities to an excellent standard.

The RFO will report directly to the Town Clerk, working closely with the Services and Contract Manager to:

1. Act as the Responsible Finance Officer (as outlined above) for all aspects of the Town Council's finances, managing the Town Council's financial affairs within the legal framework for town and parish Councils, maintaining good governance, accountability and transparency in accordance with regulatory requirements, accounting guidance and proper practice (the current Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide) and current legislation.
2. Ensure corporate governance and administration of the Town Council with specific responsibilities for accounts and financial records, in accordance with Financial Regulations.
3. Advise the Clerk and Members on matters relating to the budget, income and expenditure, including procedures, methods and protocol.
4. Take responsibility for and to develop and lead on specific Town Council schemes, projects and service areas, focusing on Town Council finances and business support.
5. As the Town Council's role and growth develops, continually appraise financial arrangements and to seek to develop a system whereby financial information can be built into quality performance measures and adapt to the size of the business operations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Regulate cash flow.
- Review and monitoring the Town Council's systems, ensuring that proper checks and controls are in place.
- Liaise with the Town Council's internal auditor and external auditor.
- Review the Financial Regulations annually (particularly any updates and amendments needed due to changes to statute and government regulations).
- Maintain the cashbook and ensure that all supporting documentation is maintained to provide the required audit trail.
- Ensure that schedules of payment are presented to the Finance Committee for information/approval.
- Control and oversee investments, bank transfers and payments.
- Administer the Town Council's loans, leasing and such other capital financing arrangements as may be required.

- Ensure that all money due to the Town Council is billed and collected promptly and banked regularly and that payments are made promptly and made correctly.
- In partnership with the Services and Contracts Manager monitor contracts to ensure the council is receiving the required level of service and value for money
- Oversee reconciliation with expenditure and banking payments, allocating receipts and payments from bank statements and completing monthly reconciliations for all the Council's accounts.
- Oversee the external accounts for the submission of HMRC (PAYE and NI), LGPS.
- Manage the Town Council's bank accounts to achieve an effective cash flow and to manage the Town Council's investments in accordance with the approved Investment Strategy.
- Ensure that the SAGE software system is effectively administered and up to date and that finances are administered within the approved budget.
- Submit monthly VAT returns.
- Oversee of all internal accounting processes including salaries and wages payments: Calculating and preparing payroll journals to input into the accounts. Reconciling control accounts. Updating and calculating any pay increases.
- Oversee the Council's Grant Scheme with colleagues and payment of grants awarded, checking receipts etc.
- Prepare a detailed annual budget and precept assessment for the Town Council's approval having ensured that all appropriate Committees have had the opportunity to engage with the process.
- Make appropriate banking arrangements.
- Advise the Council on a financial strategy that will meet its financial and policy objectives (including preparation of annual budget and recommendation to Council, precepting funds from the precepting authority when the final budget is agreed by Council.
- Production of income and expenditure reports and explanation for variances, budget monitoring and preparation of annual accounts.
- Prepare the Town Council's annual Financial Statements in accordance with legislation and guidelines, seeking the Town Council's approval of the Statement of Internal Control annually.
- Monitor the Local Government Pension Scheme, payroll legislation, annual pay awards, and HR policies and take action as appropriate within a finance and business support remit.
- Carry out reviews of provision of utilities, contracts and services ensuring cost effective suppliers are in place, in context of the Town Council's Carbon Net Zero commitment.

- Review and monitor the Town Council's systems and ensure that proper checks and controls are in place.
- Ensure that expenses (including those claimed by members), sickness, annual holiday and TOIL (time off in lieu) are managed in accordance with Town Council policies.
- Review the Financial Regulations annually, Procurement Policy, Reserves Policy, and Investments Policy (particularly any updates and amendments needed due to changes to statute and government regulations).
- Carry out investigations and prepare reports on an ad hoc basis.
- Provide regular statements to committees
- Manage insurance risk and contracts and to oversee the maintenance of the Fixed Asset Register.
- Ensure the Town Council's obligations for risk assessment and health and safety are met within a finance and business administration remit.
- Complete and balance the year-end accounts, then submit them for approval.
- Complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Council's External Auditor and submit with records as requested.
- Effectively manage the finance for staffing and resources, in keeping with the policies of the Town Council.
- Provide business management support to the Town Council, working with other officers as appropriate in relation to work such as:
 - a) Participating in strategic reviews on relevant issues – fraud and corruption, investments, IT etc and to make recommendations.
 - b) Ensuring implementation of all necessary procedures and documentation to ensure appropriate financial management in all areas of the Town Council's work.
- Assist as a member of the Senior Town Council's Management team with its overall performance management. This could involve taking responsibility for specific Town Council schemes, projects and events, as requested by the Town Clerk.
- Oversee the preparation of agenda for, attend and write/oversee the writing of the minutes of the Finance Committee and other meetings as directed by the Town Clerk.
- Advise the Town Council on overall policies to be followed in respect of the Council's financial and business activities.
- Ensure an up-to-date knowledge of Town Council policies/procedures, relevant legislation.
- Attend appropriate courses as required.
- Monitor and propose updates to financial and business policies/procedures to ensure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose.

- Maintain professional registration.
- Represent the Town Council as required and ensure good working relationships with external partners, local authorities, parish and town Councils and other public organisations and community groups/organisations.
- Liaise with volunteers, management committees, voluntary organisation/community groups/friends' groups, schools and businesses and contractors/suppliers, staff from partner organisations, general.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES APPLICABLE TO ALL STAFF

- a) Work with the Council Team in the delivery of the Council's priorities expressed in the Council Plan.
- b) To deal with correspondence or documents or bring such items to the attention of the Council as necessary.
- c) To issue correspondence as a result of instructions of, or the known policy of the Council.
- d) To prepare, in consultation with appropriate members, agenda for meetings of the Council and Committees.
- e) To attend such meetings and prepare minutes for approval.
- f) To study reports and other data on activities of the Council. Where appropriate, to discuss such matters with administrators and specialists in particular fields and to produce reports for circulation and discussion by the Council.
- g) To create reports that draw up both on his/her own initiative and as a result of suggestions by Councillors, create proposals for consideration by the Council and advice on practicability and likely effects of specific courses of action.
- h) To maintain a working knowledge of relevant legislation, statutory instruments and codes of practice and to arrange and deliver briefings to councillors.
- i) To maintain a working brief on best working practices within and outside local government, and to ensure that these are effectively communicated to the Council.
- j) To act as the representative of the Council as required.
- k) To liaise and develop relationships with external bodies, including other Local Authorities, residents, businesses and local organisations.
- l) To attend training courses or seminars as required by the Council.
- m) To be part of the officer rota providing the public reception during office hours.

- n) To acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient delivery of the affairs of the Council.
- o) To ensure all requests for information held by the Council are processed in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of handling requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The post holder will actively assist the Council in meeting current and emerging requirements of Equality legislation and comply with measures that are introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.

It is the duty of every post holder while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself or any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work. No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions.

Every post holder has a general duty to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Every post holder has a general duty to ensure that data used is accurately recorded and collected and should be aware of data protection requirements.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential Skills:

You are required to have:

1. Either a relevant professional qualification or equivalent specialist qualification (i.e. Business degree and AAT Level 4 diploma) or will have equivalent relevant experience and will be committing to training.
2. Full personal membership of a recognised sector organisation (AAT, CIPFA, CIMA ACCA).
3. Possess the right to work in the UK.
4. Excellent numeracy and accuracy skills and speed of preparation, maintenance and monitoring of both manual and computerised records.
5. Excellent and confident use of Microsoft Applications Word / Excel.
6. Ability to use initiative to maintain relevant, current knowledge and skills to inform policy development related to finance.
7. Awareness and compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.
8. Commitment to undertake the necessary qualifications to act as Proper Officer in absence of Town Clerk and Services and Contracts Manager. (ILCA/CILCA)

Desirable Skills:

1. Experience of working in a Town or Parish Council/ local government setting.
2. Knowledge of procurement and contract management, tendering processes, Contract Finder, due diligence etc.
3. Data Protection/GDPR experience/qualifications
4. Relevant technical knowledge, or the ability to learn said knowledge speedily
5. A full UK driving licence or access to transport

Experience:

1. Managerial experience organising and co-ordinating financial services.
2. Experience of creating and managing budgets.
3. Experience of producing long-term financial plans and forecasting).
4. Experience in undertaking detailed reconciliations and balancing of accounts.

5. The post holder will be required to demonstrate a capability to work on their own initiative to achieve the Council`s requirements, and to organise and prioritise their work to achieve the Council`s goals.
6. The post holder will be required to demonstrate experience of managing a significant budget

Knowledge:

1. Knowledge to process all bookkeeping related transactions and postings
2. Knowledge of accountancy processes including year-end close down of accounts.
3. An understanding of and practical ability to use SAGE financial systems or equivalent computerised accounting system.
4. Ability to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of the wider impact of the role. This may include extensive and comprehensive knowledge of the Town Council`s governance, processes and procedures with an understanding of political sensitivities

Personal Style:

1. Excellent teamwork and leadership skills and ability to use these to inspire, motivate and develop the finance team to attain high levels of performance.
2. Excellent written and verbal communication skills including report writing, influencing and negotiating skills and confident, assured presentation skills.
3. Proven ability to work flexibly and manage a complex workload. Excellent time management skills to prioritise and set appropriate deadlines.
4. Ability to use initiative to maintain relevant, current knowledge and skills to inform policy development related to finance.
5. Ability to think analytically, solve problems and make decisions.

Personal Qualities:

1. The Council expects the highest standards of conduct from its employees/office holders, and at all times you must carry out your duties with integrity and professionalism.
2. Ability to communicate effectively, confidently and politely with a wide range of people, paying attention at all times for the need to act with sensitivity, diplomacy, discretion and the need to maintain confidentiality