

Principal Accountant

Job Description

Directorate:	Resources		
Service:	Financial Management		
Location:	County Hall, Preston / Hybrid		
Salary range:	£55,612 - £60,147	Grade:	12
Reports to:	Head of Service, Financial Management	Staff responsible for:	1 direct reports c. 4 indirect

Job purpose and scope

- Responsible for financial reporting, budgeting, and strategic financial planning for a specified area of the business, contributing to the overall financial health and stability of the council.
- Work collaboratively and closely with senior management and stakeholders within a specified area of the business to provide advice, guidance and support on all areas of financial management and compliance.
- Lead a team of finance professionals.

Performance Indicators

- Quality of advice/service against legal, safety and best practice standards
- Achievement of relevant service targets
- Adherence to internal/external quality standards if applicable
- Adherence to policies and procedures
- Accuracy and timeliness of information recording and processing
- Customer and stakeholder feedback
- Leading Lancashire Framework

Leading Lancashire – Our Leadership Framework



Leading Lancashire

Our Leadership Framework

Our Vision and Values We are driven by a simple yet powerful vision – “Here at Lancashire County Council, we are helping to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit, and prosper.”

This vision is at the centre of everything we do. Embedded in our identity are our values: **Supportive, Innovative, Respectful, and Collaborative**, our guiding principles that enable everyone to thrive.



Four Spheres of Leadership

The Leading Lancashire framework is a dynamic approach, encapsulating four key spheres:

Responsibilities, Capabilities, Behaviours, and Results.

These spheres form the bedrock of our leadership ethos, providing clarity and direction for all leaders. Responsibilities guide our actions, Capabilities cultivate our potential, Behaviours shape our interactions, and Results measure our impact. Together, these spheres ensure leaders deliver their best for themselves, their teams, LCC, and the people of Lancashire.



The Lancashire Mindset

Woven through the Leading Lancashire framework we introduce The Lancashire Mindset; Growth, Ownership, Optimism and Positive Impact. Adopting this mindset across the entire organisation not only brings our values to life but also emphasises the collective commitment to delivering the best for the people of Lancashire.

The Lancashire Mindset not only shapes our approach to leadership but also serves as a guiding force for a culture rooted in growth, ownership, optimism, and the commitment to making a meaningful positive impact.



Levels of Leadership

The **Leading Lancashire** framework provides an opportunity to define and clarify the focus and purpose of the various leadership levels within the organisation.

VISIONARY (Long-Term Direction):

Level 1 & 2 Leadership – Executive Directors and Directors Senior leaders at this level, are Visionary Leaders. They have the privilege of shaping the long-term vision for the organisation, providing strategic and visionary direction that will guide the future success of Lancashire County Council.

SHAPING (Medium to Long-Term Strategy):

Level 3 Leadership – Heads of Service

Heads of Service at this level are Shaping Leaders. They are empowered to shape strategies with a broad mid to long-term view, setting clear strategic initiatives that provide direction to the management population, contributing to the organisation's success in the medium to long term.

OPERATIONAL (Short-Term to Immediate Effectiveness):

Level 4 Leadership – Management Roles

Leaders at this level, found in various management roles, are Operational Leaders. They focus on immediate operational effectiveness, ensuring their teams deliver in the short term, meeting objectives and driving success on a daily-to-monthly basis.

These refined terms more explicitly convey the visionary, shaping, and operational aspects of leadership at each level within the **Leading Lancashire** framework.

Accountabilities/Responsibilities

- Manage and mentor a team of finance professionals, providing guidance, support, and training to develop their skills and ensure high performance.
- Lead, develop and promote a culture of continual professional development of all team members.
- Prepare and oversee the production of accurate and timely financial reports, including annual statements of accounts, budget monitoring reports and management accounts.
- Lead the budgeting process for a specified area of the business, working closely with directors and heads of service and other budget holders to develop robust budgets aligned with strategic objectives. Monitor budget performance and provide financial forecasts to support decision-making.

- Ensure compliance with relevant accounting standards, statutory regulations, and internal financial policies.
- Provide leadership on the interpretation and communication of relevant policy, legislation, regulations and codes of practice, scanning the horizon for relevant changes that may impact the business. Conduct regular reviews to identify and mitigate financial risks.
- Proactively provide expert advice and insightful financial analysis and interpretation to support strategic decision-making and to meet internal/external customers' needs.
- Be a point of contact for external auditors for a specified area of the business, facilitating the audit process and addressing any audit findings or recommendations.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of financial policies, procedures, and controls to enhance financial governance and transparency.
- Evaluate existing provision and monitor service developments to recommend large scale service improvements for decision by senior management e.g., reviewing service delivery models.
- Review management information requirements and identify improvements to ensure information gathered meets requirements for service planning or legal/security requirements.
- Build effective, collaborative, working relationships with internal stakeholders, including senior management and elected members, providing financial advice and guidance, as required.
- Represent the council at external forums and meetings to build professional networks and influence wider policy agendas.
- Lead on the design and delivery of medium to large projects to resolve service issues or to achieve service improvements. This includes initiating and scoping improvement projects and leading on the design of objectives.

Other

- **Equal Opportunities**
We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work.
- **Health and safety**
All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy.
- **Customer Focused**

We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.

- **Safeguarding Commitment**

We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- **Skills Pledge**

We are committed to developing the skills of our workforce. All employees will be supported to work towards a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy if they do not have one already.

Our Values

We expect all our employees to demonstrate and promote our values:

- **Supportive**

We are supportive of our customers and colleagues, recognising their contributions and making the best of their strengths to enable our communities to flourish.

- **Innovative**

We deliver the best services we possibly can, always looking for creative ways to do things better, putting the customer at the heart of our thinking, and being ambitious and focused on how we can deliver the best services now and in the future.

- **Respectful**

We treat colleagues, customers and partners with respect, listening to their views, empathising and valuing their diverse needs and perspectives, to be fair, open and honest in all that we do.

- **Collaborative**

We listen to, engage with, learn from and work with colleagues, partners and customers to help achieve the best outcomes for everyone.

Person Specification

All the following requirements are essential unless otherwise indicated by *

Your ability to meet the job requirements will initially be assessed by the information provided on your application but further assessment will be undertaken at interview and, in some cases, by using other types of assessment(s).

Qualifications

- Qualified accountant (CCAB), or equivalent, with substantial post-qualification experience in a finance role, preferably within a local government environment.

Experience

- Significant experience in a senior financial management role within a large and/or complex organisation.
- Proven experience in financial reporting, budgeting, and financial analysis.
- Management and development of teams to ensure high quality service delivery.
- Significant experience of working across services within multi-disciplinary teams.
- Innovative and creative management of services within a changing and challenging financial environment.
- Development of financial strategy, policies, and procedures.

Essential knowledge, skills & abilities

- Strong leadership and managerial skills with the ability to motivate and develop a team.
- Thorough knowledge of accounting principles, financial regulations and best practice within public sector financial management.
- Ability to build relationships and decisively influence at key decision-makers at senior levels, both internal and external to the council.
- Ability to work collaboratively in a fast-paced environment and manage competing priorities effectively.
- Sound IT skills, including proficiency in financial management systems and advanced Microsoft Excel skills.

- Commercial acumen and financial understanding.
- Comprehensive understanding of the activities and objectives of local government, both current and future.
- Ability to scan horizon and understand implications of broader local government trends for the service.

Other essential requirements

- Commitment to equality and diversity.
- Commitment to health and safety.
- Display the LCC values and behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others.