



Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	14 September 2023
Subject:	Appointment of Portfolio Holder Assistants
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Jessica Farmer - Interim Director of Legal and Governance Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Job Description of Portfolio Holder Assistant

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the proposals by the Leader of the Council for named Portfolio Holder Assistants and their area of responsibility under the identified Cabinet Member.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to approve:

- (1) the appointment of the identified Portfolio Holder Assistants and responsibilities and note that these supersede previous appointments;
- (2) the payment of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to the Portfolio Holder Assistants from 14 September 2023.

Reason: (for recommendations) To enable the support to Cabinet Members in terms of information provision and management, to contribute to and ensure an effective decision-making framework as part of the democratic process.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the elected Leader of the Council to notify the information set out below:

- name of Deputy Leader of the Council;
- names of Cabinet Members and their delegated authorities (ie Portfolios).

2.2 The Cabinet may also appoint Portfolio Holder Assistants without any decision-making powers, to assist Cabinet Members in undertaking the full extent or part of their roles effectively. Details of appointments are set out below for approval. A relevant generic job description is attached at Appendix 1 to fully outline the extent of their duties. It is recommended that the level of SRA payment of £2,267 per annum will be effective from the date of the Cabinet meeting.

2.3 The Leader of the Council has indicated that he wishes to amend the current Portfolio Holder Assistant appointments.

Portfolio Holder Assistants

The following Councillors are proposed as Portfolio Holder Assistants, without any formal decision-making powers.

Portfolio Holder Assistant	Identified Remit	Responsible Cabinet Member
Cllr Chris Baxter	Strategy	Cllr Paul Osborn
Cllr Philip Benjamin	Planning and Regeneration	Cllr Marilyn Ashton
Cllr Janet Mote	Customer Experience and Civic Pride	Cllr Stephen Greek
Cllr Matthew Goodwin-Freeman	People (Children and Adult Services)	Cllr Hitesh Karia/Cllr Pritesh Patel
Cllr Nitesh Hirani	Business and Employment	Cllr Norman Stevenson
Cllr Kuha Kumaran	IT	Cllr Stephen Greek
Cllr Nicola Blackman	Infrastructure and Highways	Cllr Anjana Patel
Cllr Vipin Mithani	Community Safety	Cllr Anjana Patel
Cllr Zak Wagman	Finance	Cllr David Ashton

Options considered

Cabinet are asked to determine whether or not they wish to make changes to the Portfolio Assistant appointments made in May 2023.

Ward Councillors' comments n/a

Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.
n/a

Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications.

Legal Implications

The Council's Constitution provides for the appointment of Portfolio Holder Assistants. The role has no decision-making powers in relation to the Portfolio, whether or not the relevant Portfolio Holder is absent. Portfolio Holder Assistants shall not participate in or vote on the scrutiny of matters within their identified remit as approved by Cabinet.

Financial Implications

The Portfolio Holder Assistant role attracts an SRA (Special Responsibility Allowance) of £2,267 per annum. Only one SRA payment may be made to a Member, in addition to the Basic Allowance. The cost of the SRAs will be contained within the budget for Members' allowances.

There are no additional costs as a result of this proposal as the cost of the SRAs is already funded within the existing budget for Members' allowances.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no direct equalities implications.

Council Priorities

Portfolio Assistants support Cabinet Members in delivering the Council's Priorities which are as follows:

1. **A council that puts residents first**
2. **A borough that is clean and safe**
3. **A place where those in need are supported**

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Sharon Daniels

Signed by the Chief Financial Officer

Date: 16 August 2023

Statutory Officer: Jessica Farmer

Signed by the Monitoring Officer

Date: 6 September 2023

Chief Officer: Alex Dewsnap

Signed off by the Managing Director

Date: 6 September 2023

Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta

Signed by the Head of Procurement

Date: 15 August 2023

Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns

Signed on behalf of the Head of Internal Audit

Date: 16 August 2023

Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

EqIA carried out: NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Alison Atherton, Senior Professional Democratic Services email: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: [Council's Constitution](#)

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO

APPENDIX 1

Job Description - Portfolio Holder Assistant

A Portfolio Holder Assistant (PHA) may be appointed to support a Portfolio Holder or Portfolio Holders in carrying out their duties in a variety of ways. For example:

- (a) A PHA may be appointed to assist a Portfolio Holder in all his/her duties or to assist in a particular specific area.
- (b) A PHA may be appointed to assist several Portfolio Holders in a particular specified area which is covered by more than one Portfolio Holder.
- (c) A PHA may be appointed to assist two or more Portfolio Holders in different specified areas.

On appointment, the specific duties of the PHA must be specified and will also be subject to the following general considerations. PHAs have no decision-making powers.

Within their specified duties, PHAs will:

1. Keep abreast of best national practice and new initiatives and brief the Portfolio Holder accordingly.
2. Assist the Portfolio Holder in establishing and maintaining professional, effective and efficient working relationships with opposition groups, Chairs of Committees and with other Councillors.
3. Undertake such responsibilities as may arise, or be required, from time to time other than decision-making.
4. Deputise, as required, for the Portfolio Holder within the limits or conditions set by the Portfolio Holder where this does not require direct Executive decision taking.
5. Assist the Portfolio Holder to manage their workload and deal with such issues or projects (whether long term or time limited) as shall be agreed with them.
6. Develop direct, effective working contacts with Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service and their staff and external partners, and assist the Portfolio Holder with maintaining effective policy and management links with them.
7. Act as a point of contact for the Portfolio Holder within the relevant political group.
8. Advise and support the Portfolio Holder on particular and ad hoc issues and opportunities arising from their own participation in Council activity and externally, and also on strategic issues.
9. Help to promote specific media opportunities relating to key projects, with regular feedback to the Portfolio Holder.