WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE OFFICER / RECEPTIONIST

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

Reports to: Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Jobs Reporting to Holder: None

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Finance Officer/Receptionist** is responsible for delivering a professional, welcoming and efficient reception service as the first point of contact for the Town Council, providing courteous assistance to residents, visitors and stakeholders, and ensuring that front desk operations run smoothly.

In addition, the postholder supports the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in ensuring the effective financial management of the Town Council. This includes overseeing day-to-day financial operations, maintaining accurate financial records, processing financial transactions, assisting with budget monitoring and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, financial regulations and Council policies.

The role requires a balance of strong customer service skills and sound financial administration, contributing to both the Council's public-facing services and its financial integrity.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial Duties

- Oversee the day-to-day financial operations, including overseeing budgets, monitoring balances and ensuring proper accounting practices are followed.
- Ensure that all money due to the Council is billed and collected promptly.
- Manage supplier contracts, ensuring terms are met and value for money is achieved.
- Maintain appropriate records and documentation to support financial transparency and accountability.

Financial Administration & Invoice Management

- Process invoices, payments and receipts in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- Correctly file invoices and other financial documentation.
- Enter financial data into accounting systems accurately and efficiently.

Budget Preparation & Financial Reporting

- Prepare draft estimates for the annual budget and report on financial matters to the Clerk and Council.
- Using the accounting software, prepare financial reports covering budget monitoring, receipts and payments, monthly bank reconciliations and other relevant financial matters.
- Assist in monitoring and controlling expenditure against budget allocations.

Compliance & Audit Preparation

- Ensure compliance with financial regulations and legislation, including the submission of VAT returns and other statutory requirements.
- To work alongside the Clerk, Council and Internal Auditor to prepare accounts and annual returns for audit purposes and submit them if directed to do so.
- To work alongside the Clerk to ensure that all statutory internal and external audit requirements are met, and any consequential actions are taken.

Procurement & Contracts

- Assist in the procurement of goods and services in line with Council policies and financial regulations, with the aim to achieve best value.
- Monitor contracts and service agreements to ensure value for money and compliance with agreed terms.
- Liaise with suppliers and contractors regarding financial matters, ensuring timely payments and efficient service delivery.

Reception Duties

- Greet all visitors and callers in a courteous and friendly manner, ensuring they are directed appropriately.
- Answer telephone enquiries promptly and professionally, transferring calls or taking accurate messages.
- Respond to routine public enquiries in person, by telephone and by email, providing information or directing queries to the relevant department.

Customer Service and Communication

- Provide accurate information about Council services, events and procedures.
- Handle enquiries and complaints sensitively, referring complex matters to the appropriate officer.
- Promote a positive image of the Town Council at all times.

Other Responsibilities

- Provide general administrative support to the Town Clerk, Council and Council Officers as required.
- Comply with the Council's policies, procedures and codes of conduct.
- Attend training courses, conferences and relevant meetings to keep up to date with financial best practices and legislative changes.
- Assist in identifying opportunities for funding, grants and cost-saving initiatives.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the role as required by the Town Clerk or Council.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Skills & Experience:

- Experience in bookkeeping, financial record-keeping and budget monitoring.
- Strong IT skills, including proficiency in accounting software, Microsoft Excel and financial reporting tools.
- Excellent numeracy and analytical skills with high attention to detail.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with the ability to present financial information clearly.
- Experience in a reception, customer service or administrative role.
- Experience in handling enquiries from the public in a professional manner.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks, prioritise workload effectively and meet deadlines.

Desirable Skills & Experience:

- Knowledge of financial regulations and accounting principles applicable to local councils.
- Experience working within a local government or public sector financial environment.
- FILCA (Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration) qualification (or working towards) or equivalent experience in financial administration.
- Knowledge of local government financial reporting and audit requirements.
- Experience using Scribe (financial management software specific to local councils).
- Awareness of risk management and internal financial controls.
- Understanding of VAT regulations and experience in processing VAT returns.

Personal Attributes:

- Professional, courteous and approachable manner.
- A proactive and self-motivated approach to work.
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team.
- High levels of integrity, discretion and confidentiality in handling financial matters.
- Flexible and adaptable to changing priorities.
- Commitment to professional development and continuous learning.