

CANDIDATE BRIEFING PACK

Director of Finance

Prepared for London Borough of Croydon

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Penna

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Welcome Letter

Thank you for thinking about joining us at Croydon Council to be part of our new corporate management team.

As you will already know, Croydon has faced significant challenges over the past 18 months, in terms of the Council's financial position, some well-publicised service failures, and of course the pandemic challenge faced by every local authority.

We need an outstanding team of senior leaders to deliver the changes needed at Croydon. We are looking for people who have the right skills and experience, but who also share our values, and our commitment to Croydon and its people, and to making this Council the best organisation it can be.

Turning the Council round will be hard but fulfilling work; as part of a new, strong, supportive, and values-driven corporate management team, you will be helping to rebuild the Council: its finances, its governance, its culture, and its services. The financial challenge is steep, but we are already making serious progress, with a clear three-year financial strategy in place, a new permanent Chief Executive, and a new political administration with a shared commitment to the task ahead, and to putting Croydon's people first.

Croydon is a fantastic place; a vital part of London's growth story with a strong identity in its own right, and this is a rare chance to make genuine change in a place of great opportunity. It's a once-in-a-career moment, to join a brand-new management team at a time when your impact will be felt the most. May's local elections will also see our first Executive Mayor elected and the start of a new governance system for Croydon. What we do together over the next three years will help shape the future of one of London's most diverse and exciting boroughs.

We are building a team in which talented, clear-sighted, and committed individuals with a strong public service ethos will thrive, and help to build that supportive, inclusive, and accountable culture which will be so important to getting the Council back on track.

This is a values-led organisation where people care passionately about fairness, inclusion, tackling inequality, and about making Croydon better for the people who live here. The next few years will be tough, but when we get the right team together they will also be immensely fulfilling.



CLlr Hamida Ali
Leader of the Council

Katherine Kerswell
Chief Executive

About us

As one of London's largest and most diverse boroughs, Croydon is a fantastic place to live, work and spend time, with all the benefits of close proximity to the rest of London and the south east.

Our borough is made up of diverse communities that stretch from Crystal Palace to Coulsdon and from New Addington to Purley; with bustling district centres and over 120 green spaces that link us together and a vibrant urban town at its centre. One of London's largest commercial districts outside the centre, Croydon is a major hub of activity for shoppers, workers and visitors; its excellent transport links include the iconic trams. The borough has a richly diverse cultural scene and is known as the birthplace of music genres from punk to dubstep and the home of grime legend Stormzy.

Croydon's greatest strength is its people. London's second most populous borough, Croydon is home to 386,700 residents. Caring, passionate and principled, they take huge pride in coming together to improve their borough and help their communities. A long history of community action through our dynamic and dedicated voluntary and community sector was exemplified during the pandemic with Croydon uniting to support neighbours, communities and local businesses.

Croydon is also home to more than 94,000 under-18s – more young people than anywhere else in London. We are incredibly proud of them and committed to them and their futures. We look after more vulnerable children and young people than any other council in London; caring for them is a privilege and a priority, and our children's services are rated 'good' by Ofsted.

Over the past decade we have seen huge investment, regeneration and growth in our borough. Croydon remains an attractive and important part of London for ongoing growth and investment – growth from which we want to see all our communities benefit. However, the impact of the pandemic, austerity and our financial challenges mean we must change to focus on the needs our residents are facing today and make sure we are a financially sustainable council by 2024.

Croydon Council

Croydon Council is one year into one of the most significant and fast-paced transformational programmes in local government today. Our renewal plans set out how we are changing as an organisation to provide the good quality core services and value for money our residents and businesses expect. We will focus our resources where they matter the most, prioritising clean, safe streets, protecting the most vulnerable residents, and tackling ingrained inequality and poverty, while living within our means. Throughout our three-year renewal programme, we will work in close partnership with our improvement panel. Both the panel and government have noted our "significant progress" and demonstrated confidence in our ability to deliver the changes we need to make.

We are also preparing for some major constitutional changes. Following a referendum in October 2021, Croydon is preparing to change its governance arrangements and adopt a mayoral model in May 2022. Our first elected mayor will have one of the largest mandates in the capital.

There is a huge amount of change underway and most importantly, we want to involve staff, residents and all our partners in the decisions we make and be open in everything we do. Our passionate and committed workforce is our greatest asset; our partners are our most valued colleagues. We look forward to continuing to work with them as we build the council for Croydon's future.

Advertisement

Inspire Excellence

Director of Finance (Deputy S151) Salary up to £109,140

This is a great opportunity to be a part of one of local government's most exciting transformations.

This career making role will have its challenges but offers the chance to make real lasting impact on financial governance and management in one of London's largest Councils as we deliver the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan - and achieve our target of a financially sustainable budget by March 2024.

We're looking for extensive knowledge and experience of local government finance and the ability to identify transformation opportunities and develop innovative, cost-effective solutions. As a motivational leader, you'll inspire colleagues and champion our 'one Council' approach... In short, you'll be someone ready to take on a challenge, able to build productive relationships – someone determined to take Croydon forward into a sustainable financial future.

We acknowledge that we haven't always got things right and we're honest about what we can achieve - but that doesn't mean we're not ambitious. We're committed to providing value for money, tackling the issues that affect local people, and ensuring they see the full benefit of every pound we spend.

Who we are – and where we're going

We fully acknowledge the fact that we haven't got things right in the past and have strengthened our resolve to do them better. With a clear financial strategy in place together with an unwavering commitment to listening to our residents and putting them first, this is a reenergised Croydon. A determined Croydon, with a fantastic team of people who care about our community, and how we can support the many different people who live and work here.

We have a vision of what improvement success looks like for us – a future where we have a vibrant local economy, a great team of people, and delivering new ideas that will mean we can be at our best for the communities in Croydon.

How to apply

If you'd like to find out more, please go to: <https://www.inspiringcroydon.co.uk>

Croydon Council is an inclusive employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. We are happy to consider applications from candidates seeking flexible working arrangements.

As users of the disability confident scheme, we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the advertised role. We're committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and we expect every member of our team to share this commitment.

Job Description

Job title: Director of Finance (deputy S151)	Service Area: Finance	
Directorate: Resources	Post Number	Evaluation Number:
Grade: 2	Date issued: December 2021 FINAL	

Croydon Council's priorities

We will live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents.

We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough. We will follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice.

We will focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford. First and foremost, providing social care services that keep our most vulnerable residents safe and healthy and keep our streets clean and safe.

To ensure we get full benefit from every pound we spend, other services will only be provided where they can be shown to have a direct benefit in keeping people safe and reducing demand

Croydon Council's new ways of working

We will practise sound financial management, being honest about what we've spent and what we can afford.

We will focus on what we, uniquely, can do as the local authority as the democratically elected leaders of our borough. This means we will focus on our core services, and a small number of evidence-based outcomes that deliver our priorities. But we will also continue to use our democratic mandate to convene our partners around a common purpose and to make a clear case for a better deal for Croydon.

We will aim to become a much more transparent, open and honest council.

We will involve residents in our decision making. But we will also need to be clear with residents about what we can do, and what we can't. When we have to say no, we will do so with compassion and take the time to explain our decisions.

Overall purpose of role

As a member of the council's senior management, the **Director of Finance** will work collaboratively with other directors in the resources directorate, with corporate directors and directors in other directorates, and with the chief executive to deliver the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan, the council's priorities and ways of working and a financially sustainable budget by March 2024.

The **Director of Finance** will provide budget management, planning and reporting (GF, HRA and Capital), support to all directorates through the heads of finance / business partners, treasury management, payments, revenues, benefits and debt services and promote the council's corporate competencies and values through day-to-day managerial behaviours.

The **Director of Finance** will provide high quality professional advice to the corporate director of resources, the chief executive, Leader and Cabinet, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, the General Purposes and Audit Committee and any other external bodies on all finance matters related to the functions of the council.

Reports to: Corporate Director of Resources

Responsible for: Heads of finance / business partner support to directorates, management of the finance function and treasury management.

Job context:

The post incorporates the role of deputy S151 officer to the statutory role of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which is held by the corporate director of resources.

This post holder is an office holder under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and will be engaged in regulated activity by virtue of undertaking the role and will come within the scope of the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The postholder is required to observe and fulfill the seven principles of public life (also known as the Nolan Principles).

1.1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

1.2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

1.3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

1.4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

1.5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

1.6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

1.7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The post holder has line management responsibility for 6 direct reports and responsibility for all staff in the finance division and is accountable and responsible for those finance services delivered.

The post holder is accountable for the finance budget and will deliver services and the associated savings programme and transformation projects within that budget envelope.

The post holder will ensure the financial probity and competence of financial management across the finance division and that effective arrangements are in place to meet legislative and statutory requirements in relation to financial management and internal control.

The post holder is jointly accountable with the corporate management team and all senior management for the delivery of the council's equality strategy 2021-2024 and action plan and will personally lead elements of it and champion it overall.

The post holder will ensure the corporate parenting responsibilities for the council's looked after children and care leavers are fulfilled in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The post holder will enable staff in the division to lead cross-council projects on issues as defined by Cabinet. A limited number of reviews per year will tackle complex priority issues and also enable new skills and experiences to be developed by staff to aid their future career development.

The post holder will participate in the council's emergency arrangements as an on-call member and will fully participate in gold and silver arrangements as required, which may require chairing the formal council meetings.

The post holder will ensure that all relevant health & safety legislation and the council's health & safety requirements are reasonably complied with.

The post holder will be required to operate within any relevant delegations as detailed in the council's scheme of delegation of the council's constitution.

The post holder will be required to work some evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays in order to meet service requirements and to ensure appropriate representation of the council with residents, the Leader and Cabinet and all elected Members and external bodies.

This is a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990. The individual holding this post cannot have any active political role.

Politically restricted employees are prohibited from:

- standing for office as local councillors, MPs, MEPs, Members of the Welsh Assembly or Members of the Scottish Parliament,
- canvassing on behalf of a political party or a person who is, or seeks to be, a candidate, and
- speaking to the public at large or publishing any written or artistic work that could give the impression of advocating support for a political party.

Accountabilities – Director of Finance

- To manage the division, ensuring that the development and transformation of services to meet the new budget envelope in the medium term financial strategy 2022-2025 is delivered.
- To be the professional lead for financial management in the council enhancing the competencies of cost centre managers, their compliance with the financial reporting requirements of the system and that the reporting system itself is functional and fit for purpose.
- To provide the operational support for all directorate financial management activity for both the general fund, housing revenue account and capital expenditure and ensure effective directorate management team and directorate cost-centre manager support, ensuring timely financial advice and compliance with the reporting requirements of the financial management system and the CIPFA Financial Management Code 2020.
- To ensure there is compliance by cost centre managers to submit data in a timely way and fully and correctly use the finance reporting system so as there is a robust process for monitoring the in-year financial position on a monthly basis and reporting on that to both corporate and directorate management teams and elected members.
- To lead the financial management processes of the council on a monthly basis, using the output from the Council's financial monitoring framework and to then identify and develop financial policies and options needed to deliver the council's agreed budget.
- To support the corporate director for resources and S151 officer in the effective planning, monitoring and delivery of the council's financial strategies and budget.
- To support the corporate director for resources and S151 officer and develop, and manage the establishment and implementation of an effective internal and Member led scrutiny and annual challenge process for the council's budget.
- To ensure that the revenue, HRA and capital programme budget for the council is delivered to deadline and that the council tax can be agreed by members to time.
- To ensure the council's final accounts are produced on time and meet the required legislative standards and maintain a open and positive relationship with the external auditor.
- To ensure that accounting polices and practice are developed and maintained to meet new accounting requirements and to meet the changing needs of the council.
- To support the corporate director of resources and S151 officer in producing the medium term and annual budget plans in line with the council's financial strategy.
- To provide professional advice and guidance on financial strategy and policy developments to the Leader and Cabinet, Scrutiny and Overview Committee, General Purposes and Audit Committee, corporate and directorate management teams on financial issues.
- To provide financial direction and reporting on the council's capital programme, working closely with the director of commercial investment & capital.
- To be responsible for ensuring the internal cash balances of the council are effectively managed and maximised with minimum risk.

- To also ensure with the corporate director of resources, that there is an effective working relationship with the council's bank and investment advisors.
- To manage on behalf of the Corporate Director of Resources the treasury management function, ensuring that the council's financial position and investments are managed effectively in line with the relevant CIPFA codes of practice and provide advice and support to members and senior management on the implementation of the treasury management strategy.
- To ensure the payments, revenues, benefits and debt service delivers monies due to the council and provide effective support, information and advice to those residents and businesses struggling to pay.
- To operate within the governance, financial and legal frameworks of the council at all times.

Accountabilities (all corporate directors and service directors)

Tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

Strategy

- To take a "one Council" approach to deliver more effective outcomes and at all times avoid a silo-ed, single directorate or service area approach.
- To actively seek out and learn from external good practice and bring those new ideas and ways of working into service development and delivery.
- To ensure the council listens to and engages residents in the development of ideas, strategies and policies and that co-design and co-production approaches are implemented throughout the directorate.
- To contribute fully to the development and implementation of all corporate strategies, the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan and the council's priorities and ways of working and to act as a project or programme senior responsible owner to lead and ensure the implementation of specific corporate projects as required.
- To actively promote the council's priorities and ways of working and the council's leadership framework and values to ensure they are delivered throughout the organisation.

Service quality

- To fulfil the best value duty requirements as established by the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the directorate's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Through personal example, commitment and clear action, valuing and celebrating the diversity of Croydon's communities, ensuring an inclusive approach and equality of access and treatment in employment and service delivery.
- To develop appropriate service quality measures, targets and outcomes for

- accountable assessment. To seek out more transparent accountability mechanisms for delivery in the directorate.
- To maintain an up to date knowledge of relevant legislation as applicable to the directorate and to the overall council.
- To build effective partnerships to harness public, private, voluntary sector and community resources that can help deliver the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan and the council's priorities and ways of working.
- To be the council's (officer level) lead representative in a number of partnerships.
- To work collaboratively with the trade unions to improve services and solve problems in a coherent and integrated manner.

Performance

- To lead and direct the services within the directorate in order to ensure that they deliver effective and efficient services, that they set and achieve high standards of performance, that they provide best value and that the overall budgets are managed and controlled within the funding envelope agreed.
- To lead, direct and uphold the internal control system that safeguards the residents' interest in the appropriate use of council resources and ensure the system is respected and complied with by all staff in the directorate.
- To comply with the requirements of the Council's constitution and the relevant officer and other codes of conduct and ensure through personal leadership that staff in the directorate are familiar with, understand and comply with the requirements also.
- To ensure the effective management of data and security of information received and used within the directorate, to comply with the relevant legislation such as GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act, recognising that the council wishes to operate in the most open and transparent way.

Resource management

- To lead and direct an effective divisional management team.
- To ensure that staff are informed, organised, performance managed, held to account and motivated to deliver high quality and cost effective services.
- To uphold the mandatory financial regulations of the council and ensure that they are understood and complied with by the directorate's staff .
- To plan and keep under review the services within the directorate to control the budgets within it, manage risk effectively and ensure accountability.

Leadership and Culture

- To lead within the directorate and across the council, the change that is needed in order to ensure that adult social care services play their full part in achieving the Croydon Renewal Improvement Plan and the council's priorities and ways of working.

- To act at all times in ways that create a fully inclusive workplace and operating culture, proactively seeking ways to ensure staff feel valued and that they all belong.
- To seek ways to harness and fully develop the potential of staff working in the directorate and develop their talent.
- To demonstrate through personal behaviour, active listening to staff and residents in ways that will help rebuild the relationship with the residents of Croydon and seeking out the resident voice to guide and advise the council in its' actions and decision making.
- To model the behaviours required of all staff in terms of equality, ethical behaviour, empathy, effective governance, effective internal control, transparency, and openness.

Leadership Framework

The council's leadership framework follows the principles of a competency framework and all staff are expected to demonstrate these.

Developing Oneself – You demonstrate the values every day, you are passionate about the services you lead and deliver the vision and outcomes of Croydon Council. You are inspirational and engage others through personal leadership making the vision understandable to everyone.

Inspiring and Developing People – You identify talent and develop their capability to ensure a committed and motivated workforce, you create a culture based on the corporate values and ensure staff and stakeholders deliver a desired outcome.

Collaborating and Influencing for Results – You are challenging and innovative in your approach to driving high standards and value for money, you trust and respect staff and partners and empower them to be courageous to try new approaches.

Enabling and Facilitating the Community – You create effective collaboration between stakeholders, establish relationships and understand others perspectives. You are open and honest with others. You build a shared sense of purpose across Croydon, ensuring delivery and a collective use of resources

Person Specification

Specific Minimum Qualifications and Expertise

- Extensive knowledge and substantial experience of local government finance.
- Knowledge and experience of budget setting, financial monitoring and closing the accounts as well as experience of managing the development of significant strategic budgets.
- Knowledge of the treasury management policies.
- Knowledge of the Revenues and Benefits regulations.
- Knowledge of value for money and transformation principles to ensure the most cost effective outcomes are achieved within limited resources.
- Experience of successfully operating in a political environment.
- CCAB or CIMA Qualified Accountant.
- Excellent oral, written and presentational skills. Able to put across arguments in a compelling way, convincing or impressing others in ways that result in acceptance, agreement or behavioural change.
- Strong analytical skills and lateral thinking to develop creative and innovative service solutions and a willingness and ability to challenge.
- Ability to build and maintain effective teams and services and relationships with members, other managers and the wider community.
- Understanding the need for change, with the ability to identify change requirements and establish urgency and common purpose around transformational change.
- Ability to set personal priorities, objectives and deadlines while maintaining a focus on the key service priorities/accountabilities, as well as the resilience and drive to meet the demands and pressures of the post.
- Ability to lead, motivate and develop a team of multi-disciplinary finance staff.
- A readiness to make decisions, take the initiative, motivate and empower others into action.

Corporate Values

Our values are the base of every job role within Croydon – our values are fundamental in everything we do as a Local Authority. You are required to demonstrate a commitment to our corporate values:

One Team: To cross boundaries to work together towards shared goals with colleagues, partners and communities

- You are strategically innovative in your approach to building and maintaining partnerships and you and your teams act in a joint enterprise with them. You use your contacts and colleagues to bring teams together.

Proud to Serve: We strive to always do our best for the community, getting the most from limited resources and using taxpayers' money wisely

- You are proud to be part of the wider Croydon and the contribution you and your teams make to it. You make a difference to people's lives through engagement and you strive to get the best possible value for money for customers.

Honest and Open: We work hard to build trust by treating everyone with honesty and integrity

- You think through who needs to understand what during communication; and take care to communicate detail clearly. You take people's views into account continuously. You trust people, colleagues and staff, to do their best and deal with any issues positively.

Taking Responsibility: We encourage and support each other to take responsibility and show what we can do, learning together and recognising each others' contributions

- You are clear where formal accountability lies and where we can all take responsibility for results. You praise your colleagues for their efforts and ideas and thank them for their contributions.

Valuing Diversity: We make the most of the many perspectives that make Croydon distinctive

- You treat all staff and customers with equal value and respect. In everything you do, you make good use of the wide variety of background, skills and perspective your teams, the Council and the community demonstrate.



How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

- Please apply by submitting a CV and Covering Letter (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.
- Please ensure all gaps in employment and education history are fully explained on your CV; we may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.
- Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.
- Please ensure that you address the key requirements as set out in the person specification.
- Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details. We are keen to ensure that all our jobs are accessible to all members of the community and use this data to monitor our progress in doing this.
- Please return your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.
- Following long listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.
- This recruitment process will be anonymised at application stage; we will be sharing your application with a third-party supplier who will redact all personal details and any unconscious bias. They will not share or hold your data.

The following timetable sets out the key dates in the recruitment process:

Activity	Date
Closing Date	Friday 4 th February 2022
Longlist Meeting	Friday 11 th February 2022
Preliminary Interviews & 1-2-1 with Chief Executive	W/C 14 th February 2022
Shortlist Meeting	Monday 28 th February 2022
Stakeholder Panels	W/C 7 th March 2022
Final Panel Interviews	Monday 21 st March 2022 (face to face)

To apply for this role, please click the following link: <https://execroles.penna.com/?type=1>

For further information or confidential discussion, please contact Rob Naylor 07922 417 550 or Az Ahmed on 07717 810 481.