

# **BRIEF**

## **Chief Officer Finance appointment**

### **Introduction**

The current post holder Chief Officer Finance and Commercial has resigned and will leave the Council at the end of September 2013. In the recent senior team restructure communicated with the Employment Panel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 the day to day line management of this post was moved to Director Economy, Communities and Corporate with a direct line of accountability into the Chief Executive on all substantial matters of financial management control.

It is proposed to change the scope of this role to Chief Officer Finance resulting in the aspects of the role relating to procurement and property management being picked up by others within the directorate.

It is the intention to appoint to this role permanently, however given the Council's critical financial position it is vital that the council has an experienced Chief Officer Finance in position to lead what will be a challenging budget setting process. It is proposed therefore to appoint an experienced interim for a period of up to 6-7 months whilst the process of recruiting permanently is progressed. Ideally the person appointed will commence work before the current post holder leaves the Council. This will enable an effective transfer of knowledge, which is important, notwithstanding the financial implication of an overlap.

### **Interim Chief Officer Finance responsibilities**

Herefordshire Council is looking for a highly competent, experienced and motivated Chief Finance Officer. Someone who can join the team, hit the ground running as an interim, with no time to get to know the business. The role is likely to be around 6 – 7 months, operating over a critical period. The role needs to;

- Lead the development of the whole Authority budget process against a background of organizational underperformance and the need to make further significant savings. Critical analysis of budget, spend, benchmarking and modeling demand/cost trajectories is required to inform the plan which must be integrated with the overall corporate planning cycle and evidence base.
- Working with Cabinet, the AD Organizational Development and Management Board to lead the developed of the medium term financial plan ensuring the allocation of resources to deliver the councils priorities. These will enable the Authority to prepare for future financial constraint in a measured way while focusing on priorities.
- Working with Cabinet, AD Organizational Development and Management Board to deliver solutions that take account of current performance, the councils transformation programme, avoiding where ever possible short term damaging decisions whilst balancing this with the need to stabilize the organizations financial position.
- Holding directors and senior managers to account for delivery against financial plans
- Review the current and longer term arrangement with Hoople Ltd ensuring financial systems spanning Council and Hoople Ltd are Lean and effective which may lead to changes to the operational model.
- Lead the re-commissioning of Financial and Revenues & Benefits Services from Hoople Ltd working as part of the team responsible for describing the minimum business support requirement thereby reducing spend in this contract area from circa £6M to £4M wef 1.4.13

- Functional line reporting into Director Economy, Communities & Corporate.
- Dotted line to CEx on substantive financial issues/ reports.
- Management of Finance team.
- Good knowledge of Revenues and Benefits is desirable given that all subject matter expertise is currently held within Hoople Ltd; the councils provider partner for corporate support services.
- Responsible for internal audit and liaison with the external auditor
- The successful candidate will be the Council's Section 151 Officer, so **must** be 'a member of an accountancy body recognised by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), qualified through examination, and subject to oversight by a professional body that upholds professional standards and exercises disciplinary powers.'

## Process & Timeline

The Councils Chief Officer (Finance and Commercial Services) is leaving the organisation at the end of September 2013. He also holds the statutory role of Section 151 Officer

The CIPFA Guidance recommends that the Section 151 Officer 'report directly to the Chief Executive and be a member of the Leadership Team, with a status at least equivalent to other members.'

The statutory role of Section 151 Officer must be performed by a Council officer. The non-statutory role (in effect the Director of Finance role) could be performed through a contract for services. The CIPFA Guidance contemplates a scenario where a Director of Finance/s.151 Officer is paid via a contract for services for 80% of his time (for his non-statutory work) and via a contract of employment for the remaining 20% of his time (for his s.151 Officer statutory work).

Under Part 3 of the Councils Constitution, the 'Duty to designate officers as the Monitoring Officer and the s.151 Officer is reserved to Full Council.

Under the Council's Employment Rules (para 4.9.3.7) appointment of a Statutory Chief Officer is to be made by the Employment Panel, which also approves the Terms and Conditions of Employment.

As this post holder (in the statutory s.151 role) will have a dotted reporting line direct to the Chief Executive, the appointment should be by the Employment Panel, with onward referral to Council for formal designation as the Council's s.151 Officer.

Therefore, in order to secure the best possible person to this interim role prior to the Chief Officer (Finance & Commercial Services) leaving it is proposed to;

Agree brief for the role, budget and appointment process	2 August 2013	Leader, Chief Executive, Director Economy, Communities and Corporate, Programme AD; Organisational Development
Check proposed approach with Council External Auditors	2 August 2013	Programme AD; Organisational Development
Inform Group Leaders and Employment Panel members of the brief, appointment process and the action to remove procurement and property services from the role Chief Officer Finance role	w/c 5 August 2013	Chief Executive Leader
Rigorous selection process for interim	20 <sup>th</sup> or 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Leader, Chief Executive, Director

consultant/Chief Officer Finance designate. CX decision.	August 2013	Economy, Communities and Corporate
Employment Panel agree T&Cs for permanent Chief Officer Finance role and appoint the interim as Chief Officer Finance (effective from the departure of the present post holder) and recommend to Council that s/he be designated as the authority's s151 officer	By 11 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013 (papers due 3.9.13)	Employment Panel
Council designate the successful interim as the authority's s151 Officer	27 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013 (papers due 13.9.13)	Council
Commence recruitment and selection process for permanent Chief Officer Finance. - Agree brief and role profile - Appointment process	Mid/late Sept 2013	Employment Panel
Advertisement	End Sept 2013	Employment Panel
Longlisting	End Oct 2013	Employment Panel
Shortlisting	Early Nov 2013	Employment Panel
Interviews	Mid Nov 2013	Employment Panel
Appointment	Mid Nov 2013	Employment Panel
Council designate the successful candidate as the authority's s151 Officer	13 Dec 2013	Council
Successful candidate commences in post	Jan-April 2014*	

\* Depending on notice period, if applicable.

### Financial Implications

The aim will be to operate within the budget available created by the Chief Officer (Finance & Commercial) vacancy. It is unlikely however that all costs for an interim will be contained within this costs envelope. It is anticipated that the interim arrangement will incur additional costs of £20k for the remainder of 2013/14 which include the costs of recruitment.

Permanent appoint to the role will be contained within the grade and salary arrangements for the existing Chief Officer (Finance and Commercial) role. It is likely that there will be a recruitment cost however this is not yet known; the recruitment process and costs will be agreed with the Employment Panel.

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**Programme AD – Organisational Development**

**2 August 2013**