

Job Description

Job Title: Director of Corporate Services / Section 151 Officer

Grade: Executive Director 1

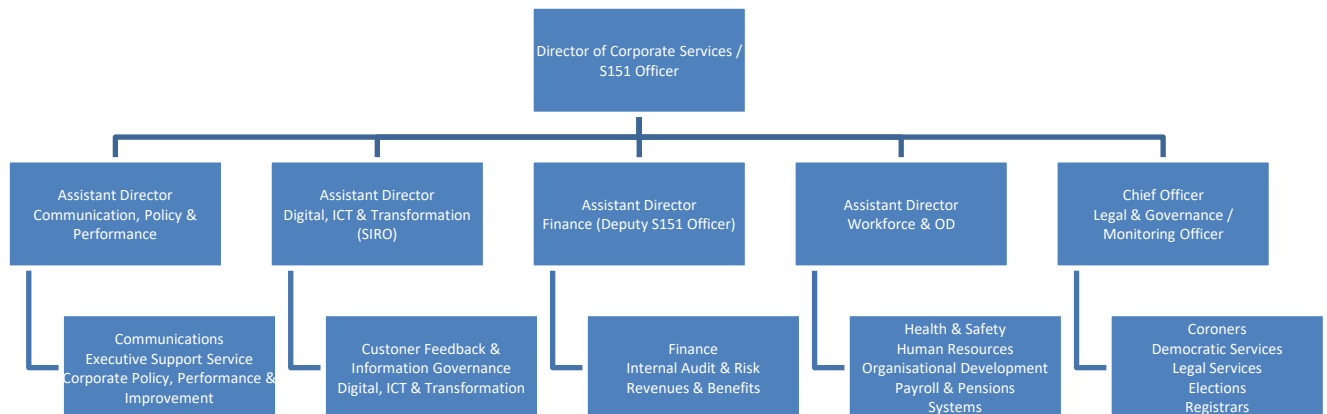
Location: Number One Riverside

Responsible to: Chief Executive

ROLE PURPOSE

1. To provide strategic leadership for the Council's corporate services and to act as the Council's statutory Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and the effective stewardship of public funds.
2. As a member of the Council's Leadership Team, to support the Chief Executive and Elected Members in delivering the Council's priorities, medium-term financial sustainability, high standards of governance and effective, resident-focused services.
3. To lead and develop a broad corporate services portfolio, including finance, revenues and benefits, legal and governance, democratic services, risk and insurance, ICT and digital, workforce and organisational development, communications, policy, performance, sustainability and corporate health and safety.
4. To provide clear, impartial and professional advice to the Chief Executive, Elected Members and senior officers on financial strategy, governance, risk, statutory compliance and the effective use of resources.
5. To lead transformation, continuous improvement and organisational change across corporate services, ensuring that services are efficient, resilient, inclusive and aligned to the Council's strategic objectives.
6. To promote the Council's commitment to safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, public accountability and the highest standards of ethical leadership.

DIRECTORATE STRUCTURE



KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Discharge the statutory responsibilities of the Council's Section 151 Officer, including responsibility for the proper administration of financial affairs, effective financial governance and the provision of robust professional advice.
- Lead the development and delivery of the Council's medium-term financial strategy, budget framework, financial planning, statutory accounts and financial reporting arrangements.
- Ensure effective treasury management, capital strategy, reserves strategy, internal control, audit, risk management and assurance arrangements are in place.
- Provide leadership for corporate financial management, including budget monitoring, financial resilience, value for money, income, debt management and financial support to services.
- Ensure the Council complies with relevant legislation, professional standards, codes of practice, financial regulations and constitutional requirements.
- Provide strategic leadership for corporate governance, legal and democratic services, supporting effective decision-making, transparency, scrutiny and member governance.
- Lead corporate support services so that they enable service delivery, organisational resilience, workforce effectiveness, digital improvement and high standards of customer service.
- Build effective relationships with Elected Members, senior leaders, partners, external auditors, regulators, government bodies and regional colleagues, including across Greater Manchester where relevant.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic leadership and corporate management

1. Provide visible and effective strategic leadership as a member of the Council's Leadership Team, contributing to the development and delivery of the Council's corporate plan, priorities, values and organisational culture.
2. Support the Chief Executive in the effective management of the Council, providing strategic advice, constructive challenge and professional leadership across the full range of corporate services.
3. Lead the Corporate Services Directorate so that services are well governed, financially sustainable, customer-focused, inclusive, digitally enabled and responsive to the needs of the organisation, residents and partners.
4. Ensure corporate services have clear priorities, performance measures, workforce plans, improvement plans and governance arrangements that support the delivery of Council objectives.
5. Maintain effective service structures, leadership arrangements and capacity across corporate services, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently and in line with Council priorities and statutory requirements.
6. Lead significant corporate, transformation and business-critical programmes as directed by the Chief Executive, ensuring effective delivery, governance and benefits realisation.
7. Develop effective and trusted relationships with Elected Members, providing timely, accurate and politically aware advice while maintaining professional independence and statutory integrity.
8. Promote an organisational culture of accountability, continuous improvement, inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety, ethical conduct and effective risk management.

Section 151 Officer and financial leadership

9. Act as the Council's statutory Chief Finance Officer, ensuring that arrangements are in place for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and that financial decisions are lawful, prudent and sustainable.
10. Lead the Council's financial strategy, budget setting, medium-term financial planning, capital strategy, treasury management, statutory accounts, reserves strategy and financial reporting arrangements.
11. Provide clear professional advice on financial resilience, affordability, value for money, budgetary control, financial risk and the financial implications of policy, service and transformation decisions.
12. Ensure effective financial governance, internal control, audit, risk, assurance and compliance arrangements are in place and operating effectively across the Council.

13. Provide strategic leadership for revenues and benefits, including council tax, business rates, welfare support, financial assessments, income collection, fraud prevention and debt management.

Governance, assurance and democratic accountability

14. Provide strategic leadership for legal, governance, democratic and scrutiny services, ensuring effective support to the Council's Constitution, decision-making framework and committee arrangements.
15. Ensure that governance, risk management, information governance, audit, insurance and assurance arrangements support lawful, transparent and accountable decision-making.
16. Support Elected Members in their democratic role by ensuring high-quality advice, effective governance processes and appropriate support for cabinet, committee, audit, scrutiny and wider member arrangements.
17. Promote high standards of probity, transparency, equality, ethical conduct, information management and statutory compliance across the Council.
18. Work with statutory officers and senior leaders to ensure that legal, financial, governance and people implications are properly considered in all significant decisions.

Corporate services, transformation and performance

19. Lead the development and continuous improvement of corporate services, ensuring they provide effective professional support, enabling services and assurance across the Council.
20. Provide strategic leadership for ICT and digital services, supporting modern, secure, data-informed and efficient ways of working across the organisation.
21. Lead organisational development, workforce, payroll, pensions, communications, policy, performance, sustainability and corporate health and safety functions in line with Council priorities and statutory duties.
22. Ensure effective performance management, service planning, business intelligence and reporting arrangements are in place to support improvement, accountability and delivery against corporate priorities.
23. Champion innovation, commercial awareness, service redesign and the effective use of technology and data to improve productivity, service resilience and outcomes for residents.

Partnerships, regional working and external relationships

24. Represent the Council effectively with partners, regulators, external auditors, government bodies, professional networks and regional colleagues, including across Greater Manchester where appropriate.
25. Build constructive relationships with public sector, voluntary, community, health, housing and other partners to support shared priorities, financial sustainability and improved outcomes for residents.

26. Promote the Council's reputation through professional leadership, collaborative working, regional influence and a clear focus on public value.

Date reviewed: July 2026

Person Specification

Post: Director of Corporate Services / Section 151 Officer

The following criteria will be used to assess candidates for the role. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate how they meet the essential criteria through their application, assessment process and interview.

Area	Essential criteria
Qualifications and professional status	• Professionally qualified accountant, with current membership of a CCAB recognised body. • Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to senior strategic leadership, public finance and governance. • Ability to meet the professional requirements of the statutory Section 151 Officer role. • Postgraduate management or leadership qualification. • Membership of a relevant professional network or sector body.
Experience	• Substantial senior leadership experience within a complex public sector or similarly regulated organisation. • Significant experience of leading strategic financial management, budget setting, medium-term financial planning and financial reporting. • Experience of advising elected members, boards, senior leaders or equivalent decision-makers on complex financial, governance and organisational issues. • Track record of leading corporate services, transformation, service improvement and organisational change across a broad portfolio. • Experience of working successfully with external auditors, regulators, partners and other key stakeholders. • Senior local government experience at director or assistant director level. • Experience of operating as, or directly supporting, a statutory Section 151 Officer.
Knowledge and understanding	• Strong understanding of local government finance, governance, statutory responsibilities, democratic accountability and public sector decision-making. • Detailed knowledge of financial strategy, budgetary control, reserves, capital, treasury management, audit, risk and assurance. • Understanding of the role of the Chief Finance Officer and the requirement to provide independent, impartial and professionally robust advice.

Area	Essential criteria
	• Knowledge of relevant legislation, professional standards, financial regulations, codes of practice and governance frameworks. • Understanding of the challenges facing local government, including financial sustainability, demand pressures, transformation, partnership working and workforce capacity. • Knowledge of Greater Manchester governance, devolution or partnership arrangements. • Understanding of wider corporate services, including HR, digital, legal, democratic, performance, communications and risk functions.
Skills and abilities	• Ability to provide clear, credible and authoritative professional advice on complex financial, governance and organisational matters. • Strong strategic thinking, judgement and analytical skills, with the ability to balance financial, legal, political, organisational and community considerations. • Ability to lead and motivate senior teams, build capability and create a culture of accountability, inclusion and continuous improvement. • Excellent communication, influencing and relationship-building skills, including the ability to work effectively with elected members, senior officers, partners and external stakeholders. • Ability to manage competing priorities, lead through ambiguity and maintain resilience under significant organisational, political and financial pressure. • Experience of leading digital, data or commercial improvement programmes. • Ability to operate effectively at regional or sub-regional level.
Leadership behaviours and values	• Demonstrates visible, inclusive and values-led leadership, acting with integrity, accountability and professionalism. • Shows political awareness and sound judgement while maintaining impartiality, independence and statutory responsibilities. • Promotes collaboration, constructive challenge and evidence-based decision-making. • Committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety and high standards of public service. • Demonstrates the Council's values through professional conduct, leadership style and decision-making. • Experience of leading cultural change across a complex organisation.

Area	Essential criteria
Other requirements	• Ability to attend evening meetings and work flexibly in line with the requirements of a senior statutory role. • Ability to respond to urgent or high-risk financial, governance or organisational matters where required. • Commitment to the Council's policies on equality, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety, information governance and public accountability. • Understanding of the borough, local context and key strategic partnerships.