# Job Description

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| **Job Title** | Head of Service – Strategic Finance Business Partner |
| **Directorate** | Finance and Resources |
| **Service Area** | Finance |
| **Grade** | 13 |
| **Competency Level** | 4 |
| **Salary** | £80,881 - £86,688 |
| **Job Type** | Hybrid |
| **Location** | Cunard Building |
| **Disclosure and barring service (DBS)** | Not applicable |
| **Job Evaluation Ref No** | |

## Job Purpose

The Strategic Finance Business Partner is a senior leadership role acting as a key link between finance and service areas, providing high-level financial insight, strategic challenge and advice to support informed decision-making, service transformation, and long-term financial sustainability.

Post holders will support the Directorate Management Team within one of four specialisms:

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- City Development: Commercial, Companies, Regeneration and Assets
- Adult Services: Demand Management, Social Care, and Homelessness
- Children's Services: Education and SEND
- Neighbourhoods and Housing: Operations Delivery, Trading Services, and Benchmarking

The role ensures business partnering is high performing and customer focused, shaping departmental strategies, advising on financial implications, and guiding capital and revenue projects. It leads budget development and monitoring, ensures compliance, and supports non-financial managers through coaching.

Working collaboratively across the organisation, the postholder fosters strong relationships, promotes accountability, and drives effective financial and resource management. As part of the Finance and Resources Management Team, they help set the strategic direction of the council's financial function in line with local and national priorities.

The postholder will have strong and collaborative working relationships with the Director of Finance – Technical and Strategic (Deputy S151), the Head of Financial Performance and Insight, the Head of Financial Strategy and the Chief Accountant.

## Directly Responsible For:

The post holder will have indirect strategic and matrix management responsibility for a variety of staff, approximately 50 FTEs across Finance and additionally outside of financial management roles, and that includes developing, allocating and assessing the work of others carried out across a variety of different work streams.

## Directly Responsible To:

Director of Finance Business Partnering

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## Main Areas of Responsibility:

**Strategic Relationship Management and Leadership Influence**

- Provide excellent leadership for Finance Business Partnering within a climate of continuous improvement and value for money, ensuring performance is maximised across the whole Finance service, including accountability for the efficient deployment of staff resources, evaluation and feedback to support appraisals, and upholding standards and competencies
- Develop strong and effective working relationships with Corporate Directors and their wider leadership teams and partners, ensuring understanding of their business needs and developing innovative and transformational change programmes for service provision and cost-saving opportunities
- Participate in Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) and ensure all financial matters are well understood and that actions are agreed to address issues raised
- Advise the Director of Finance Business Partnering, Senior Leadership Team and Elected Members on all related matters connected with the operational delivery of business partnering
- Understand the complexities of political dynamics and use this to build credibility and manage relationships with elected members

**Strategic Financial Advice and Decision Support**

- Provide high quality, accurate and timely information, strategic financial advice, and specialised technical support and direction on financial strategies, policy, standards and practices, enabling services to make well-informed decisions in the knowledge of financial impacts on Council finances
- Translate complex financial information/data for non-financial stakeholders into clear options, risks and implications

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- Assess the financial implications of service proposals and prepare financial reports and commentary for Cabinet and other stakeholders, including elected members and senior management; deliver comprehensive reports, briefings and responses to member and officer enquiries as required

**Directorate-Level Value for Money, Efficiency, and Savings Leadership**

- Objectively and constructively challenge existing practices to achieve outcome-driven solutions
- Review business intelligence and support benchmarking of financial, activity and performance data and insight, undertaking horizon scanning to contribute to informed decision-making, support transformation and improve value for money
- Establish robust and consistent financial management practices, promoting probity, efficiency, high performance and overall value for money, learning from best practice and identifying and addressing training needs
- Develop innovative ideas and solutions to ensure the Council has robust financial arrangements underpinned by a strong Finance Business Partner model

**Procurement, Commissioning, and Contract Financial Strategy**

- Provide strategic financial advice and challenge for the procurement and management of contracts (including financial system-related contracts within supported service areas), to ensure value for money and compliance in procuring, and to identify and take opportunities for efficiencies in relation to price and activity

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**Member Engagement and Political Governance Support**

- Advise and support elected members by providing financial advice and guidance through briefings, training sessions, report generation and attendance at governance meetings, including Scrutiny Committees
- Translate complex service finance issues into accessible narrative for political audiences

**Directorate Financial Governance and Budget Holder Capability**

- Ensure budget holders, service managers and Heads of Service have a comprehensive understanding and acceptance of their revenue and capital budgets, and a high level of financial literacy to manage budgets and financial plans effectively
- Lead the strategic preparation and monitoring of Directorate revenue and capital budgets, including providing guidance and input to service business plans and change and transformation programs, utilising appropriate financial modelling, options appraisal, and risk analysis techniques
- Take forward financial information, insight and analysis produced by teams reporting to the Head of Financial Performance and Insight and apply it in a strategic, outward-facing way to influence service decisions, transformation programmes, and future delivery models
- Ensure compliance with Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and financial policies, implementing procedures and establishing financial controls and governance to meet s151 responsibilities

**Risk Management, Forecasting Challenge, and Escalation**

- Provide strategic direction to revenue and capital planning, ensuring budget proposals are informed by robust modelling, options appraisal and risk

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analysis techniques, and aligned to medium-term service and transformation priorities

- Review business intelligence and undertake horizon scanning to identify risks and opportunities that inform decision-making and support transformation

**Strategic Input into Transformation and Cross-Council Change**

- Provide senior finance input on key projects within service directorates and the wider Council, particularly in transformation programmes and the development of cross-service initiatives as required
- Develop innovative and transformational change programmes for service provision and cost-saving opportunities (in collaboration with directorates)

**Horizon Scanning and External Insight for Directorates**

- Be actively involved in appropriate professional networks across the region and the Core Cities to learn from others and develop new ideas that will benefit the region and the city
- Undertake necessary development work in response to changing financial regimes, new government legislation and initiatives, and evaluate the financial implications of policy changes/decisions

**Additional Responsibilities**

- Support the implementation and organisational readiness for the replacement of the Council's SAP ERP system
- Contribute to continuous improvement in financial management processes and financial controls
- Provide leadership for improvements in Financial Management across the council and for the operating model of the Finance function

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- Support the development of both financial and non-financial management policies (e.g. procurement), explain to others how these policies might be applied and when necessary, advise on adaptation of these policies to ensure compliance with changing external financial management regulations
- Procurement and management of contracts including for financial systems within the service to ensure VFM and compliance in procuring and the opportunities for efficiencies are identified and taken in relation to price and activity

## Supervision and Management Responsibility:

- Ensuring activities are planned to include meaningful one to one conversations, quality annual appraisals and regular workforce planning and development
- Manages performance and behavioural issues effectively

## Budget and Financial Responsibility:

- Being fully accountable for managing the council's resources well and complying with statutory requirements. This includes managing your own functional cost centre budget, time, avoiding unnecessary waste, reuse and recycle resources to reduce personal impact
- Monitor financial performance and deliver within budget
- Monitor financial performance, deliver within budget and seek savings and efficiencies by exploring opportunities to draw funding where appropriate
- Set, monitor, and remain within budget whilst challenging the team to deliver increased efficiencies
- Provide indirect management and budgetary control over a team of c.30 to c.50 FTE.

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- Support and advise budget holders to manage within limited and reducing resources
- Support and advise senior budget holders to manage financial risk and protect the financial health of the Council
- Explore different options for funding and income generation in support of the MTFS
- Shared accountability for setting and delivery of a Capital programme over £400m and a net revenue budget over £700m.

## Social Value Responsibility:

- Drive for social value through all activities, ensuring wider social, economic and environmental benefits for the council, residents and communities

## Physical Demands of the Job:

- The post holder will be required to use display screen equipment and sit at a desk for prolonged periods of time

## Corporate Responsibility:

- Contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan
- Delivering and promoting excellent customer service, externally and internally.
- Commitment to customer excellence by dealing with customer feedback, including complaints, and learning from feedback in the drive for continuous improvement
- Commitment to managing people well and in line with the Council's People Plan
- Business continuity, emergency planning and risk management
- Participation in the tactical/out of hours rota

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- Making the council a great place to work, living the council's values, actively engaging in regular communications including team meetings, undertaking training as required and being responsible for managing own performance
- Develop the City Council's commitment to equal opportunities and to promote non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work undertaken
- To ensure that all work functions are undertaken in accordance with health and safety legislation, codes of practice and the City Council's safety plan

## Competency Framework:

We operate a competency framework, a set of core behaviours which define how we are expected to approach our work, how we perform in certain situations and how we treat each other. Each competency details the standards of behaviours and skills required by all staff and this in turn supports delivery of our aim and our council plans linking them together with our values.

The post holder will be required to demonstrate the ability to perform at the following competency level: **Level 4**.

The competency framework can be found here.

This job description is not intended to be either prescriptive or exhaustive. It is issued as a framework to outline the main areas of responsibility. You will be expected to carry out any other duties that may reasonably be required in line with your main duties and changing priorities of the organisation.

# Person Specification

Assessment methods used: I = Interview, P = Presentation, A = Application, E = Exercise, T = Test, AC = Assessment Centre

## Qualification and training

### Essential

- Educated to degree level or equivalent (A, I)
- CCAB/CIMA professional qualification and full membership (A, I)
- Evidence of continuous professional development which reflects commitment to effective management in a large organisation (A, I)

### Desirable

- Management qualification or on the job experience supplemented with relevant training

## Experience

### Essential

- Extensive senior-level experience within a large, complex organisation, with strong knowledge of finance, including key issues affecting local government and the statutory and legislative framework (A, I)
- Proven track record of leading significant service transformation, improvement and change, delivering successful outcomes and driving innovation (A, I)
- Experience operating within political or highly accountable governance environments, building constructive relationships with elected members, senior leaders, partners and stakeholders (A, I)

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- Demonstrated success in leading and managing high-performing teams, including coaching and developing managers to improve performance (A, I)
- Strong experience in delivering major projects, navigating complexity, and ensuring efficient and effective results (A, I)
- Ability to use financial and organisational insight, intelligence, and analysis to guide strategic decision-making, assess risks, and identify opportunities (A, I)

## Skills/Abilities

### Essential

- Excellent relationship building, negotiation and influencing skills, with the ability to manage diverse and sometimes conflicting stakeholder interests (A, I)
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, able to explain complex issues clearly and present persuasively to varied audiences (A, I)
- Strong strategic thinking and horizon scanning capability, able to anticipate changes in the internal and external environment (A, I)
- Ability to contribute to and lead strategic initiatives, policies, and organisational planning (A, I)
- Highly self-motivated, able to work autonomously, manage competing priorities, and meet multiple deadlines (A, I)
- Skilled in evidence-based decision-making, particularly in environments of uncertainty, ambiguity, or incomplete information (A, I)

### Desirable

- Project and change management experience
- Systems implementation experience

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## Commitment

### Essential

- An understanding of and a personal commitment to the Vision and Values of Liverpool City Council (A, I)
- Able to deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity both in provision of services and as an employer (A, I)

## Other

### Essential

- A demonstrable record of achievement in promoting and delivering service improvement, customer care, safeguarding and equality and diversity (A, I)
- Ability to maintain, develop and monitor performance indicators for services and use them proactively to improve performance (A, I)