

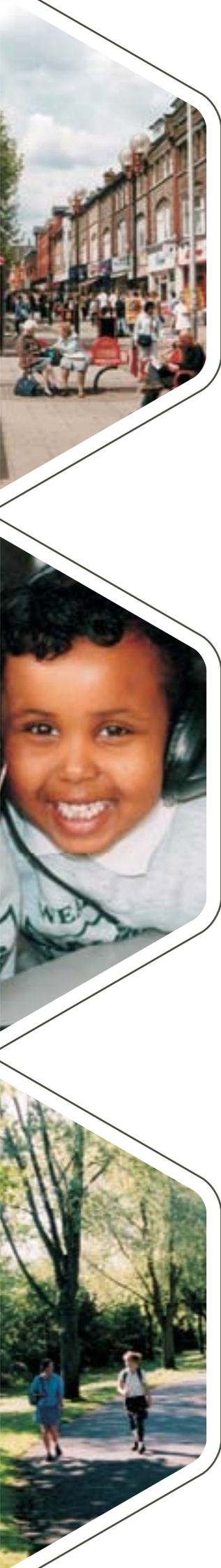


London Borough of Harrow

Chief Executive

Candidate Information Pack





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Introduction

BOB SHANNON, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



Dear Candidate

Thank you for expressing an interest in these posts of with the London Borough of Harrow.

We are proud of our achievements in this Borough for a number of reasons. The Council is, firstly, in the vanguard of change in embracing the Government's Modernising Agenda. Look no further than our Best Value Pilot Status and our Beacon Award as evidence that this Council has a record of performance to match any Authority in the country.

Harrow also has a unique Partnership with all public, private and voluntary sector agencies, which goes far beyond consultation. We have matured into an arrangement whereby joint commissioning, financing and accountability are features of many of our projects. You would have a key part to play in our modernising agenda both in corporate and service terms. If you talk to our stakeholders they will confirm that Harrow makes a difference rather than just talking about it!

Until recently, when he took up the position of Chairman and Chief Executive of the Commission for Local Government Administration, Tony Redmond held both of the statutory roles of Chief Executive and Director of Finance.

As part of our continued drive for modernisation and the implementation of new executive and Governance arrangements we have now decided to split the two roles and to re-shape our top management team. This team is already one of the smallest in the country. These are in effect new posts with new roles to take on and define.

The challenges laid down not only by the consequential restructuring of the Council but also by the Modernisation Agenda and a real commitment to the continuous improvement of services will prove tough - but I believe they will be immensely rewarding and stimulating to the high calibre individuals we seek for these roles.

Harrow offers a stimulating, exciting and supportive environment within which to work and the corporate philosophy is well developed in delivering the Council wide goals of the Authority.

I very much hope that you will consider putting forward a serious application to join an organisation which is at the very cutting edge of fundamental change in local government.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Bob Shannon
Leader of the Council

About Harrow



Harrow is an attractive suburban London Borough covering 19 square miles in North West London. It has a population of around 220,000 and about 81,000 households.

It has splendid transport links to central London, ten miles away, plus the M1, M40 and M25 motorways and Heathrow Airport.

The Borough is an exciting mix of prosperous business activity and rural peace and its population enjoys all the benefits of a diverse culture. It has a rich and diverse history.

The London Borough of Harrow comprises the town of Harrow itself, together with communities including Harrow on the Hill, Hatch End, Pinner, Rayners Lane, Stanmore and Wealdstone. It boasts modern shopping and entertainment facilities, a leisure and fitness centre and sports grounds.

Major employers in the town include Kodak, BAe Systems, and First National Bank as well as the Council itself. Around 60,000 people work in the Borough in more than 7,000 businesses. The Borough's schools are of a high quality producing above-average examination results. Recorded crime is amongst the lowest in London, and healthcare facilities are excellent, with Northwick Park Hospital and Edgware General Hospital in easy reach.

The London Research Centre 2001 ethnic group projections estimate that 38% of Harrow's population is from an ethnic minority.

In 1997 Harrow was selected as a Best Value Pilot and in 1999 was selected as a Beacon Council for its innovative PFI project in Revenues and Benefits. A Beacon submission has been made for this year for Promoting Racial Equality.

The Council has also received Charter Marks in Housing, Renovation Grants and Animal Services.

liP has been achieved in the Chief Executive's Department, Education Services, Environmental Health Services and Environmental Services.

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Organisation and Structure

About The Council

The Council was first formed in 1934 as the Harrow Urban District Council and became a London Borough in 1965 following the London Government Act 1963. It is the only Borough to have retained its Middlesex boundaries. Being an outer London Borough Harrow is responsible for the provision of a wide range of public services including education, housing, social services, highways and recreation and local planning. The Authority employs approximately 5,500 staff in the following departments: Chief Executive's,

Finance & I.T., Environmental Services, Education and Social Services.

The administrative headquarters of the Council is the Civic Centre, Station Road, and Harrow. Civic Centre is a modern building that is accessible for wheelchair users. There are staff restaurant facilities. Car parking is available, including car parking bays for people with disabilities, which are situated close to the main entrance. There are also Social Services establishments, Schools and other outlying buildings where Council employees work.

Political Composition

In May 1998, 63 Councillors were elected to serve Harrow Borough Council for a four-year period. The composition of the parties is currently:

- 32 Labour
- 20 Conservative
- 9 Liberal Democrats
- 2 Independent Resident

In May 2002 the whole Council will be subject to the re-election.

The Council was one of the first to implement Cabinet Government. Nearly all the powers of the Authority are devolved to a 17 member Cabinet. The only other major committees taking executive decisions are the Planning Committee and the Social Services (Ratification) Committee. Cabinet meets monthly. There is also a separate Scrutiny Committee (which also currently has responsibility for propriety matters).

What marks out the system in Harrow as different from nearly all other Cabinet systems operating in other authorities is that the Cabinet has representatives from all the political groups – it is not a one-party system.

New Political Arrangements

Proposed Arrangements

Our consultation with local residents resulted in 41% supporting a Leader and Cabinet and a total of 55% supporting one or other of the mayoral options. The Council decided it was right to give electors the opportunity to decide whether or not a directly elected Mayor and Cabinet is the right model for Harrow, and an all-postal referendum will take place on 6 December 2001. Should the people decide against a directly elected Mayor, the Council's fallback position is a Leader and Cabinet.

The New Constitution

The proposals for the new constitution have been sent to the Secretary of State. Elements around the structure of the new executive will be defined by an incoming Mayor or by the Council, if the electorate reject the mayoral option. The Council favours holding all meetings in public, whether or not key decisions will be taken.

The proposals provide for an overview and scrutiny committee and four scrutiny sub-committees. The remit of the four sub-committees is based on the four themes of the Harrow Partnership Initiative.

The Council will establish a Standards Committee of 8 people in December 2001. Two of the eight members will be independent members. Apart from the areas of responsibility prescribed within the 2001 Act, this committee will have oversight of the constitution, will evaluate its working and make proposals for change as necessary.

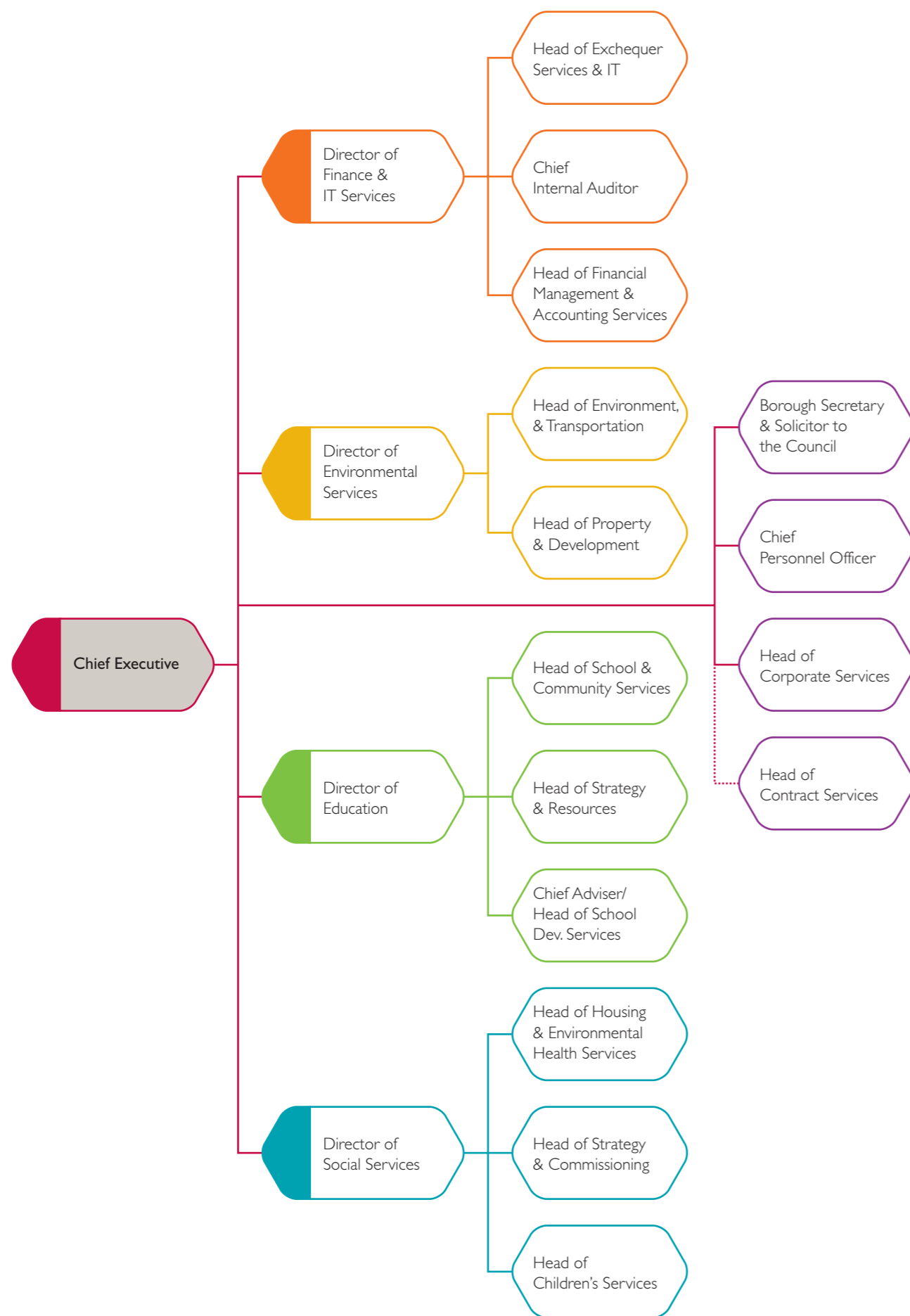
The new executive arrangements will be formally approved by Council in April 2002 and will come into effect after the May 2002 local elections. It is planned that sections of the constitution will be agreed by the Council between December and April 2002 as appropriate and for the entire document to be approved in April 2002.

Organisation and Structure

The Council is organised into 5 departments each of which is headed by a Director; these are:

- Chief Executive's
- Education
- Environmental Services
- Financial & I.T. Services
- Social Services, Housing and Environmental Health

The Directors together with the Chief Executive form the Chief Executive's Board (CEB). CEB meets with the Heads of Service on a monthly basis to oversee the management of the organisation.



Chief Executive's Department

The Chief Executive's Department provides the main corporate and support services for the organisation.

The Chief Executive's Department has a net spend of around £15million and employs 652 staff in the following key areas:

- Law and Committee Administration, Registration of Birth Deaths and Marriages, Electoral Registration and Electors and Local Land Charges.
- Corporate Services – Drug Action Team, Harrow Partnership, Media and Communications, Policy, Performance Management and Best Value and Community Safety.
- Personnel Services – Corporate & Departmental Personnel Teams, Central Training Unit, Employment Development Unit, Occupational Health, Health and Safety, Workplace Nursery and Payroll & Pensions Services.
- Contract Services – Refuse, Street Cleansing, Ground Maintenance, Transport Services, Security Services, Parking Enforcement, Civic Amenity Site and Catering.

Education Department

The remit of the Education Service is wider than its responsibilities for local schools. The Service Provides:

- Library Services
- Arts & Leisure Services
- Community & Youth Services
- Student Support Unit

The Department has a net revenue budget of £91 million, which compares to an overall Standard Spending Assessment of £90 million.

Of the school's budget (86%) has been delegated or devolved to schools.

Harrow provides statutory (pre-16) education in 3 stages:

- First Schools, for pupils aged 4–8
- Middle Schools, for pupils aged 8–12
- High Schools, for pupils aged 12–16

There are 19 First Schools, 19 Middle Schools and 18 combined First and Middle Schools in the borough. There are 10 High Schools, 7 Co-Educational Schools, one single sex Community School and two Roman Catholic High Schools, one for girls and one for boys.

Post 16 education in Harrow is provided through tertiary and sixth form college systems.

There are three Special Schools in Harrow.

The Education Services Strategic Plan was determined in 1998 for a 4 year period following extensive consultation with all parties with the Harrow Education Community. The plan is reviewed annually.

The prime focus for the department continues to be the achievement in schools. This has been particularly reinforced by the process of a LEA Inspection, which has considered in depth, the LEA's work in support of school improvement. A recent Ofsted and Audit Commission Inspection provided the opportunity for an external perspective on our own self-review

processes and it was reassuring that the outcomes produced no surprises.

Another key factor in the drive to sustain and develop standards in schools is the recruitment and retention of teaching staff. The year has seen growing difficulties in this area in a number of Harrow Schools, which, to a great extent, mirror the experiences of schools in other London and SouthEast England LEA's.

Environmental Services

Environmental Services plays a key role in promoting environmental and economic wellbeing and delivering the commitments in the Council's Environmental Statement: Harrow Council is committed to continuously improving the quality for the people of Harrow through its role as a community leader and as an employer and service provider.

The Department has a net spend of £43 million revenue and manages £10.5 million capital employing 267 staff in the following key areas:

- Planning and Building Control
- Waste Management
- Transportation
- Parks and Countryside
- Highways, CCT and Street Lighting
- Engineering Services
- Parking and Highway Enforcement
- Design and Building Services
- Property & Valuation
- Economic Regeneration and Funding



the commitment to making a difference. The size, organisation, structure, resources or abilities of partner organisations do not determine its place in the partnership structure. All partners are seen as being there to make the best possible contribution that they can.

The Partnership gains direction from meetings of all partners, usually referred to as stakeholders. An annual conference is held where all partners come together to agree priorities and to consider ways of working. The conference has national recognition and the delegates last year were joined by no less than five government ministers.

The Partnership is based around four theme areas, with the recognition that some issues cross two or more themes. The themes are:

- Strengthening Communities
- Lifelong Learning
- Health and Social Care
- Environment and Economy.

To date each of the themes has been co-ordinated by a Strategy Group whose task was to stimulate the work of the partnership in that theme. The Strategy Group acted on behalf of the stakeholders in promoting a series of key priorities. The Strategy Groups have had various degrees of success with the initiatives they have been involved in.

In order to increase success and be able to clearly show the impact of partnership initiatives upon the quality of life of those living and working in Harrow, it has recently been agreed with partners that the four Strategy Groups will be reconstituted as Project Groups. The Project Groups will be much more action orientated with work plans containing clear targets against which regular progress reports will be produced. Work plans will be directly linked to the joint community planning process that involves every resident in Harrow endorsing key priorities that together form the Harrow Community Plan.

Where the membership of a Project Group has the capacity and resources to complete a project on their work plan then a Task Group will be formed to do so. Where capacity does not exist then resources will be sought from the Partnership Steering Group so a Task Group can be sent up. All Task Groups will report back to their appropriate Project Group on their progress within a standard format.

A steering group involving all key agencies, representatives of voluntary organisations, minority groups and the private sector meets to ensure continuity and resolve duplication or conflict. The steering group seeks to promote a range of working methods.

Joint consultation is a hallmark of the partnership. Partners are invited to consultation meetings through local Partnership Area Forums, which

provide the opportunity for the public to participate with the partners in a joined up way which ensures that the public are involved in a cohesive, thought through approach.

The Partnership doesn't just meet and talk. Its successes include the development of a major project on information sharing and promoting benefits, which has attracted substantial Government funding. Multi agency forums have been formed to deal with issues of racial harassment, crime, domestic violence and many other social issues. The Partnership has promoted joint working in health improvement, summer universities, local purchasing, anti-poverty initiatives and environmental projects.

Following recent government guidance on the requirement for the establishment of Local Strategic Partnerships it is proposed that the Partnership becomes the local LSP for Harrow.

Beacon Status

The Council is proud to have been awarded Beacon Status in the first year of operation of this scheme. Its two submissions in year two were close runners up and were commended by the Beacon evaluation group. This year the Council has submitted an application under the heading of 'Promoting Race Relations' and this reflects the excellent consultative work being undertaken in a borough with a very significant ethnic minority population.

Public Service Agreements

The Council was unsuccessful in achieving pilot status for PSA but was fortunate to be awarded the opportunity to shadow another London Borough as it developed its processes. The Council is currently preparing to bid for PSA status in mid June of 2002.



Harrow's Finances

The Council's overall financial position is sound. Total net expenditure this year is estimated to be £192m and the Council Tax is £788.07 at Band D.

Harrow operates tight financial and budgetary control against a background of increasing demand for services and restricted central government grant. Its unit costs are generally low and its financial performance is good. General Fund Balances currently stand at about £5m, which are recognised by the Council to be at the lower end of the spectrum. The Council's debt is some £173m and investments (most relating to unapplied capital receipts) amounts to £86 million.

Council Tax collection rates are amongst the highest in London at 98%. We are a vF site for Benefits and DIP and Workflow operates in both revenues and benefits.

The budget for next year is being constructed with particular pressure in Education and Social Services in mind and exercises are currently being undertaken to achieve a balance between quality service provision and a reasonable increase in Council Tax.