

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE**

**Laois County Council**

**Financial Management Accountant**

**(2 year Temporary Contract Post)**

**CANDIDATE BOOKLET**

**10th November 2017**

**Financial Management Accountant (Temporary – 2 year contract)**

**Laois County Council**

#### Background

Laois is a rural county which has a steadily intensifying urban population - 84,000 people approx as per census 2016. Laois has the second highest rate of population growth in the State over the period. The population increase between 2006 and 2011 was 20.1% which was the highest population increase in the Country and 2.5 times the National average of 8.1%. The reason for much of this growth can be attributed to the availability of good quality affordable housing with excellent connectivity to centres of employment in North Kildare and Dublin City allowing commute times of circa 45 minutes by road and rail to these employment centres.

The County’s towns and villages have been organically grown and led to develop in a coherent manner and since the introduction of the first Core Strategy in the Laois County Development in 2011, much of the growth has now been refocused into Portlaoise, Portarlington, Mountmellick and Graiguecullen – the 4 Local Area Plans towns within the county.

The state has invested heavily in County Laois with almost €750 Million worth of infrastructure developed over the last 15 years.

The bulk of this investment has been in the Motorways through Laois (~€500 Million) along with substantial investment in water services infrastructure across the County but principally in Portlaoise Town (~€120Million). There has also been substantial investment in School’s infrastructure in the County, once again focused on Portlaoise with the development of 2 new secondary schools and 6 new primary schools and 2 new schools (1 primary & 1 Secondary) are currently going through initial planning stages. Social infrastructure has been invested in as well with the development of 2 Leisure Centres (1 in Portlaoise, 1 in Portarlington), 7 Libraries, 21 Playgrounds, 1 Art House and a new Library for Portlaoise town in going through design stage with a state support grant of €1.6Million committed. This state investment supported by locally raised matching funds has been critical to support the doubling of our population as referenced above and ensuring an excellent Quality of Life for Laois citizens.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated legislation and regulation have placed a greater emphasis on strategic overall management, accountability, and general wellbeing of local communities and the provision of enhanced, customer focused and efficient services.  Local democracy is strengthened by the four Municipal Districts ensuring that local communities and their representatives have a real input into the delivery of the full range of public services. Directors of Service & Senior Staff are expected to assist and support the Chief Executive in charting the way ahead for the county’s future with the prime focus being job creation, community engagement and involvement and delivering value for money with greater effectiveness and efficiencies.

**Financial Management Accountant - The Role:**

This position is a senior position within the Finance Function of Laois County Council reporting to the Head of Finance. The successful candidate will be responsible for the effective management of the Finance Section. He/she will also be responsible for the introduction of new initiatives, policies, procedures and working with multi-disciplinary teams. The successful candidate will work in a dynamic and progressive local authority which provides a multiplicity of services to their county.

Duties and Responsibilities:

The Financial Management Accountant will be responsible for the following:

* Preparation of the statutory accounts.
* Compilation and preparation of the Laois County Council Budget.
* Liaising with internal and external stakeholders to include auditors, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Department of Finance and Public Expenditure, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, National Oversight and Audit Commission, Banks and funding providers.
* Ensuring that the local authority adheres to currently accepted accounting standards and relevant codes of practice.
* Responsibility for the management and control of the day-to-day operations of the Finance Department.
* Monitoring and implementing/improving internal controls and checks to ensure good financial control, safeguarding of assets of the Council, including Activity Based Costing.
* Ensuring the rapid, timely and accurate preparation of financial and management reports through the use of automated systems.
* Monitoring, interpretation and reporting on monthly management accounts for senior management team.
* Preparation, implementation and ongoing review of the Council’s finance plans including management of capital budgets.
* Financial planning and analysis including ad-hoc financial analysis and modeling.
* Introduction of reporting structures and systems in line with new requirements of legislation, circulars, value for money reports, etc.
* Providing financial advice and assistance to all departments to support the achievement of the Corporate objectives and support devolved budgeting structures.
* Promoting and assisting the implementation of good practice in Risk Management, Procurement, Value for Money, Shared Services, Efficiency and Effectiveness.
* Ensuring the adequacy of financial systems in the Council, in particular their support by adequate information systems.
* Implementing changes in existing financial systems as required.
* Managing an developing the team of staff in the Finance Function to ensure the highest standards of proficiency and work with a variety on non-finance teams.
* Operation and development of the Council’s debtor management and credit control functions.
* Cashflow management, treasury and loan reporting and management.
* Other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned from time to time.

**ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government has declared that the qualifications for the position of Financial Management Accountant shall be as set out hereunder: -

**Character:**

Candidates shall be of good character.

**Health:**

Each candidate must be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service.

**Education, Training, Experience, etc.:**

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms for the office –

1. Possess a professional accountancy qualification and be a member of a recognized body of accountants;
2. Have satisfactory experience of accountancy work, including management accounting and/or financial accounting;
3. Be experienced in the management of staff;
4. Possess knowledge of public sector finance.

**Essential Skills and Experience**

Candidates should also have:

* Knowledge of accounting methods, procedures, processes and contemporary management account techniques and principles;
* Extensive experience in leading, developing and implementing financial and resource allocation strategies that support Strategic Objectives;
* Experience in the identification of critical financial issues and of briefing senior management and/or Board of same;
* Extensive experience of analysis, conceptual thinking and problem solving in Finance and Business Management;
* Experience of staff supervision and performance management;
* Highly developed oral relationship management and interpersonal skills and a capacity to promote co-operation, trust and openness amongst staff and customers;
* Highly developed oral and written communication skills, including negotiation, report writing and presentation skills;
* Excellent working knowledge of integrated Financial Management Systems, Microsoft Excel and Access.
* Experience in risk management and procurement.

**It is desirable that candidates should also be able to demonstrate:**

* An ability to determine priorities and organise workloads in order to produce quality output within tight timeframes;
* Proven ability to work under pressure and think laterally in dealing with a wide range of issues;
* Knowledge of the Agresso/Milestone 4 and other related financial management systems.

**Candidates must also:**

* Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned;
* Be suitable on the grounds of character;
* Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned.

**Candidates, if successful, will not be appointed to the post unless they:**

* Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are, or may be required to be, performed;
* Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position.

**Key Competencies**

Key Competencies for the role of Financial Management Accountant.

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| Strategic Management and Change | Strategic Ability  Displays the ability to think and act strategically. Thinks long term. Can translate organisational mission and vision into clear specific and achievable objectives. Demonstrates innovation and creativity to secure successful strategic outcomes.  Political Awareness  Has a clear understanding of the political reality and context of the organisation.  Networking and Representing  Develops and maintains positive and mutually beneficial relationships. Builds networks of technical and professional contacts. Promotes and sustains an appropriate, positive, and cohesive image for the organisation it represents.  Bringing about Change  Effectively introduces change, fosters a culture of creativity in employees and overcomes resistance to change.  Demonstrates flexibility and an openness to change. |
| Delivering Results | **Problem Solving and Decision Making**  Can pinpoint critical information and address issues logically. Understands the context and impact of decisions made. Can act decisively with complex information and multiple stakeholders.  **Operational Planning**  Plans projects to determine rationale, objectives and deliverables, resource requirements, timelines and milestones, reporting requirements, and evaluation methods. Establishes high quality service and customer care standards.  Delivering Quality Outcomes  Promotes the achievement of quality outcomes in delivering services. Organises the delivery of services to meet or exceed the required standard through collaborating with, instructing and motivating employees and by managing resources effectively. |
| Performance through People | Leading and Motivating  Motivates others individually and in teams to deliver high quality work and customer focused outcomes. Develops effective and productive workplace relationships. Leads by example in terms of commitment, flexibility and a strong customer service ethos.  Managing Performance  Effectively manages performance. Empowers people to achieve or exceed organisational goals by delegating sufficient authority, responsibility and accountability.  Communicating Effectively  Has highly effective verbal and written communication skills.  Presents ideas effectively to individuals and groups. |
| Personal Effectiveness | Relevant Knowledge  Keeps up to date with current developments, trends and best practice in their area of responsibility. Demonstrates the required specialist knowledge, understanding and training for the role. Has strong knowledge and understanding in relation to statutory obligations of Health and Safety legislation and its application in the workplace.  Resilience and Personal Well Being  Demonstrates appropriate and positive self confidence. Remains calm under pressure and operates effectively in an environment with significant complexity and pace.  **Integrity**  Behaves in an honest, trustworthy and respectful manner and is transparent, fair and consistent in dealing with others  **Personal Motivation, Initiative and Achievement**  Is enthusiastic about the role and sets challenging goals to achieve high quality outcomes. Is self motivated and persistent when faced with difficulties. Engages in regular critical reflection in order to identify how own performance can be improved |

Principal Conditions of Service

**The Office:**

This position is available on a whole time, temporary contract basis for a period of two years.

The holder of the office shall not engage in any gainful occupation, other than as an officer of a local authority, to such an extent as to impair the performance of his or her duties as an officer of a local authority or in any occupation which might conflict with the interests of the local authority or which might be inconsistent with discharge of his or her duties as a local authority officer.

**Salary**

The salary shall be fully inclusive and shall be as determined from time to time. The holder of the post shall pay to the Local Authority any fees or other monies (other than his/her inclusive salary) payable to or received by him/her by virtue of the post or in respect of any services, which he/she is required by or under any enactment to perform.

The salary scale effective from 1st April 2017 is €65,426, €65,506, €66,748, €69,031, €71,454, €73,850, €76,262 (maximum), €78,982, (1st LSI), after 3 years satisfactory service at maximum €81,675, (2nd LSI) after 6 years satisfactory service at maximum.

Entry point to this scale will be determined in accordance with Circulars issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

In accordance with Departmental Circular letter EL 02/2011, a person who is not a serving local authority employee on or after 1st January 2011, will enter the salary scale at the minimum point. Rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government policy.

**Residence**

The holder of the office shall reside in the district in which his or her duties are to be performed or within a reasonable distance thereof.

**Duties**

In accordance with Section 159(3) and (4) of Local Government Act 2001 an employee of the local authority shall perform the duties of the office and give the local authority under the general direction and control of the Chief Executive or of such other officer as the Chief Executive may from time to time determine, such appropriate services of executive, administrative or management nature as are required for the exercise and performance of any of its powers, functions and duties and to exercise such powers, functions and duties as may be delegated to him/her by the Chief Executive from time to time including the duty of servicing all committees that may be established by the local authority and such duties as may be required in relation to the area of any local authority. The holder of the office will, if required, act for an officer of a higher level.

**Hours of attendance**

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 37 hours gross per week. The successful candidate will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of his/her duties subject to the limits set down in working time regulations. The rate of remuneration payable covers any extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

**Annual Leave**

The annual leave allowance for the position of Financial Management Accountant is 30 days. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the public service, is based on a five day week and is inclusive of the usual public holidays.

**Sick Leave**

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars.

Officers who will be paying Class A rate of PRSI will be required to sign a mandate authorizing the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts directly to the Local Authority. Payment during illness will be subject to the officer making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

**Superannuation contributions:**

Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority who are liable to pay the Class D rate of PRSI contribution will be required, in respect of their superannuation, to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 5% of their pensionable remuneration.

Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority, who are liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution will be required in respect of their superannuation to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 1.5% of their pensionable remuneration plus 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children).

All persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority are required, in respect of the Local Government (Spouses and Children’s Contributory Pension) Scheme, 1986, to contribute to the local authority at the rate of 1.5% of their pensionable remuneration or net pensionable remuneration, whichever is relevant and in accordance with the terms of the Scheme**.**

Persons who become pensionable officers of a local authority for the first time on or after 1 January 2013 are liable to pay the Class A rate of PRSI contribution and are required in respect of superannuation to contribute at the rate of 3.5% of net pensionable remuneration (i.e. pensionable remuneration less twice the annual rate of social insurance old age contributory pension payable at the maximum rate to a person with no adult dependant or qualified children) plus 3% of pensionable pay

**Retirement**

Effective from 1st January 2013, the Single Public Service Scheme applies to all first-time new entrants to the public service, as well as to former public servants returning to the public service after a break of more than 26 weeks. Retirement age is set initially at 66 years; this will rise in step with statutory changes in the State Pension Contributory (SPC) age to 67 years in 2021 and 68 years in 2028. Compulsory retirement age will be 70.

For appointees who are deemed not to be “new entrants” as defined in the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004, the minimum retirement age is 60 and the maximum retirement age is 65.

For Class A “new entrants‟ as defined in the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004 the minimum retirement age is 65 with no maximum retirement age.

**Pension Accrual**

A 40-year limit on total service that can be counted towards pension where a person has been a member of more than one existing public service pension scheme would apply. This 40-year limit, which is provided for in the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and OtherProvisions) Act 2012 came into effect on 28 July 2012. This may have implications for any appointee who has acquired pension rights in a previous public service employment.

**Pension Abatement**

If the appointee has been previously employed in the Civil or Public Service and is in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during his/her employment, that pension will be subject to abatement in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012.

**Start date:**

**Any person, to whom an appointment is offered, shall be required to take up such appointment within a period of not more than one month.** If he/she fails to take up appointment within such period or such longer period as the Council in its absolute discretion may determine, the Council shall not appoint him/her.

***IMPORTANT NOTICE:*** *The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.*

**Selection Process**

**How to Apply**

Applications should be made via application form to Human Resources Department, Laois County Council, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Application forms are also available for download onlinethrough [www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie). All sections of the form must be fully completed.

**Closing Date**Your application must be submitted not later than 4.00pm on Friday 24th November 2017. Applications will not be accepted after this date.

**Selection Process**The Selection Process may include the following:

* Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application;
* a preliminary interview, which may also include a presentation;
* a competitive interview, which may also include a presentation;

**Shortlisting**Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While you may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the local authority may decide that a number only will be called to interview and a shortlisting process may take place.

**Other important information**

Laois County Council will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

**Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn**

Candidates who do not attend for interview when and where required by Laois County Council, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as is required in regard to any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.