

Job description - Head of Finance & Business Support (PB3)

Job summary

The Head of Finance and Business Support will drive improved business performance in West Forest District through the leadership of the finance and business administration team, and supportive collaboration with the functional delivery teams - Estates, Forestry & Land Management and Recreation & Engagement. Together we are Forestry England, we grow forests for all, for life.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Team leadership

- lead the district finance and business support team, supporting effective and efficient delivery through a culture of team working and mutual support and collaboration. Specifically act as line manager for the district's Finance Manager and Business Support Manager. The postholder will likely take on line management of the district's Project Development Manager and / or the 3 Area Managers once successfully inducted into the business.
- actively engage with the district's strategic leadership team (forest management director, head of estates, head of recreation & engagement, head of forestry & land management and human resources business partner) shaping our district strategy and associated delivery plans. Take lead responsibility for business planning and monitoring discussions at this level, engendering support and commitment to drive positive change.
- foster a positive team working relationship between district and national finance officers; engaging as required on national project work. Be open and realistic as to the challenges inherent in the business, promoting transparency and constructive dialogue.
- proactively liaise with the internal engagement officer to report on business performance so that everyone in the team can be sighted on 'where we are, against where we need to be'.

Business improvement & project development

- positively collaborate with the heads of function and their operations managers to support the development of strategic financial planning to drive business improvement.
- continually engage and positively challenge managers in the business to evidence the link between programme delivery and both expenditure and income. Be open and realistic as to the challenges inherent in the business, promoting transparency and constructive dialogue.
- proactively engage at all stages of project development so as to ensure projects are financially sound and will bring about an improved business performance. Appropriately challenge projects that will add to the long-term cost burden of the district. Seek to ensure all projects that are being prepared for external funding include full-cost recovery. Liaise closely with the Project Development Manager, and other project managers as required to ensure projects and associated business cases are financially sound.
- collaborate with operational managers to identify areas of our 'day-to-day' work that can be converted to funded projects and support the resulting project development.
- lead the development of business planning in the district, so that expenditure and income links more explicitly to operational delivery programmes, and the added complexity of project-based funding is understood and handled effectively. Through support for improved operational planning, build increasing levels of confidence in our long-term financial planning.
- support the Business Administration Manager in her role to effectively manage the district administration team, provision of IT services, provision and servicing of vehicles, machinery and equipment, and other office support services.
- engage with operational managers and commercial services to support procurement of goods and services so as to secure improved value for money; supporting the Business Administration Manager in her role as procurement champion, and lead of the administrative team who have administrative responsibilities for the resulting contracts.

Management accounting

- support the Finance Manager in her role of maintaining accurate and timely financial processes, including but not limited to raising and approving /paying invoices, journals, monthly accruals accounting and Government Procurement Card reconciliations.
- support the Finance Manager and her team in completing end of year processing in an accurate and timely manner.
- work collaboratively with the Finance Manager and the functional teams to add value to monthly business monitoring, linking financial outturns and forecasting to actual and planned programme and project delivery.
- provide high levels of oversight to identify and act on potential fraud, misuse of financial systems and compliance with financial systems and processes.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

- the district operates an out of hours emergency duty officer Rota and the postholder will be expected to join the Rota and be eligible for on-call payments accordingly.

Location-specific information

- the postholder will be expected to travel to different office and depot locations to support the remotely located delivery teams as may be required; and to attend national meetings and training events. This will most likely require travel by car, and thus a current driving licence is seen as a requirement of the role although candidates may put forward a proposal that satisfies the business need to travel without recourse to driving.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- experience in an accountancy position for a large organisation is considered essential for this role.
- line management experience is considered essential for this role.

Qualifications

Essential

- a fully qualified accountant with a recognised IFAC (International Federation of Accountants) member body, CIMA, or equivalent.