

Parental Leave Policy for Members

1. Aim of the Policy

- 1.2 This policy sets out members' entitlements to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.
- 1.3 The objective of the policy is to provide a positive environment for members with family responsibilities so that our cross-section of members are representative of our community. The policy will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of elected members. It will also assist with retaining experienced members and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

2. Leave Provisions of the Policy

- 2.1 Members giving birth are entitled to up to 6 months maternity leave from the due date, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required
- 2.2 In addition, where the birth is premature, the Member is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period. In such cases any leave taken to cover prematurity of 28 days or less shall be deducted from any extension beyond the initial 6 months.
- 2.3 In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases of prematurity of 29 days or more, additional leave may be taken by agreement, and such exceptional leave shall not be deducted from the total 52 week entitlement.
- 2.4 Members shall be entitled to take a maximum of 2 weeks paternity leave if they are the biological father or nominated carer of their partner/spouse following the birth of their child(ren). During this period Members will continue to receive their basic allowance and any special responsibility allowances without deduction.
- 2.5 A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to advise the Council of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave from Council.
- 2.6 Where both parents are Members leave may be shared up to a maximum of 24 weeks for the first six months and 26 weeks for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 52 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.
- 2.7 A Member who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency shall be entitled to take up to six months adoption leave from the date of placement, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required.

- 2.8 Any Member who takes maternity, shared parental or adoption leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six month period.
- 2.9 Any Member intending to take maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant notice requirements of the Council, both in terms of the point at which the leave starts and the point at which they return.
- 2.10 Any member taking leave should ensure that they respond to reasonable requests for information as promptly as possible, and that they keep officers and colleagues informed and updated in relation to intended dates of return and requests for extension of leave.
- 2.11 Absences from Council meetings during any period of Parental Leave will be noted as such, rather than being attributed to general absence.

3. Basic Allowance & Special Responsibility Allowance During Parental Leave

- 3.1 All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- 3.2 Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.
- 3.3 Where a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence that person shall receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment.
- 3.4 The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, during a period of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave shall continue for a period of six months, or until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the date when the member taking leave is up for election (whichever is soonest). At such a point, the position will be reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further six month period.
- 3.5 Should a Member appointed to replace the member on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowances shall apply.
- 3.6 Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on leave, or unless the Party to which they belong loses control of the Council during their leave period, they shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post, or to an alternative

post with equivalent status and remuneration which they held before the leave began.

4. Resigning from Office and Elections

- 4.1 If a Member decides not to return at the end of their maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave they must notify the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.
- 4.2 If an election is held during the Member's maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

5. Ward Duties

- 5.1 Members who take parental leave will be able to nominate another member to deal with local issues in their Ward. It will be the responsibility of the member to hold discussions with their preferred nomination to arrange this. Where this hasn't been possible, the member taking parental leave will need to raise this with their Political Group Leader.
- 5.2 Where a member has limited alternatives to nominate due to low political representation, the Leader will decide with the member the most appropriate way in which their ward duties can be covered.
- 5.3 Members are responsible for putting an out of office message redirecting queries to a designated member. However, if they still wish to respond to emails/correspondence whilst taking parental leave, they are at liberty to undertake this activity.

6. Parental Bereavement Leave

- 6.1 The Parental Leave and Pay Act will give all employed parents a day-one right to two weeks leave if they lose a child under the age of 18 or suffer a stillbirth from 24 weeks' pregnancy from April 2020. This right is extended to elected members.