



Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	Human Resources and Appeals Panel
Meeting date:	25 February 2021
Title of report:	Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Report by:	The Leader of the Council
Decision Type:	Non key
Ward(s) to which report relates	N/a

Executive Summary:

In a Cabinet report dated 16 December 2020 regarding the Strategic Financial Leadership of the Council and CCG, a Joint Executive Director of Finance was established and appointed to. The report advised that a review of the supporting staffing structures in finance would follow.

This paper proposes the establishment of a Deputy Chief Finance Officer with responsibility for the operational management of the Council's finance function

Recommendation(s)

That:

The post of Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Band E) is established.

Key considerations

In December 2020 strategic finance leadership arrangements were reviewed and a new post of Executive Director Finance was established, across Bury Council and CCG. The role will act as the officer appointed under s151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires the Council to appoint a suitably qualified officer to be responsible for the administration of its financial affairs. The Executive Director Finance will also fulfil the statutory financial responsibilities of the CCG.

The Executive Director Finance was appointed to in January 2021 and the appointee will take up their post during the spring of 2021. The accountabilities of the post were agreed to include:

- creating single leadership for development of an integrated strategic approach to the next three year financial plan and commissioning strategy.
- driving the creation of pooled and aligned budgets and single financial management systems across the CCG and the Council. This will be essential to the operation of the One Commissioning Organisation
- leading the professional development of finance staff and raise overall financial skill levels across the CCG and the Council. This will strengthen the resilience of the finance functions by increasing the flexibility of staff across the CCG and Council to respond to challenges and changing circumstances.

The HRA agreed that, once the leadership appointment was, supporting structures within both finance teams will be reviewed and a separate report will be brought back to complete the restructure of the finance function.

Proposal

It is proposed that a Deputy Chief Finance Officer (DCFO) post is established within the Council to provide operational leadership of the finance function. Equivalent arrangements will be made within the CCG and an interim Deputy CFO has recently been appointed for a six-month period.

The proposed job description for the post is appended and includes:

- deputy to the Executive Director who is the council's statutory Section 151 officer
- implementation, monitoring and reporting on the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, production of which will be a core responsibility of the Executive Director
- day to day supervision of the teams for which the Executive Director is responsible including accountancy; audit; Revenues and Benefits and procurement
- providing technical financial leadership for the Council across such issues as treasury management, commercial, investments, the Housing Revenue Account, pay Services (Payroll, Pensions and Accounts Payable), Insurance and commercial and investment activity

- implementing and monitoring the Council's Long Term Finance Strategy and Plan including the financial strategy for schools and associated funding streams, as well as leading the finance input to the Council's Transformation Programme
- leading on the financial input to the efficiency agenda within the Council, including reviewing financial processes to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of these processes and to ensure the finances and resources of the Council are used in the most effective and efficient manner.
- Overseeing the management of the Council's Capital Programme and the development, delivery and monitoring of the Council's Capital Strategy.

It is proposed that recruitment to this post commences immediately. It is acknowledged that the market for experienced, qualified finance staff in local government is highly competitive. As such an independent partner (Gatenby Sanderson) have been engaged to support with a national executive search campaign, pending approval of the post. Gatenby Sanderson completed the executive search for the successful Executive Director appointment and have therefore been retained because of their proven credentials and knowledge of the Bury system.

Other alternative options considered

This proposal is made on the basis of a number of options pursued with regards the strategic finance function over the last two years. Proposals are made on the basis of analysis of future organisation pressures and requirements and previous attempts to recruit and retain senior staff

Next Steps

Subject to approval, recruitment to this post will commence immediately. The wider restructure of the finance service will be progressed under the direction of the new Executive Director Finance as an early priority on their appointment.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

The final structure within finance will be managed as a whole system, to have maximum impact on the Borough's economic recovery from Covid-19 and reducing the costs of demand caused by health inequalities and concentrations of deprivation.

Equality Impact and considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Equality Analysis	<i>The change in structure does not present any equality impacts. The recruitment to this post is an opportunity to further the diversity of the workforce. External advertising should therefore take account of opportunities to target under represented community groups</i>

**Please note: Approval of a cabinet report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be considered when this section is completed.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The post is not filled	Comprehensive advertisement and use of an executive search campaign
Failure to recruit means the Council will not have the technical, sector-specific financial skill/knowledge required.	Interim resource will be secured

Consultation:

The changes in structure do not affect any substantive postholders and therefore are not subject to consultation.

The TU will be notified.

Legal Implications:

Recruitment must be in accordance with the Council's Constitution, which requires approval of the post based upon a recommendation from HRA, the new recruitment policy for Chief Officers (subject to approval of that policy) and comply with the requirements for equality and diversity.

Financial Implications:

The cost of the post is £127k and funding will be considered in the context of the wider finance restructure. In the event that sufficient funding cannot be identified, the cost will be built into the council's financial strategy from 2021/22 onwards.

Report Author and Contact Details:

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Background papers:

HRA/Cabinet Reports June 2020 and December 2020

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
DCFO	Deputy Chief Finance Officer