

APPOINTMENTS & STAFFING

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

Report of Assistant Director Finance

PROPOSED ACCOUNTANCY APPRENTICE POST

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Not applicable

PURPOSE

To seek approval from members to revise the Corporate Finance team structure by deleting a vacant part-time Technical Support Assistant post and creating an Accountancy Apprentice post.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members

1. **Approve the deletion of a vacant 15 hour per week Technical Support Assistant post;**
2. **Approve the establishment of an Accountancy Apprentice post.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current Technical Support Assistant post (Grade D – 15 hours per week) became vacant with effect from 29th January 2020. Following a review of tasks and workload associated with the role, and requirements for the team as a whole going forward, it is considered that a better opportunity in terms of future succession planning would arise if we made use of the apprenticeship scheme. It is therefore proposed to utilize the vacant hours/salaries budget to establish an Accountancy Apprentice post, funding the associated training costs from the apprenticeship levy.

It is proposed that the apprentice would undertake training during the period of employment with the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). This is a well-established organisation offering qualifications to Level 4 Professional Accounting Technician level. The apprentice will progress to receiving training in drafting financial statements, budgets and evaluating financial performance, and on successful completion of the training programme, will be able to become a full member of the AAT.

To complete the training programme to Level 4 would typically take 3 years, depending on qualifications on entrance.

There are a number of local training providers offering the AAT qualification, registered under the Government's apprenticeship scheme as a registered training provider. The apprenticeship post would be suitable either for a school leaver or an older employee wishing to undertake the AAT qualification as part of a structured

apprenticeship programme. The post would be paid at age-related national minimum wage rates.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The current vacant Technical Support Assistant post is budgeted in 2020/21 at £11,300 including on-costs. A full-time apprentice post, at age under 18, would cost £10,574 pa (including on-costs). An 18-20 year old would cost £14,949 including on-costs. Should the successful applicant fall into this, or an older, age-bracket, the additional cost could be funded from within existing salaries budgets, as there is currently an anticipated underspend of £7.6k pa due to a Management Accountant within the Finance team working reduced hours.

Training costs including course fees are estimated at between £1k - £2k per annum dependent on the training provider, and would be met from the funds accrued under the apprenticeship levy scheme.

LEGAL/ RISK IMPLICATIONS

No other posts will be significantly affected.

Unions will be fully consulted.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk that we would not be able to recruit to a part-time 15 hour per week post and would lose the ability to build resilience and cover within the Corporate Finance team, and have less scope for succession planning for future, without a full-time trainee role.

If we are unable to recruit a sufficient number of apprenticeships across the Council, we run the risk of not being able to fully utilize the apprenticeship levy funds we have built up, resulting in us losing funds to Government.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDICES

Appendix A shows the job profile for the post to be approved.

APPENDIX A

JOB PROFILE – Accountancy Apprentice	Age related minimum wage
Job Purpose For the apprentice to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train to be able to perform as an Accountancy Assistant within the Corporate Finance team. • Obtain the necessary technical skills via a recognised qualification (AAT) to support development into a substantive Accountancy Officer role (should such become available). • Undergo a range of supervised experience that develops the apprentice to work independently by the end of the programme. 	Experience Proficient in use of keyboard and telephone. Methodical and organised approach.
Functional Responsibilities Key responsibilities include: <p>To support the Corporate Finance team in providing pro-active and customer focussed service to Members, Corporate Management Team and Budget Managers.</p> <p>To maximise the integrity of the financial system by the timely and accurate processing of all income and expenditure into the general ledger. This will involve a range of activities including processing miscellaneous income, housing rents and council tax payments.</p> <p>To provide informed advice and guidance on financial policy and procedures, rules and regulations to other staff and customers.</p> <p>To liaise with customers to deal with their requests in relation to Corporate Financial issues.</p>	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Appropriate training will be provided where necessary. Ability to use keyboard and telephone. Methodical and organised approach. Ability to interpret numerical information. Good standard of education equivalent to a minimum of 5 GCSE grade C or above (or equivalent) including English and Mathematics. Commitment to furtherance of own learning and development.

<p>To assist in the closedown and preparation of the Annual Statement of Accounts, including administrative support for the development of the plan/process, preparation of working papers and liaison with external auditors.</p> <p>To assist in the preparation & completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of regular monthly reporting, monitoring, performance management and review of the financial status for the Council; • completion of statutory and other Government returns & performance information; and • the production/finalisation of statutory/non-statutory documents. <p>To assist in the preparation of budgets to be included within the medium term financial strategy.</p> <p>To provide support to the management of the unit with regard to performance monitoring (including Business Plans).</p> <p>To keep abreast of current developments and legislative requirements associated with the department.</p> <p>To maintain effective two-way communication with staff, colleagues and customers, in order to further enhance the quality of service delivery.</p> <p>To comply with Corporate policy and guidance relating to Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Risk Management, Data Protection, and Financial Regulations.</p>	
<p>Strategy/Policy Development</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Attributes</p> <p>Effective verbal and written communication skills. Ability to undertake one off and routine tasks.</p>

	<p>Ability to work as part of a team contributing to team work and team goals. Ability to work on own initiative, organising and monitoring own workloads. High degree of accuracy and attention to detail. Ability to interrogate and accurately update on-line computer systems. Commitment to highest levels of service delivery. Ability to maintain appropriate confidentiality.</p>
<p>Other: To undertake any appropriate training that might be identified to enhance personal performance and development and as required by the apprenticeship training provider.</p> <p>To undertake such other duties that are required from time to time and are commensurate with the grade and general nature of the post.</p>	

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