CUMBRIA COMBINED AUTHORITY

# Post Specification

## Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title: Head of Finance (Deputy Section 73 Officer)**
- **Date: July 2026**
- **CCA Grade: Grade 18**
- **CCA reference: CCA002**
- **Location: Main office- Penrith (minimum 2 days office based)**

## Service Area Description

Cumbria Combined Authority is a newly established organisation building the financial, governance and operational systems that will underpin its long-term success. The finance service is in a period of active development, establishing core processes, implementing new systems, and shaping the Authority's financial framework from the ground up. This is a rare opportunity to join at the beginning and help shape how the organisation operates.

## Purpose of this Post

The purpose of this role is to lead the management accounting, financial accounting, budgeting, exchequer, tax, treasury and operational elements of the finance department, to support the Section 73 Officer in the development and delivery of effective internal control, risk management processes and investment strategies and plans and to deputise for the Section 73 Officer when requested by the Section 73 Officer or in their absence. The postholder will provide expert financial leadership across a range of finance related functions to establish, embed and develop the systems, processes and controls required for a new organisation. The role requires a high degree of technical knowledge and well established leadership skills in a finance function, as well as flexibility, a willingness to undertake varied tasks, and a proactive approach to building and developing strong teams and robust, compliant financial operations.

## Key Job Specific Accountabilities

- Lead the Authority's Management Accounting function to develop strong support for budget holders and provide relevant, timely and accurate financial information to senior managers and the Board.

- Lead the Authority's Financial Accounting function to ensure the provision of an effective General Ledger and Chart of Accounts and that accurate statutory accounts are produced in a timely manner, liaising with External Auditors to answer their queries to ensure a smooth audit process to enable accounts to be approved within statutory timescales.

- Lead the annual budgeting cycle for the Authority, including determination of the precept where appropriate, and support the Section 73 Officer in the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan and other long term financial strategies

- Lead the Authority's exchequer functions, including Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, to ensure that suppliers are created and creditors paid in a timely manner that meets internal control requirements and that all approved income is secured for the Authority and the level of outstanding debtors minimised. To support the Section 73 Officer in their responsibility to certify grant income from government departments and other public bodies.

- Lead the Authority's systems for reporting timely and accurate VAT returns to HMRC and support the Section 73 Officer in securing specialist tax advice – regarding VAT or other taxes – as required.

- Lead the relationship with the Authority's corporate bankers and secure additional bank accounts and payment facilities as may be required by the Authority and maintain an accurate cash flow forecast to enable the Authority to manage its public funds in the most effective way. Support the Section 73 Officer in the development of Treasury Management and non-Treasury Management Investment Strategies and in developing any options for borrowing or other credit facilities that the Authority may investigate or approve.

- Ensure that the Authority has sufficient insurance coverage to manage insurable risks in line with the (to be developed) Risk Framework and Risk Management Strategy/Policy and to support the Section 73 Officer in developing and maintaining the Risk Framework and Risk Management Strategy/Policy.

- To support the Section 73 Officer in their responsibilities for the internal control environment, including liaising with Internal and External Auditors as appropriate and attending Audit and Governance Committee meetings as required.

- To support the Section 73 Officer in analysing Value for Money in Business Cases received for potential investment from the revenue and capital Investment Fund.

- To deputise for the Section 73 Officer in internal and external meetings as required.

- Work flexibly across the finance service, undertaking varied tasks as needed to support operational delivery during a period of organisational development.

- Build effective working relationships with colleagues, partners and legacy councils to support smooth transition and continuity of financial operations

## Key Facts and Figures of the Post

- **Budget Responsibilities**: c£400k initially – likely to grow
- **Management Responsibilities:** 2 posts in year one, year two onwards TBC
- **Other:** Will carry statutory responsibilities when deputising for the Section 73 Officer

## Essential Criteria

- **Qualifications:** A recognised CCAB qualification (eg CIPFA, ACA, ACCA, CIMA). Evidence of continuing professional development and commitment to maintaining up-to-date financial knowledge.
- **Knowledge:**
  - Significant knowledge across the range of financial responsibilities encompassed by this role.

    - Experience of working with financial systems and the ability to support process development, system improvements or implementation activities.
    - Understanding of financial controls, audit requirements and statutory financial responsibilities.
    - Experience of leading the delivery of core accounting tasks such as reconciliations, journals, budget monitoring, financial reporting or year-end processes.
    - Evidence of continuing professional development (CPD)
- **Experience:**
    - Significant experience of leading teams to provide a range of financial services. Whilst Public sector experience is not essential for this role (we welcome applications from candidates with strong transferable skills gained in any sector), experience of working within a regulated, audited or publicly accountable environment will be very advantageous.
    - Good technical background in accounting covering all aspects of budget preparation, in year monitoring and forecasting and year end accounting.
- **Expertise:**
    - Excellent people manager who brings clarity of purpose and a supportive environment to their teams
    - Knowledge of a range of finance systems and how to maximise their productivity for organisations
    - Capacity to work effectively under pressure, prioritise and meet deadlines.
    - Ability to work with non-finance managers to provide objective and understandable financial advice.
    - Accurate numeracy, analytical and comprehension skills.
    - Commitment to high standards of integrity, confidentiality and professional conduct.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- This post requires a standard DBS check.

## Job Working Circumstances

- **Emotional Demands:** Routine demands commensurate with the tasks and duties encountered in a modern office and challenging role of this type.
- **Physical Demands:** Limited physical demands, commensurate with those experienced in a normal office environment.
- **Working Conditions:** Conditions as experienced in a normal working office environment.
- **Other Factors:** Travel to the main office in Penrith is required minimum 2 days a week.