

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PART A: JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTORATE:	Transformation and Resources
JOB TITLE:	Head of Transactional Services
GRADE:	Band 14
JD REF:	H211
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Director of Finance and Procurement (Deputy Section 151 Officer).
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Council Services within the portfolio. These may change to reflect need and maximise capacity and resources across the Council.
Service/ Functions:	Leadership and management of the Council's transactional services which covers a range of activities that are critical in terms of providing sensitive efficient and effective services to residents and businesses as well as staff. They are also critical to help the Council make all payments and collect all income due. The services include Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates, Insurance, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Payroll and Cashiers & Income Management.
Budget:	This post holder has a key role in supporting the Council to make best use of its overall budget of c £738 million as well as holding responsibility for deployment of the circa £61 million service gross budget which includes benefits payments.
Staffing:	The postholder will work with colleagues to make best use of all available resources. This is a particularly sensitive role in terms of making sure that funds are both distributed and collected in line with good practice both to help the organisation maintain healthy finances as well as distribute benefits and other funds that residents need and are due. The postholder manages a team of technical and professional advisers with a staff complement of circa 180 FTE.
Other Resources	The postholder will work alongside colleagues across the organisation and beyond to support activities which both help the organisation secure more funding as well as ensure that residents, especially those in need are aware of the benefits and other funding opportunities that might be available to them.

JOB PURPOSE:

To lead, steer, develop and manage the Council's transactional services which support delivery of the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities in line with the corporate plan – a Council that works for everyone, to benefit the people of Northumberland. All these activities are intended to ensure that the Council makes best and proper use of public money by formulating and applying strategies and monitoring arrangements which deliver the Council priorities while meeting high standards as specified in legislation and best practice guidance. These services are critical in terms of both spend and collection of funds and a number of services are customer centred in terms of providing local residents with advice and support which affects their overall financial position.

The postholder provides advice to the Director, Executive Director and other colleagues on the performance of all transactional services. The postholder will ensure that all appropriate financial controls are in place to protect the organisation and individuals whilst providing advice and support to help them make best use of all the funding available to the Council and recipients e.g. people in receipt of benefits. As part of this the corporate approach to budget monitoring will be key to help secure best value along with the application of customer focussed processes.

Some activities may require activities to take place with local, regional partners and the post holder will be a participant in shaping and delivering activities which make the best use of the resources at the Council's disposal learning from best practice and applying it to Northumberland's circumstances. Understanding where there are opportunities to increase income from and deliver better value for money will be a theme that runs through the work of all staff in this service as will a strong and sensitive customer focus.

The postholder will ensure that financial processes and regulations comply with best practice and that internal controls are effective both in the distribution and collection of funds. There may be significant opportunities to improve the efficiency of these services through increased digitalisation and self service tools and the postholder will lead work to explore these using an understanding of where there is good practice to learn from elsewhere.

To play a full and positive role as a member of the Council's Senior Management Team ensuring the delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management (people, finance and other assets) and use of prioritisation to secure the best possible delivery of public services across the locality and maximise the Council's role in finding ways of delivering services which provide best value for money.

Lead by example and foster a culture, both with the service and across the Council, which engages all staff and partners in the development and delivery of services that meet residents' needs and expectations.

KEY FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

Support the Director and Executive Director in providing advice on matters relating to all transactional services. This includes making sure that all legislative requirements are applied and that the Council is able to assure itself that appropriate and proportionate measures are in place to use resources to best effect while delivering exceptional customer service. This means having a good blend of control and empowerment which enables good decision making and distribution of resource. Having efficient and effective digitised processes and systems in place to protect both the organisation and its users will be key to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and delays which affect the delivery of front line services.

Ensure the payroll function is well co-ordinated with other employee advisory services and that all records are up to date so that both staff and managers have a complete picture of an employee's record.

Support Members of the Council and the Chief Executive in developing the vision and priorities for the County and ensure best advice is provided on the most appropriate response to internal and external pressures for transformational change. This will involve providing specific advice in relation to the pace and scale of change which relates to transactional services.

Manage well the interface between Elected Members and Officers within the Directorate, maintaining and developing essential Member / Officer partnerships and processes which support and promote a positive and respectful relationship between Members and Officers.

Champion a coherent multi agency approach to service delivery and provide leadership, direction, and management of the team within the service to ensure the delivery of the Council's priorities and provision of high-quality, cost-effective services based on community needs.

Contribute to successful management of the Council's reputation, ensuring that it always acts in the best interests of Northumberland and that its activities are explained to stakeholders in an open and transparent manner.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Support the Director and Executive Director in making sure the Council has all necessary arrangements in place to secure proper administration of all transactional activity and is able to provide specialist advice on related matters such as benefits.

Oversee the provision of timely and accurate advice to the Director, Executive Director, Chief Executive, Cabinet, and all Members, to ensure provision of high quality professional financial support and advice on matters which will ensure services are sustainable and meet necessary standards as set down in legislation and relevant regulations and best practice standards.

Act as a role model and exemplar in achieving a people-centred, values based and inclusive organisational culture that promotes innovation and creativity, nurtures growth, and focuses on developing and maximising the potential of the workforce to improve services.
Oversee the most effective utilisation, performance, and deployment of resources (Human, Physical and Financial) that puts at its heart the provision of high quality, value for money services and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the directorate to deliver successfully against the Council's ambitions and priorities bearing in mind statutory requirements.
Actively demonstrate commitment and action to develop an inclusive, supportive, and constructive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and diversity is valued in the workplace, in service delivery and communications.
Support and contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of major programmes of change both in relation to the corporate Transformation Programme and other initiatives to ensure that all financial implications are given proper consideration during the assessment of options and subsequent implementation in order to maximise options which deliver best value and reduce inefficiencies.
Provide assurance that strategies and plans are in place to enable that appropriate levels of financial and governance control are in place across the service and across the organisation by deployment of financial advice that understands the services covered.
Oversee the scrutiny and advice on the plans and actions of Central Government and other external agencies to determine their impact on the development of local policies and priorities such as they relate to the use of budget allocations and support the Council to be a decisive and influential organisation that maximises all available assets. This will involve understanding national policy changes which might affect the Council's financial position in different areas and across the organisation .
Ensure the promotion, development, and maintenance of good relationships with the media and public as an individual and across different services and that effective communication and engagement strategies are applied to support delivery.
Ensure equality, diversity and cohesion principles are embedded across the service. Provide leadership around diversity and inclusion, ensuring that the policies and services of the Council reflect the changing needs of all local communities and workforce and that equality of opportunity is ensured and diversity celebrated.
If required play a role within the Council's Corporate Emergency Planning arrangements. (This includes a requirement to be available in the event of an emergency to perform the duties allocated to the post within the Emergency Plan).
To undertake functions in the event of local or national elections, supporting the Returning Officer ensure the democratic nature of such activities is undertaken efficiently and in compliance with all statutory requirements.

Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are be carried out in accordance with Council's Constitution, governance arrangements, policies, and procedures.

Special Conditions:

This position has been identified as a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Therefore, the post holder is restricted from undertaking or participating in any political activity.

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PART B: SENIOR MANAGERS CORE COMPETENCIES

Working with Partners	
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- Work collaboratively across services and departments to deliver corporate excellence.
- Work collaboratively with external partners to deliver excellent service.
- Seek opportunities for partnership working at a local, regional, national level.
- Clarify expectations, objectives and working arrangements of partnerships.
- Contribute effectively to multi-partner projects.

Serving our Community	
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- Promote the Community Plan.
- Seek and act on feedback from the community.
- Influence Service and Corporate plans to reflect community needs
- Develop, deliver, and improve access to services based on an awareness and understanding of the diverse community
- Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery

Working within the Political Arena	
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- Understand and actively support the role of Councillors.
- Understand and actively support the democratic process within Northumberland Council.
- Recognise the impact of Government and legislation on Council strategy and services.
- Consult, support, and keep Councillors informed.

Delivering Excellence	
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- Understand how corporate performance is measured.
- Monitor and evaluate services in relation to objectives and performance indicators.
- Establish a culture that embraces the agreed Vision and Values.
- Be positive ambassadors for the organisation.
- Contribute to strengthening corporate leadership capacity.
- Identify opportunities where organisational performance could be improved.

Focusing on the Future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan the external environment, look ahead, assess strategic options, and develop the Council in the medium and long term. • Lead the development and implementation of corporate policy at a strategic level. • Challenge what we do and how we do it. • Influence relevant national and regional organisations and partners. • Connect plans, policies, strategies, and services to provide consistent service delivery. • Generate innovative ideas. • Translate strategy into action. • Consider the implications of decisions across the Council and act in the overall interests of Council performance. 	
Building Shared Vision and Values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan the internal environment and engage employees in compelling visions of the future. • Create an environment in which a culture embracing our Vision and Values can thrive. • Involve all stakeholders in building a vision for the future. • Have a clear picture of the direction the organisation is taking and communicate it with insight, energy, and vision. • Translate the Council's vision into practical and achievable plans. 	
Strengthening Corporate Leadership Capacity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously develop the political leadership and managerial interface. • Operate with others as a cohesive senior managerial team. • Create time with staff and other managers for discussion about their development rather than firefighting. • Coach and mentor staff and other managers. • Lead, delegate and empower others at a strategic level. • Identify and develop potential senior managerial successors. 	
Promoting and Facilitating Change	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically evaluate the reasons that prompt change and take appropriate action. • Proactively steer internal change. • Proactively manage the exchange of information between the public and the organisation. • Consider the resource implications of change. • Anticipate and respond to emotional and morale issues brought about by change. • Monitor and evaluate the change process to ensure aims are met. 	

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PART C: PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Qualifications/Professional Development
Educated to degree or equivalent
Evidence of relevant up to date leadership and management training particularly relating to the provision of exceptional customer service
Evidence of recent relevant Continuous Professional Development.
Experience, Knowledge, and Skills
Proven achievement of leadership success in providing advice and guidance on transactional activities in a large complex organisation . A good understanding of local government will be beneficial in this regard.
Proven track record in delivering excellent customer services to a variety of stakeholders with different needs including highly vulnerable people who need to understand and access benefits.
Significant experience in creating and embedding financial systems and processes which support good decision making in the use and distribution of public money and secure best value for money.
Understanding and experience of using different tools to assess financial benefits associated with major change and the capturing of those benefits including through increased use of digital and self service tools.
Ability to operate sensitively in a political environment, developing relationships with all members gaining respect, trust, and confidence and being accountable for effective delivery within a challenging financial environment.
Evidence of personally leading within an organisational culture that models and embeds the practice of co-design and co-production and collaboration with people inside and outside the organisation.
Evidence of using strong option appraisal, analytical skills, and innovation to achieve organisational success in an environment of reducing financial resources.
Ability to develop long term strategic thinking and bring new ideas, approaches, and solutions.

Highly skilled communicator who communicates with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm and can demonstrate integrity, create rapport, and build trust and confidence to positively influence outcomes.
Ability to translate complex ideas and information into meaningful and 'user-friendly' information; 'tells the story' to bring people along and ensure all audiences understand the key messages.
Ability to develop strong relationships with senior leaders from a range of public and private sector organisations.
Personal and professional integrity and credibility that establishes respect, trust, and confidence.
Demonstrate personal resilience and ability to thrive in challenging circumstances.
Model and demonstrate organisational values and leadership behaviours, creating a shared purpose and positive permission culture that enables people to thrive through development, involvement, and well-being.
Motivation
Confident leader with a vision for Northumberland with high levels of energy, stamina, and resilience.
Fully committed to the principles and values underpinning the Council
Demonstrably strong corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues that inhibit organisational progress to high quality service delivery.
Personality, behaviour, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of Council Members, senior managers, staff, the public, external partners, and other stakeholders.