Job Description

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| **Job Title** | Technical VAT and Taxation Officer |
| **Grade** | EPO10 |
| **Reporting To** | Senior Finance Manager – Capital and Financial Transactions |
| **JD Ref** | CSUP0206P |

Purpose

To lead and manage the VAT function of the Council, providing expert advice on VAT legislation, strategic tax planning, and financial compliance across all directorates. The role ensures the Council meets its statutory VAT obligations through the completion of complex financial reconciliations and returns, while maintaining a robust framework for minimising VAT risks. The post holder will provide assurance to senior leadership on VAT risk exposure and mitigation strategies and ensure effective engagement with HMRC and key stakeholders.

Main Duties And Responsibilities

Work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders by ensuring VAT is correctly accounted for, advice is provided that is relevant, accurate and timely. Working with our tax advisors where appropriate to protect the Council financially and reputationally.

**Behavioural:**

* Enjoy, achieve, create impact, and thrive in the role and organisation.
* Live our values in the role and organisation.
* Inspire confidence and trust in financial decision-making and tax compliance.
* Maintain high standards of ethical conduct and professional integrity in tax practice.

**Team Leadership and Management:**

* Lead and manage the Council’s VAT function, ensuring it is robust, well-resourced, and aligned with financial and corporate strategies.
* Supervise junior staff, providing training, oversight, and coaching in VAT compliance matters and technical development.
* Act as the Council’s VAT technical lead, setting standards for interpretation and application of tax regulations and ensuring dissemination of best practice.
* Identify learning and development needs across finance teams in relation to VAT and ensure relevant training is delivered.
* Ensure VAT compliance is embedded within procurement, payment and income processes across directorates.
* Monitor performance indicators related to VAT activity and set targets for service improvement and risk reduction.

**Communication, Engagement and Training:**

* Serve as the primary contact for VAT enquiries across the Council, advising Chief Officers and senior managers on complex transactions and corporate schemes.
* Lead engagement with HMRC and external tax advisors, including management of inspections, investigations, and settlement negotiations.
* Represent the Council at regional and national VAT forums (e.g. CIPFA, NW VAT Group, PS Tax) and interpret outcomes into policy and procedure updates.
* Design and deliver corporate VAT training sessions for finance and non-finance audiences, supported by policy documents and digital learning resources.
* Develop and maintain an up-to-date intranet repository of VAT guidance.
* Work with our Services including Legal and Commissioning to ensure correct VAT treatment in contractual terms, contract arrangements and third-party relationships.

**Data Analysis and Decision-Making:**

* Interpret complex financial data and assess VAT implications of service changes, capital projects, income-generating proposals and innovative delivery models.
* Maintain the Council’s partial exemption methodology and regularly forecast the impact of expenditure and income changes on the Council’s partial exemption threshold.
* Lead on scenario analysis and financial modelling in relation to VAT compliance, capital projects and funding variations.
* Provide evidence-based recommendations to senior officers to mitigate VAT risk and ensure financial sustainability.
* Ensure that business cases, options appraisals and investment decisions have fully considered VAT impact.
* Prepare and present technical briefings and risk reports to senior leaders.

**Performance Management:**

* Produce the Council’s monthly VAT return and other statutory returns in accordance with HMRC deadlines and accounting regulations.
* Conduct quarterly risk assurance reviews of financial systems for VAT compliance, including purchasing cards, procurement and income generation.
* Provide quarterly VAT compliance reports to senior Finance staff and annual assurance for the Section 151 Officer.
* Lead on internal VAT audits and support external audits in relation to tax matters.
* Deliver continuous improvement in VAT processes, reporting and internal controls, and contribute to the wider development of financial systems and digitisation strategies.
* Lead performance benchmarking and continuous improvement initiatives with other local authorities.

**Compliance:**

* Ensure full compliance with VAT legislation, HMRC requirements and Council financial regulations.
* Maintain and update corporate VAT policies and procedures.
* Undertake horizon scanning for changes in VAT and taxation law and interpret legislative impact for local authority operations.
* Ensure that all VAT returns, reconciliations and reporting are accurate, timely, and evidenced.
* Support fraud prevention and anti-avoidance measures in respect of VAT schemes and high-risk areas.
* Provide assurance to the Council’s senior management on VAT exposure and ensure corrective action is implemented where required.

**Other:**

* Lead or contribute to cross-Council projects and working groups, ensuring VAT is considered from inception to delivery.
* Deputise for senior finance colleagues in areas relevant to tax and statutory returns as required.
* Any other duties commensurate with the grade and role of the post.

Role Specific Knowledge, Experience And Skills

**Essential**

**Qualifications**

1. A recognised professional accountancy or tax qualification/part qualification (e.g. CIPFA, ACCA, CIMA, CTA, ATT etc).
2. Evidence of continued professional development in VAT or taxation compliance.

**Qualifications – Desirable:**

* Membership of a relevant professional VAT or tax body.
* Additional accreditation in public sector VAT or tax governance.

**Knowledge & Skills**

**Essential**

* In-depth technical knowledge of VAT legislation and compliance, including partial exemption and capital goods scheme.
* Ability to interpret legislation, case law and HMRC guidance and translate into practical advice.
* Excellent analytical, report writing and problem-solving skills.
* Strong communication and influencing skills, able to engage with senior stakeholders and translate complex information clearly.
* Proficiency in use of Microsoft Excel and financial management systems for tax data extraction, analysis and reporting.
* Ability to work independently with a high degree of responsibility and autonomy.

**Knowledge and Skills – Desirable:**

* Awareness of current and emerging financial and tax issues affecting local authorities.
* Knowledge of Oracle or similar ERP systems for transaction management and reporting.

**Experience**

**Essential**

* Significant experience in managing VAT processes in a large and complex organisation, ideally in the public or not-for-profit sector.
* Experience of preparing and submitting VAT returns, managing HMRC enquiries, and providing technical VAT advice.
* Experience of working in a financial control, compliance or audit environment.
* Experience of developing and implementing VAT policies and delivering training.
* Demonstrable record of identifying and mitigating VAT risks and ensuring compliance.

**Experience – Desirable:**

* Experience of managing VAT in a local authority setting.
* Experience in contributing to external and internal audit reviews of VAT or tax compliance.
* Experience of Oracle financial software packages

Additional Information

Ability to travel across the Borough and work from various locations.

Work hybrid, with a flexible working approach to accommodate service needs.

Expected to work from a fixed location (subject to change).

On occasion, able to work outside traditional hours, of a weekend and evening as required, adopting a flexible working approach in response to business requirements.

**Health & Safety Considerations:**

* Lone working
* Work with VDUs (Video Display Unit) (>5hrs per week)

Approved By: Daniel Kirwan – Assistant Director Finance and Investment

Date Of Approval: 11 July 2025