

## Report of the General Purposes Committee held on 14 September 2023

**Present:** Councillor David Boothroyd (Chair), Ellie Ormsby, Aicha Less and Mark Shearer

### Councillors Parental Leave Policy

- (a) The Committee received a report presenting a revised parental leave policy for Councillors. It was noted that a review had been undertaken as the policy had not been appraised since the adoption of the original policy in September 2019, but was also in response to the 'Fairer Westminster' motion passed by Full Council on 28 June 2023. This motion committed the Council to "Review the Council's parental leave policy, setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances to ensure it as inclusive and fair as possible".
- (b) Members considered the proposed amendments to the policy and noted how they represented greater alignment with practice across London as well as clarifying and simplifying the process by which parental leave may be requested and handled.
- (c) The Committee was pleased to note that the amendments included:
  - Clarifying that members were entitled to 12 months leave, subject to the 'six month rule';
  - An extension to the length of time for the payment of any Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA);
  - Revision of the shared parental leave policy so that any Councillors who have partners, who were not Council Members, but were taking parental leave, were entitled to share that leave and be reimbursed appropriately; and
  - The inclusion of clearer processes on how Councillors apply for parental leave and expectations on what arrangements should be put in place when Councillors were taking this leave.
- (d) The Committee agreed that the proposed revisions to the Policy underscored the Council's commitment to creating a supportive work environment that recognised the diverse needs of members. It also reflected the Council's commitment to inclusivity and gender equality, enhancing diverse representation. Members were of the opinion that by offering enhanced parental leave, the Council would ensure members' well-being, foster a positive environment and promote sustainable, dedicated public service. Of particular importance was that the revised policy would strengthen the council's effectiveness, responsiveness, and connection with the community it served.

**Recommendation:**

That Full council be recommended to approve the revised Parental Leave Policy for Councillors, attached at Appendix A of the report, and it be adopted into the Council's Constitution as part of an Appendix to the Member's Allowances Scheme.

David Boothroyd, Chair

**Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Report to General Purposes Committee (14.09.23).