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**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title: Head of Pension Administration (Worcestershire Pension Fund)**

**Directorate & Section/Unit: Finance**

**Reporting to: Chief Finance Officer**

**Responsible for:**  Governance and Engagement Manager, Membership Manager, Benefits Manager

**Headcount and FTE of staff: c39**

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| **Salary Grade: P07** **WCC Management Level:** Level 2 Manager**Number of Direct Reports: 3** |

**Our People Values:**

To uphold and act in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's values;

* ***Customer Focus –*** Ensure delivery of a high-quality service which meet the needs of customers.
* ***Can Do Culture –*** Be proactive to achieve excellence, finding solutions and creative ways of working.
* ***Freedom within Boundaries -*** Make constructive change through cohesive decision making, ensuring services are responsive.

**Purpose of job:**

* The Head of Pension Administration is responsible for the leadership and management of a £3.5 billion pension scheme. The post will lead the approach to engaging and working with c185 Worcestershire and Herefordshire public sector partners, including councils, university, housing and education institutions. This role and thus carries a high degree of risk to reputation that needs managing and mitigating to ensure an effective scheme/Fund. This is also monitored independently by The Pensions Regulator.
* The post is a senior leadership and management post of the Council’s Finance function, as well as playing a key role in Directorate Leadership Teams (DLTs).
* The Head of Pension Administration is responsible for assisting the Chief Financial Officer in providing strong inspirational leadership through the setting and delivery of the strategic vision and direction of the Finance function overall.
* Driving continual improvement and value for money in performance, and application of policies and financial controls, that both effectively meet the needs of the Authority and maintain the highest professional standards, including informing decision making based on professional advice.
* The post holders will support the Pension Committee, Pension Board and the Strategic Leadership Team through contributing effective and efficient administrative systems that ensure accurate recording of pay and personnel details for c60,000 members. The post holder will also be the lead for the Pensioners Payroll service which makes payment to c20,000 pensions each month.
* The post will take responsibility for a number of teams including Benefits, Employers, Communications, Governance and Systems. The post will represent the Fund in national groups, assessing the future operation of administrative and governance functions and advising the Secretary of State and ministers directly on any proposals for change.

**The proposed structure is as follows:**

**Main Activities & Responsibilities:**

* ***Leading effective Pension Administrative practices that secure and sustain strong financial standing***
* To lead the Worcestershire Pension Fund Administration Team, setting out a vision and business plan to deliver the service and continual improvement, being responsible for the day-to-day management of the function’s Managers (x3) and ensuring a high-quality service is provided to all members and employers.
* To develop, implement and maintain the Pension Administration Strategy and the associated service level agreements which formalise the administrative arrangements between the Fund and its employers, monitoring both employers and the Fund’s performance against these service standards, escalating or resolving major issues as they arise. This means using your expert knowledge of employer pension issues to propose and agree service levels that are fair to both employers and the Fund. The non-delivery of timely and clean data is a significant issue to the Fund’s ability to process pensions, leading to disputes and complaints that impact on administration costs. These agreements will be used to challenge employers’ performance, especially where there are specific employer issues which ultimately can lead them to being fined.
* Facilitate positive challenge across the Fund to continuously improve performance outcomes and deliverables, value for money and stakeholder satisfaction. Leading successful cultural and organisational change programmes both within the function and across all employers,
* Ensure that policies and procedures across the function meet current regulations and review the Fund’s Governance Policy Statement and Scheme of Delegation for subsequent approval by Committee.
* The role will oversee and ensure advice is provided to Worcestershire & Herefordshire employers, including the Council, on its future delivery models and expenditure decisions; for example how to structure covenant guarantees, capitalisation options for redundancies, or admission agreements structures including how to best manage pension liability risk from a commercial perspective and the costs to employers deciding whether an admitted body is right for their business case.
* The role will oversee and ensure advice is provided to members (current employees, deferred members and pensioners) and stakeholder groups. As such the role has a significant influence over the prosperity of the County’s population. This will include providing annual benefit statements and websites.
* To ensure that from an audit perspective the Fund is operating correctly and providing the assurances to Committee re the management of all identified risks, working with the auditors to agree action plans.
* Lead on the co-ordination of actuarial valuations, advising the Committee and employers on the complex outcomes arising from them needed to secure the financial viability of the Fund and ensure a manageable impact on employers. This will include advising Committee on risk, the valuation factors to be used and the strength of covenants required for employer organisations, working with senior executives at employer organisations to outline their options, taking an informed view of the employer’s financial strength, and presenting funding options while ensuring organisations aren’t made unviable which could lead to the termination of important services, that support Worcestershire and Herefordshire Council’s business objectives.
* Directly influence, advise and make recommendations to 175+ employer governance representatives - Councillors, Governors, Boards and Trustees - on future complex financial matters that impact on those bodies’ pay and viability. This advice will cover matters that will have high risk and reputational impact across the Fund, the Council and its partners, using expert knowledge of complex regulations to provide advice and influencing partners to make sound business decisions that ensure the viability of the Fund.
* Lead relationships and communications with employers including consulting on complex political / strategic / commercial issues that have high risk and reputational impact across the Fund, the Council and its partners. This could be for example advising around options for admissions and influencing the partner over the level of guarantee to cover the risks to the Fund whilst maintaining a viable business option for the employer.
* Provide expert advice and make recommendations to the Committee and Local Pension Board relating to the efficient and effective administration of the Fund in compliance with regulations. For example, implementing an employer and member self-service facility to make processes more secure and provide quality data that meets The Pensions Regulator’s requirements; or ensuring that workflows are completed within the statutory timeframes and reported along with any breaches, mitigating the subsequent reputational risk.
* Lead the recruitment and appointment of unelected members of the Local Pension Board and ensure all members of the Board and Committee have robust training plans in place.
* Provide advice and information to the Secretary of State and The Pensions Regulator, ensuring all statutory information has been provided.
* Lead the development, implementation and maintenance of systems, procedures and policies, including accounts payable functions to ensure adherence to Financial and Procurement Regulations.
* Lead any system upgrades, maintenance or developments to ensure that records and processing remains accurate and timely.
* Ensure the team is adequately resourced and directed to provide assistance to services and can respond to financial questions/concerns to meet business needs.
* Ensure the team works effectively with Central Accountancy to provide accurate information for the closure of accounts, working with external and internal audit to meet information needs and to ensure that proper information is maintained for historical purposes.
* ***Supporting and advising chief officers and councillors***
* The Post holder will advise the Pension Committee and Pensions Board as appropriate in relation to the governance and performance of the Fund’s administration, valuation and payments.
* The post holder will also be expected to present the views of the s151 Officer as appropriate and within direction in order to facilitate prompt decision making and know when to defer to the s.151 Officer for ratification/views. As such the post holders will represent the s151 Officer (or delegate as agreed with the CFO as appropriate for capacity and priority allows) on various boards and as appropriate at various council and partner meetings (for example at monthly meetings with the Fund’s Actuary or with other employers within the Fund).
* To represent the Director or CFO at local or national events or forums and promote Worcestershire and identify opportunities for the Council to pilot and lead on initiatives.
* ***Leadership of an effective and efficient Finance function***
* To work in the Finance Leadership Team to plan the resource to deliver all corporate and finance projects, in order to ensure efficient and effective use of resources within the team, improvement in the financial and administrative processes and ways of working as well as support to services.
* Leading with the CFO in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (and where appropriate the Wider Leadership Team (WLT) the strategic and transformation work programme of the Function. Setting out the service and workforce plans to deliver and maintain an effective, value for money service, of the highest quality, whilst managing the risks associated with that (Monthly). That includes driving the Functions apprenticeship programmes and business continuity planning.
* To meet with the CFO, and Finance Leadership Team each month to allocate workloads. This post will identify resource needs to deliver excellent financial advice on the various work/change projects and be able to negotiate resources to ensure these are completed in a timely and accurate fashion to meet Council meeting and audit deadlines.
* Regularly review as a member of the Finance Leadership Team the Financial and Procurement Regulations with appropriate senior officers, services and Legal Services to ensure they are fit for purpose and propose and lead any changes necessary to maintain that status.

**Generic Accountabilities:**

1. To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities and encourage and support staff in their development and training
2. To undertake other such duties, training and/or hours of work as may be reasonably required and which are consistent with the general level of responsibility of this job
* To undertake health and safety duties commensurate with the job and/or as detailed in the Directorate’s Health and Safety Policy
* The duties described in this job description must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for all employees and service users and is consistent with the Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy
* To act as the designated Information Access Co-ordinator for Finance, in accordance with the roles defined in the Joint ICT/IM Strategy
* To act as the designated Records Management Liaison Officer Financial Transactions, in accordance with the roles defined in the Joint ICT/IM Strategy
* To act as the Information Technology Liaison Officer for E5 and Controcc, in accordance with the roles defined in the Information & Business Systems service level agreement

**Contacts:**

 In all contacts the post holder will be required to present a good image of the Directorate and the County Council as well as maintaining constructive relationships.

 ***Internal***: Elected Members, Directors, Heads of Service, Senior Managers, Management Teams,

Managers and Staff across all directorates, Project Staff, Governors, Head Teachers, Teachers, Support and other school-based staff

 ***External***: The Fund’s actuary, employer representatives [including District & Upper Tier Authorities

(Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council), University, Housing Associations, Police, Fire, Academy Schools and Colleges]; service providers; The Pensions Regulator; Government Agencies & Departments; the LGA; members of the Fund; the NHS & Clinical Commissioning Group; and Voluntary Organisations.

**Additional Information:**

* This post is politically restricted under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ***\****
* The Council reserves the right to alter the content of this job description, after consultation to reflect changes to the job or services provided, without altering the general character or level of responsibility
* Reasonable adjustments will be considered as required by the Equality Act

Author: Michael Hudson Date: 26/01/22

 Date of grading confirmation: 17/02/2022

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Job Title: Head of Pension Administration**

**Directorate & Section/Unit: Finance**

**Salary Grade: P07**

**WCC Management Level:** Level 2 Manager

**EXPERIENCE:**

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

* Substantial experience of leading and developing a pension service/team/function/department , preferably local government and administrating a large final salary pension scheme.
* Substantial experience of working in a political environment and managing political challenges to the direction of the function. Including experience of advising a Pensions Committee and Board, or for similar groups involving elected Members.
* Substantial experience of working in a communications environment with a broad knowledge and understanding of the bodies and members impacted by the function, for example understanding of how housing associations or academies are funded.
* Significant previous experience of providing good governance for a large defined benefit pension scheme, with reference to Committee management and national LGPS governance standards.
* Substantial experience of delivering change management and benefits realisation of savings / income targets.
* Substantial experience of providing financial advice at a strategic level across wide ranging and complex services.
* Significant experience of leading, managing and developing individuals and teams within a large and diverse staff group including behavioural competencies and performance management.
* Substantial experience of financial systems, including E5 (General Ledger) and Altair (Pensions Administration & Payroll) or similar systems.
* Experience of effectively building partnerships and working co-operatively at an executive level with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders and groups.
* Significant experience of project management.

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

* An understanding of accounting standards.
* Experience of tendering, negotiating and concluding procurement of large contracts.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

* Expert knowledge of pensions administration (past and present)
* Expert knowledge of Pension Regulations and case law affecting pension administration, disclosure legislation and other related legislation and of providing expert advice with impact across employers and employees. For example, awareness of changes and the impact on ways of working around changes to HMRC rules
* Specialist knowledge and understanding of government policy in relation to the LGPS and wider pensions related issues, and the ability to communicate this to the pensions team, elected members, employees and employers.
* Expert knowledge of financial systems, including E5 and (General Ledger) and Altair (Pensions Administration & Payroll) or similar systems.
* Ability to deliver and support successful cultural and organisational change programmes both within the function and with impact across all employers, for example models of delivery involving TUPEs or redundancy schemes and future issues / risks of viability on cessation.
* An excellent standard of numeracy skills. Able to analyse and interpret complex financial data and communicate findings clearly with staff with and without a financial background.
* The ability to plan and prioritise work in order to meet strict deadlines.
* The ability to take personal responsibility for projects and carrying out / overseeing financial analysis/modelling.
* An excellent ability to communicate in verbal and written form that is clear and concise.
* Strong ICT skills, including data mining or interrogation software.
* Customer focus and able to responds positively to colleagues and customers.
* An excellent ability to set timetables and priorities and organise work in order to achieve set goals in a specified timescale.
* An excellent understanding of current service and financial issues affecting local authorities and partnering bodies.
* Well-developed decision-making skills which use challenge and risk taking as key attributes.
* The ability to develop effective working relationships with senior managers.
* The ability to identify, analyse and use innovation to resolve complex and sensitive problems.
* High level communication skills both written and oral.

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

* The ability to consider commercial factors.
* The ability to act as a team player with an excellent ability to work on own initiative Plan and prioritise work, flexibility, to work to strict deadlines.

**QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:**

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

* A level 6 qualification e.g. Honours Degree
* Chartered Institute of Payroll & Pensions Foundation Degree in Pension Administration or CCAB Qualified Accountant with relevant compensatory pension administration experience.
* Level 7 qualification in Chartered Management Institution or relevant compensatory experience
* Evidence of continual professional development.
* A relevant management degree or equivalent level of certification, e.g. ILM Level 7

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

* Project management and/or system design qualifications (for example PRINCE II,)
* PMI level 4 in Pensions Administration and Management.
* Advanced Certificate in Communications Planning, or equivalent such as CIPR.
* Professional ICT qualification

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

* Passion for delivering excellent client focused services which add value
* Leadership and influencing skills suitable to operating at a strategic level and promoting a consultancy approach to service delivery
* The ability to develop and participate in a unified team which values flexibility and sharing

**MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP COMPETENCES**

*To be assessed at interview / Assessment Centre Stage only*

It is **essential** that the post holder is able to demonstrate the Management Leadership Competencies required of a Level 2. Please refer to the attached Management Leadership Competences (MLC) information.

Author: Michael Hudson Date: 26/01/22