



## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>DEPARTMENT</b> FINANCE	<b>JOB TITLE</b> PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT
<b>HAY GRADE</b> L	<b>SALARY RANGE</b> £50,353-£52,825
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO</b> Finance Manager	<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR</b> 2 Financial Accountants

## HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS/RISK/SURVEILLANCE REQUIRED

*VDU habitual user, meeting customers face to face*

## DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Overview

You report to the Head of Finance and are accountable for providing the technical advice, insight and interpretation of Financial Accounting Standards and Regulations, producing the Annual Statement of Accounts and other statutory returns, Capital Accounting, Treasury Management and managing the External Audit process.

You will be part of the Finance Leadership Team and will manage the Financial Accounting Team consisting of two staff members.

Make a positive contribution to the Council's core values by being helpful, approachable, responsive and taking ownership of challenges and problems, while making customers feel warm, welcome, wanted and cared for.

### Dimension of Job

Financial management of all Council Accounts - £55m pa income, £40m treasury management

To promote the HART values by being helpful, approachable, responsive and taking ownership of challenges and problems to ensure they are dealt with effect and authority.

## Key Contacts/Communications Links

### Internal

Wider Finance Team  
Leadership Team  
Service Managers

Service Officers  
Internal Audit

## **External**

External Audit  
Consultants & Treasury Advisors  
Brokers  
Capita Finance managers (Collection Fund)  
Council Members  
Members of the public  
Other councils – as partners or advisers  
Suppliers  
Other stakeholders (local organisations, neighbours etc.)

## **Key Responsibilities/Specific Duties**

1. To provide expert Financial Accounting advice, interpretation and insight to the Head of Finance, S151 Officer, and Members
2. Be the Lead Officer for the review, maintenance and monitoring of the financial accounting systems and processes, to ensure the accuracy and integrity of accounting transactions.
3. To be responsible for planning and delivering the year end closedown of the accounts for both revenue and capital; and production of the final accounts of the Council within the statutory and professional framework and reporting to Audit Committee.
4. To co-ordinate and complete Whole of Government Account returns and other statutory returns for both revenue and capital in accordance with (statutory) deadlines.
5. Maintain the capital program – capital finance planning and monitoring; production of statutory returns; production of all capital notes to the accounts, complete valuation process and challenge valuers where necessary.
6. Manage relationships with external auditors to ensure the Council's financial statements are audited with an unqualified opinion in line with audit and statutory deadlines. Install continuous improvement to ensure audit evidence is provided promptly, accurately and complete to aid efficient audits within agreed cost.
7. The post holder will have expertise and a comprehensive understanding of relevant European and UK legislation financial reporting standards such as International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (UK GAAP), CIPFA Code of Practice, LAAP and VAT and advise the council accordingly. This includes identifying and learning new changes and imparting the knowledge onto relevant stakeholders.
8. To manage all daily treasury management activities in accordance with the Councils approved Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices. This includes anticipating borrowing needs and maximising returns efficiently taking into account projected cashflow forecasts and strategic steer. The post holder will be responsible for the preparation of the annual Treasury Management Strategy, the quarterly Treasury reports and Treasury outturn report for senior management in accordance with the Prudential Code and regulated Treasury Advisory Services

9. To be responsible for the management of VAT and all other Tax matters.
10. Ensure all balance sheet reconciliations are completed and reviewed with appropriate timescales (as per schedule). Ensure variances are being investigated and accurately cleared/resolved promptly. Also ensure reconciliations form the basis for adequate statement of accounts working papers and contain notes to the accounts within them where possible.
11. Lead on collection fund accounting for the statement of accounts including the completion of NDR 1 & NDR 3 returns within statutory deadlines and communicating results to preceptors. This includes in year monitoring, forecasting and the impact on budgets.
12. Lead on fixed asset accounting, maintaining the fixed asset register, monitoring and reviewing the appropriateness of capitalisation, accounting for asset additions, reclassifications, disposals, valuations and associated reconciliations.
13. Maintain effective internal controls and assurance processes to ensure that the Council is properly governed in terms of financial transactions, financial reporting, financial performance, financial planning and in securing value for money.
14. The post holder will research new and significant accounting requirements and draft responses to relevant government consultations, such as changes to funding, financial policies and/or procedures. The post holder will use judgement to propose technical accounting changes to senior colleagues and prepare and implement their application once approved.
15. Support the maintenance of the Council's financial policies, practices, budgetary disciplines, regulations, accounting requirements and performance standards. Provide technical advice, training and instructions to other finance professionals and promote the improvement of financial awareness of non-finance managers, members and staff to ensure that all financial activities of the Council are carried out within the Council's constitution, financial regulations, rules of delegation and corporate framework.
16. The post holder will need experience in the application of financial systems to support financial management. The post holder should be able to contribute to corporate reviews of financial systems, applications and suggest solutions to problems encountered.
17. To provide high levels of customer service for our residents, staff, managers and external partners, so that they are made to feel warm, welcome, wanted and cared for.
18. To always promote the HART values by being helpful, approachable, responsive and taking ownership of challenges and problems to ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

**STANDARD CLAUSES**

- To work in an internal and external customer related way in accordance with the Council’s core HART values, and in accordance with adopted procedures and good practice.
- To assist in/manage the identification, development and implementation of Manual and Information Technology systems and procedures.
- To comply with the Council’s Equal Opportunities policy, Code of Conduct and other relevant policy, procedures and legislation.
- To comply with and/or ensure compliance with the Council Data Protection Policies and the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.
- All employees have a responsibility to ensure they always take a vigilant approach to safeguard members of the public, colleagues and themselves and that they follow adopted procedures and good practice to aid in the identification and effective reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- In the event of a Civil Emergency to take on any new roles and responsibilities allocated by Leadership Team, and to be available to undertake any training that maybe required to fulfil this role.

This post carries specific responsibilities for Health and Safety in particular the carrying out/updating of Risk Assessments.

Hart District Council’s Safety Policy and other safety procedures and guidelines are deemed part of this job description. Employees must look after their own health, safety and welfare and be mindful of other persons who may be affected by their acts. Employees must co-operate and comply with management instructions regarding Health and Safety issues and report all accidents, incidents and problems as soon as practicable to their supervisor, manager or other senior members of staff available.

The responsibilities outlined above cannot totally encompass or define all tasks which may be required of the postholder. The outline of responsibilities given above may, therefore, vary from time to time without materially changing either the character or level of responsibility or grade.

Job Description Revised (Date) .....

Hay Job Evaluated (Date) .....



## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**POST:** PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT

***The HART Core Values:***

Hart District Council aims to recruit candidates who are committed to delivering our core values. It is our aim that customers should feel warm, welcome, wanted and cared for when they are interacting with our services. To achieve that, all staff are expected to be helpful, approachable, responsive, and to take ownership, to ensure challenges, problems or enquiries are dealt with and appropriately concluded.

This person specification sets out what we are looking for when recruiting to the above post. The essential and desirable attributes we are seeking for this role are set out below:

CRITERIA	ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL (E) OR DESIRABLE (D)	METHOD OF MEASUREMENT
EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS	Professional Accounting Qualification (CCAB or equivalent) or relevant degree	E	Production of Documentary evidence
	Evidence of Continuous Professional development	E	
EXPERIENCE/ KNOWLEDGE	Extensive knowledge and a clear understanding of the major issues, priorities and demands of Councils and their financial needs	E	CV/Interview
	• Deep knowledge of Local Government Statutory Financial Framework; Auditing code of practice	E	
	• Experience of working in local government	E	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive knowledge, of relevant financial systems and technology</li>   <li>• Extensive knowledge, experiences and a clear understanding of commercial developments and their application to local government</li>   <li>• Experience of successfully managing, developing and motivating staff</li>   <li>• Desire to act corporately and collaboratively, self-motivated, committed, enthusiastic who is not easily discouraged and can identify and overcome barriers to success.</li>   <li>• Committed to providing high quality customer service</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p>	
<p><b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate MS Excel, proficient MS Word, and computerised accounting systems</li>   <li>• Strong analytical skills</li>   <li>• Business case writing skills</li>   <li>• Excellent written and oral communication and interpersonal skills</li>   <li>• Clear customer focus – the ability to evaluate customer needs and ensure that resources are reasonably directed to meet those needs.</li>   <li>• Ability to build strong working relationships and to collaborate with others to achieve results</li>   <li>• High degree of organisational skills and</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p>	<p>CV / Interview</p>

	<p>ability to manage priorities in a fast changing environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-motivated and able to work under pressure. Evidence of being able to work to deadlines and to prioritise work effectively.</li> <li>• Ability to make customers feel warm, wanted, welcome and cared for</li> <li>• Ability to take ownership of tasks, challenges and problems to achieve an appropriate outcome</li> </ul>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>	
PERSONAL QUALITIES/ APTITUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation &amp; drive</li> <li>• Ability to work under pressure and manage a heavy workload</li> <li>• Ability to work as part of a team and/or alone as required and use own initiative</li> <li>• Commitment to professional and personal development</li> <li>• Ability to manage own time</li> <li>• Commitment to delivering the best possible services for residents, and internal and external customers</li> </ul>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>	Interview/CV
MISCELLANEOUS /OTHER WORKING REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to a car for work purposes</li> <li>• Ability to attend meetings out of hours</li> </ul>	<p>D</p> <p>D</p>	Interview/CV

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Signatures:

Post Holder .....

Manager .....