

Non-Executive Advisor to Harrow Council Cabinet**Background and Specification**

The Council sees the role as important in:

- (a) Ensuring the voluntary sector is at the heart of all decision making in the Council
- (b) Demonstrating its commitment to wanting to work closer to the voluntary and community sector in Harrow
- (c) Building a stronger working relationship across Harrow.
- (d) Ensuring greater transparency around the workings of the Council

The VCS Forum sees this role as key to ensuring a better understanding by the Council of the needs of the voluntary and community sector. It is an opportunity for the sector to influence the Council's senior executive body in decisions affecting the sector, and will require a thorough understanding of the sector's needs, coupled with the ability to articulate these persuasively to the Cabinet. The advisor will be appointed by the Leader of the Council and accountable to the Chair of the VCS Forum.

Strict Criteria

The advisor must:

- Not have held any Party Political Membership for the past 5 years (Impartiality)
- Not have been an elected Councillor for the past 5 years (Impartiality)
- Must not already be a VCS representative or co-optee on any other Council affiliated committee /Panel e.g. Health & Well Being Board & TARSAP etc (Objectivity)
- Must be prepared to sign a declaration of interest to be publicly available (Transparency)
- Not be permitted to meet with any Administration or Opposition Councillors to discuss tactical approaches / questioning for Cabinet meetings
- Meet the qualification criteria of a member such as : live or work within the borough, be eligible to vote, not to be a council employee, not to have been convicted of an offence for which they received a sentence of imprisonment for more than 3 months in the last 5 years. Not be subject to a bankruptcy order or any other debt relief order.

NB: The Non-Executive Advisor to Cabinet does not have voting rights during the meetings and is completely independent. This also excludes appointees from participating in the Harrow Council 'Call-In' process. The appointment will be reviewed annually.

Selection and financial allowance

The Voluntary Sector Forum will invite expressions of interest and if necessary run a selection panel. The successful candidate will be formally invited to join the Cabinet as a non-voting advisor by the Leader of the Council on an annual basis, in line with constitutional requirements. The role is voluntary, but due to the volume of work, which is expected to require a commitment of up to 25 hours per month, an allowance of up to £6,780 per annum will be made available via the Voluntary Sector Forum.

Training

Training will be provided for the advisor particularly in relation to: the code of conduct, data protection, freedom of information, register of interests, predetermination, avoidance of bias.

Role of Leader

Within the Council Constitution the Leader has the authority to remove or replace any member of Cabinet at any time as s/he wishes, in the best interests of the Council. Should the Non-Executive Advisor to Cabinet be removed, the allowance ceases immediately.

Further Details

The Non-Executive Advisor to Cabinet role will require:

- Attendance at all monthly Cabinet meetings starting at 6.30pm (excluding August)
- Attendance at any special Cabinet meetings which may be called (ad-hoc)
- Playing an active part where required in Cabinet meeting proceedings
- Attending relevant cabinet report briefings
- Feeding back to the wider VCS on a monthly basis except on confidential matters
- Ensuring that all members of the VCS Forum have the opportunity to input comments, suggestions and questions to the Advisor prior to Cabinet meetings
- Attending ad hoc meetings in order to further represent the wider VCS
- Reading all paperwork on a monthly basis and work with Councillors and Council officers on behalf of the VCS and wider community
- Prior to taking up the role, the advisor will be expected to sign a declaration of interest form which will be made publicly available in order to ensure full transparency
- To sign a confidentiality agreement with Harrow Council, as confidential 'Part II' information will be circulated to any appointee. This could include registering as a data protection act responsible user
- To use a Council email address
- To agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Members and to take legal advice which will be provided where necessary. To agree not to attend meetings or items on meetings where there is a perception of predetermination or bias.
- To act as an independent voice for Harrow's voluntary & community sector at Cabinet meetings

The Advisor will only be able to attend full Council in his/her capacity as a member of the public. S/he will not be able to call in Cabinet items or to be part of any call in and will not be able to ask public questions at Cabinet meetings.

The appointment will be subject to a satisfactory DBS search.

For further information please contact Shona Duncan, sduncan@wspld.org or Gerry Devine, devines@dsl.pipex.com

Expressions of interest should be submitted in writing to Carol Foyle, Chair of Harrow Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, carolfoyle@hotmail.com to arrive not later than 09.00 on Monday 12th February.