

JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE	Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)		
LOCATION	County Hall, Exeter		
REPORTING TO	Chief Executive		
POSITION NUMBER(S)			
EVALUATED GRADE	L2	DATE OF EVALUATION	August 2021
DIRECTORATE/SECTION/SCHOOL	Corporate Services		
EFFECTIVE DATE OF JD	August 2021	JOB NUMBER	H.0200

JOB PURPOSE:

The main purpose of the post is to support the County Council in fulfilling its objectives through making the best use of its available and limited finance resources by:

Providing the authority with financial leadership and making a major contribution to the strategic direction and corporate leadership of the authority.

Acting as the authority's Statutory Section 151 officer, with responsibility for maintaining financial integrity, administration and stewardship. This covers the management of the totality of the financial affairs of the authority in all its dealings and the Devon Pension Fund.

Maximising the level of resources available to the Council and ensuring their best use.

Ensuring Members have the right financial advice and support that will enable them to determine the Council's financial direction.

Within each specialist area, ensure all relevant statutory duties and legislative obligations are met.

CONTEXT:

The Corporate Leadership Team and Heads of Service will work together as one entity, valuing and demonstrating strong leadership and developing a collaborative approach towards continuous improvement. Each Head of Service will hold individual accountability for the results and performance improvement of their own area, alongside joint ownership of all service areas in order to meet the needs of the citizens of Devon. There will be a shared understanding of the single Council approach, ensuring public money is used in the most business-like way. The Heads of Service will provide strategic direction, clear evidence for decision making, robust performance management and enhanced relationships with Elected Members.

The economic downturn means that the Council is operating in a very challenging and fast-moving financial environment. Demand for services continues to grow, therefore, the need for financial planning and acumen is at a premium. One of the main purposes of this post is to provide financial planning and strategy that will enable the Council to achieve the right balance between service outcomes, Council tax levels and the level of reserves held, both in the immediate and going forward. The post is responsible for the local interpretation and implementation of national initiatives, such as the drive for transparency and the renewed requirement to achieve and to be able to demonstrate the achievement of value for money.

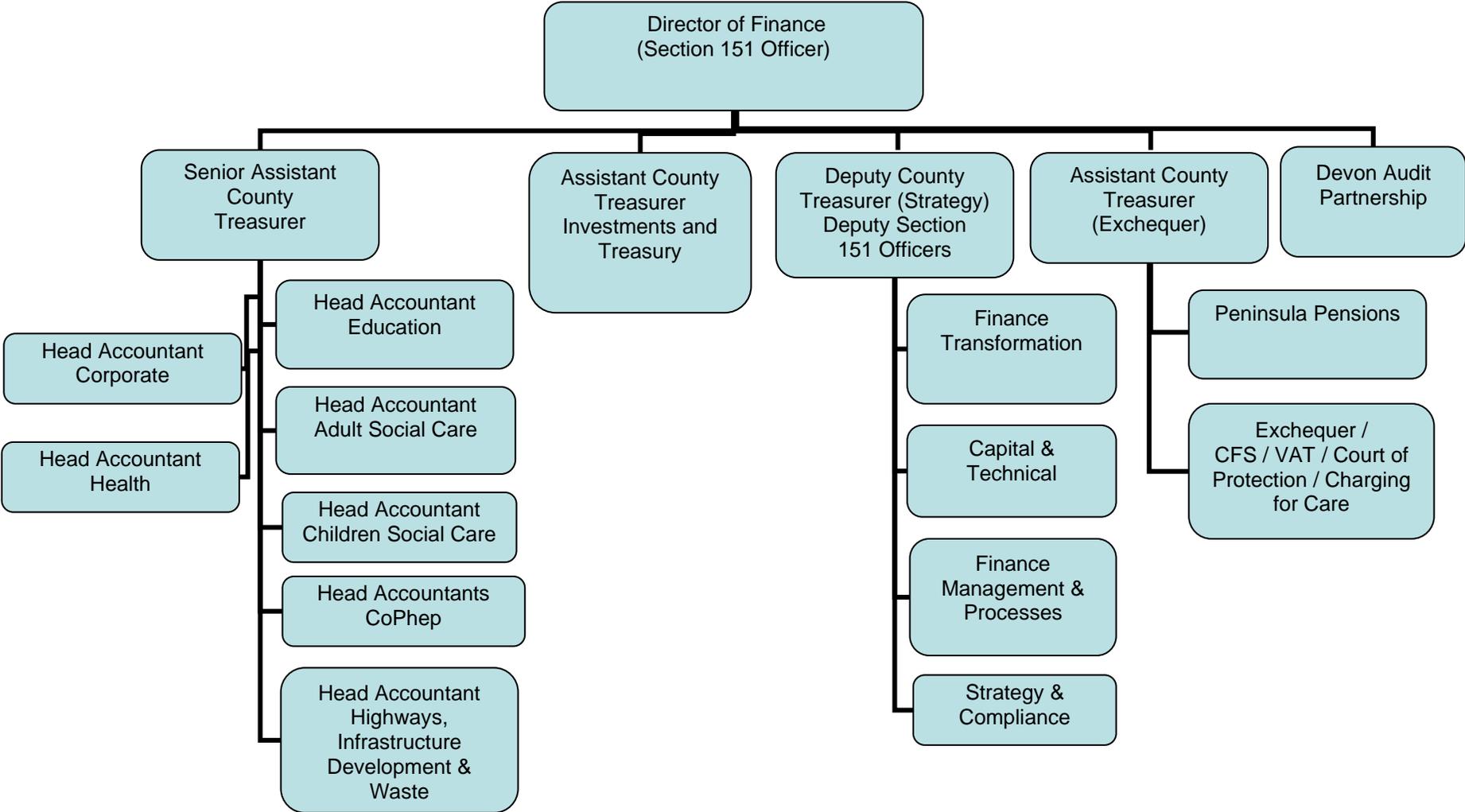
Regular contact is required with Members, especially with the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Property and the Chairs of the Audit and Investment Committees. This is done both through formal committee meetings, many informal ad-hoc meetings and information requests. This requires the use of a high level of interpersonal skills on a constant, day-to-day basis to influence financial direction and to ensure the strategic aims of the Council are realised through the annual budget setting process, the development of longer-term financial strategies and Council-wide initiatives such as the service prioritisation exercise that balanced service expectations/requirements with available resources. There is a large requirement to interpret/explain complex financial issues to non-financial Members and officers in a clear and transparent way. The post must absorb complexity and convey simplicity.

Budgetary restraints and changes in national policy have increased the need for new ways of thinking and working. The post continually acts as the interface between Finance and the requirements of the Council, stretching the legal and fiscal envelope to ensure the Council gets the best possible return from its money and achieves its strategic outcomes. The achievement of the Council's objectives is very dependent on proactive financial management that provides a link between resources and strategy, which facilitates the Council's vision of its future.

RESOURCES:

<p>Finance</p>	<p>The post holder will make a considerable contribution to the achievement of the Council's total financial wellbeing. This means taking a controlling overview of the finances and investments of the County Council, which has a gross annual revenue budget of just under £1.2billion, cash-flow investments of c.£160million and a five-year capital programme of £770million.</p> <p>The role is also responsible for the financial management of the Devon Pension Fund and the administration of the Devon Local Government Pension scheme, which covers 112 public sector and community sector organisations within Devon. The fund has investments that are currently estimated at £2.4billion.</p> <p>The post holder has direct responsibility for the Finance services budget of £13.5million that covers 335 FTEs. This figure includes staff from the Devon Audit Partnership; a shared services arrangement that provides an internal audit function to Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council and which is managed by this post. There are six direct reports, as shown in the structure chart overleaf.</p>
<p>Staff</p>	<p>The role holder will have six direct reports, as per the structure chart overleaf. The total FTEs within the Finance function is 335.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>The role will take an overview of the Pension fund and be responsible for overseeing the investment practices and results for 112 public authority organisations, including the County Council and District Councils. Total investments are currently estimated at £2.4billion.</p>

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:



KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:		%
1	To ensure the Council has a robust, integrated Finance function that directs and informs financial decision making and assists Members and officers to achieve the Council's strategic vision.	10%
2	To help shape the Council's strategic vision by providing financial leadership and direction and by making a major corporate contribution to the strategic leadership and direction of the authority as a member of the Corporate Leadership Team.	15%
3	To ensure clear, appropriate and timely advice/guidance about the financial implications of decisions/policies is provided to Members, committees and officers across the full range of Council services. This particularly relates to any change in the operation of the Council's services, such as the divestment of assets or transfer of services to the private or voluntary sector.	15%
4	To develop strong working relationships across the political management structures with Members, Strategic Directors, Heads of Service and the Council's partners based on mutual respect, trust and understanding of their concerns.	10%
5	To ensure an effective internal audit service is provided to Plymouth, Torbay and Devon Councils through the Devon Audit Partnership and to promote the growth and development of the Partnership.	5%
6	To drive forward and oversee the development of strategies, policies and standards for financial management. To ensure sound systems are in place for financial planning and control and that officers and Members' roles and responsibilities for budget management are clear and the accounts of the authority provide a true and fair view of the authority's financial position.	13%
7	To provide strong leadership across the Finance function, directing and developing staff and raising awareness and understanding of financial issues and its impact on the Council.	10%
8	To represent the Chief Executive as and when required.	2%
9	To secure safe, effective arrangements for treasury management, both for County Council funds and the Devon Pension Fund. To ensure effective processes are in place for the safe management of the investments and assets of the Devon Pension Fund. To be responsible for the management of the Devon Local Government Pension scheme and ensure the right balance between fund solvency, employer costs and investment returns.	15%
10	To facilitate, promote and support external funding opportunities.	5%

PERSON SPECIFICATION

It should be noted that the duties or tasks associated with the post may change from time to time without altering their general character or the level of responsibility entailed and without affecting the grading of the post.

For all roles, the job holder must:

- Be aware of the Council's aims, organisational values and behaviours and their impact on this post;
- Participate in the Council's performance management process;
- Seek to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations in accordance with the Council's Equality in Employment Policy;
- Carry out the duties of the post in accordance with all rules, regulations and policies;
- Carry out all duties and responsibilities with reasonable care for the health and safety of you and any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work and to cooperate fully with the County Council in health and safety matters;
- To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. All employees of the Council will not disclose or make use of, for their private advantage, any information held on manual or computer records, which are not available to the public, however acquired.

The above mentioned duties and activities associated with this job are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the job holder may be called upon to carry out such other appropriate duties as may be required within the grading level of the job and the competence of the job holder.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:

The post holder will have highly developed strategic and operational leadership skills to provide clear direction to new partnerships and develop effective working relationships and performance of the organisation.

Must be experienced in managing change, exploiting new opportunities and developing a positive performance management and improvement culture, and will have extensive management skills, including direct line appraisal meetings and designated officer responsibilities.

It is essential that the post holder has highly developed networking and partnership working skills to build effective long lasting relationships with a wide range of internal clients.

Will have the ability to think strategically and demonstrate and apply innovative solutions to improve working practices and service delivery, and to drive efficiency savings and respond positively to changing circumstances.

It is essential that the post holder has extensive knowledge of the Local Authority Best Value Accounting Code of Practice, the Statement of Recommended Practice, Financial Reporting Standards and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for the UK.

Will have a detailed knowledge of local authority accounting regulations and codes of practice.

Will be highly numerate and have excellent verbal and written communication skills. Will have excellent organisational skills both for self and for developing the team.

Will have the ability to persuade, influence and explain financial concepts to non-financial managers.

Will have the ability to interpret legislation.

Due to the Section 151 Officer requirement, the post holder must be a qualified accountant, e.g. CIPFA, CIMA, ACCA.

Will have a depth of knowledge in all aspects of financial management.