**Role Profile**

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| **Role Title** | Chief Finance Officer (s151) | |
| **Reference Number** |  | |
| **Directorate** |  | |
| **Department** | Finance and Procurement | |
| **Reports to** | Chief Executive | |
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**Role Purpose**

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for providing strategic financial leadership and direction to Somerset Council, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and serving as the Section 151 Officer.

As a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, the CFO acts as a transformational business partner and advisor to departments, leveraging technical knowledge and leadership to enhance financial sustainability and drive transformational change. They will work with Chief Executive to position Somerset nationally and regionally as an outstanding organisation with underpinning financial strategy

The CFO will delegate much of their operational financial accountabilities to the Service Director of Finance, empowering their teams to manage financial operations effectively, while fostering a culture of financial literacy and commercial expertise across the organization. They will challenge, connect, advocate, and support to ensure the council's financial health and strategic objectives are met.

**Corporate Accountabilities**

* As part of the Senior Leadership Team, actively shape the financial strategy and ensure that the vision and priorities set out in the Council Plan and Business Plan are delivered whilst at the same time significantly reducing costs and re-shaping services, so that the Council builds a fairer, greener, resilient, more flourishing Somerset that cares for the most vulnerable and listens to residents.
* Act as a strategic leader advisor and partner to departmental leaders, providing financial challenge, insights and guidance to support their decision-making, drive financial sustainability, and enable transformational change. Ensure that financial strategies are aligned with departmental goals and Somerset’s objectives, fostering a collaborative approach to financial management and planning. Lead financial oversight and challenge of key spend areas specifically Childrens and Adult and Health services.
* Develop world leading constructive relationships with a range of stakeholders including business, central government, community, local authorities, and community planning partners at both a local and national level, to build confidence in the Council’s ability to develop and implement sound financial strategies and acumen to take the organisation forward
* Build capability and expertise within the finance department, encouraging teams to innovate, automate, and to raise their level of contribution.
* Build and nurture a culture of financial literacy and commercial acumen across the organization, enhancing the financial capabilities of all staff.
* Challenge assumptions and provide critical insights to support strategic decision-making, while advocating for sound financial practices and policies.
* Ensure directorates use all available resources in the most efficient and effective way that represents excellent value for money, and ensuring services are continuously improved to see if they can be delivered in a more cost effective and streamlined way.
* Ensure all directorates remove barriers and enable staff to be entrepreneurial and innovative, working with stakeholders across departmental and organisational boundaries to co-design inclusive and joined-up services that are efficient, effective, and meet the requirements of residents and communities.
* Inspire, motivate, and develop leaders and staff, to create an empowering, enterprising, collaborative, and listening organisation that enables staff to perform at their best and therefore both deliver excellent services to residents as well as retain and attract the best talent.
* Lead and model continuous improvement in the Council through considerable change and transformation across services, while ensuring continuity in performance, financial stability and ensuring statutory obligations are met.
* Identify developments in the sector and beyond, creating innovative new approaches that illustrate an understanding of the ‘system wide picture,’ anticipating future issues and positively challenging current thinking.
* Act as a Place Leader, creating an environment in which the Council can jointly design, commission (if required), and deliver outcomes with partners, by unlocking barriers and monitoring the success of these partnerships.
* Support the Executive and Members in translating their political objectives and priorities into coherent initiatives to enable the delivery of services across Somerset, working within the appropriate governance structures.

**Portfolio Accountabilities**

* Discharge the responsibilities of the designated S151 Officer ensuring the proper administration of the Council’s financial affairs. This includes oversight of the corporate governance of the authority and the provision of effective decision-making arrangements, risk management and reporting frameworks.
* Lead, motivate and oversee the Service Director for Finance who will run and develop the financial services for the whole Council, overseeing the Council’s annual budget on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer.
* To act as the Council’s principal adviser to the Somerset Pension Board Committee.
* Ensure Directorates put value for money and proper financial planning at the centre of service design and decision making.
* Oversee the development and implementation of the Finance and Procurement function’s strategy, plans, objectives, policies, systems, and processes to deliver council priorities, ensuring they meet internal and external reporting requirements comply with external legislative and regulatory frameworks.
* Identify trends and developments in Finance and council funding/spending, anticipating future issues, promoting innovative new approaches that illustrate an understanding of the ‘system wide picture’, and positively challenging current thinking to deliver outcomes for Somerset.

**Knowledge / Skills / Experience required**

* Seasoned professional in area of expertise, with a breadth of understanding of all areas that the role covers especially children and adult social care finance.
* Degree and post graduate qualifications in relevant disciplines, and/or leadership and management qualifications.
* A fully qualified accountant and member of a CCAB body with extensive demonstrable Continuous Professional Development with significant knowledge and experience of Local Government finance.
* A technical expert with in-depth understanding of regulations/legislation and best practice within their area of specialism and the wider sector. Understanding of national and local government developments, policy, and emerging trends.
* Nationally recognised as have outstanding financial acumen and ability to simplify and communicate complex financial strategies
* Experience of leading a large directorate within a complex and diverse organisation, and leading constant change and transformation, establishing a mandate for change and inspiring the workforce to improve.
* Significant experience of leading, challenging and influencing services outside of your direct control and building diverse and multifaceted teams at a senior level, bringing activities together to achieve an aligned objective.
* A level of gravitas, and experience of building alliances with key stakeholders such as public bodies and government departments, to help position organisations favourably and to influence broader agendas.
* Excellent commercial acumen and financial management skills.
* Ability to use deep personal understanding of the agendas or motivations of others to keep them positively engaged, building behind the scenes support for ideas and initiatives.
* Ability to delegate accountabilities to a Service Director and their team, building capability rather than managing services directly.
* Ability to recognise and make use of alliances/relationships to gain support for the Vision and Plan for Somerset. Can work with and embed themselves in teams, using consultative skills and applying their technical knowledge to advise, support, and enable Council departments to deliver effective services in a financially sustainable way.
* Excellent knowledge of the impact of underlying demographic, social or political drivers, and understands the formal and informal politics at the regional and national level and what this means for the Council.
* Evidence of cultivating a high-performance, cost-effective culture, which delivers outstanding outcomes, through a variety of mechanisms, including structure, working methods, contracts, etc.

**Dimensions of role**

* The role will be leading financial services for the whole Council, developing a vision and leading strategy.
* The postholder will be active and present across the whole council supporting, challenging and shaping policy and approach.
* Financial oversight of the whole Council Budget of circa £1b.
* Planning will be over a multi-year horizon.

**Working Conditions**

Working conditions do not have a material impact on the nature of the job once all reasonable actions have been taken to moderate or eliminate them.

**Working Arrangements**

* The role is politically restricted.

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| **Date** | 31/01/2025 | |
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