

## For publication

### **Elected Members Parental Leave Policy**

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Meeting:	Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee
Date:	30 January, 2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Governance
Report by:	Assistant Director, Policy and Communications

<b>Purpose of reviewing the topic</b>	To consider the proposed policy for parental leave for elected members
<b>What are the objectives of the review?</b>	To provide opportunity for members to consider and comment on the proposed policy for parental leave for elected members prior to its consideration by Cabinet and Council in February, 2020.
<b>Key Issues for Review</b>	Draft Parental Leave Policy and key considerations including financial and equality and diversity impacts.

#### 1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 There is at present no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. This applies to MPs as well as members. These policy proposals can therefore only currently be implemented on a voluntary basis.

1.2 The Chesterfield Borough Council Parental Leave Policy for Elected Members has been modelled on the Local Government Association's Women's Taskforce Parental Leave Policy. It aims to make it easier for prospective parents and the Council alike to plan for when members take parental leave.

## 2.0 **Current position and key milestones**

2.1 The Council wishes to support its members in carrying out their duties and therefore wishes to consider the voluntarily implementation of a parental leave policy that grants members periods of parental leave for maternity, paternity and adoption as set in out Section 2 of the Parental Leave Policy for Elected Members (Appendix 1).

2.2 The Parental Leave Policy for Elected Members will cover birth and adoption.

2.3 The objective of the proposed policy is to ensure that insofar as possible members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, that both parents are able to take leave, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for Cabinet Members and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during any period of leave taken.

2.4 The member's Group Leader will be consulted over assigning Ward casework and Ward matters for the period of absence.

2.5 In order to ensure members can take appropriate leave it is proposed that any member taking a period of parental leave will be entitled to receive their basic allowance in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Members in receipt of an SRA shall continue to receive this allowance in full whilst on

maternity, paternity or adoption leave, and 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.

- 2.6 A member taking parental leave, unless removed from their post at an Annual Meeting of the Council whilst on leave, or unless the group to which they belong loses control of the Council during their leave period, shall return at the end of their leave to the same post, or to an alternative post with equivalent status and remuneration which they held before their leave began.
- 2.7 An Equality Impact Assessment for the new Parental Leave Policy for Elected Members is attached at Appendix 2. No negative impacts have been identified and significant positive impacts identified for some protected groups.

### 3.0 **Barriers/obstacles**

- 3.1 At present there is no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. These policy proposals can therefore only currently be implemented on a voluntary basis, there is therefore no central government funding for these provisions.
- 3.2 Under the proposed policy members will continue to receive basic and any special responsibility allowances whilst taking parental leave. Special responsibility allowances are paid where members undertake particular roles, such as Chair of a Committee. If these roles require cover during parental leave absence the replacement member will be entitled to receive the appropriate special responsibility allowance for the period of the temporary appointment. It is anticipated that these additional costs will be funded from the existing budget set aside for all member allowances

within Democratic Services. This will, however, be kept under review as annual costs will clearly vary according to the types of role requiring cover and the frequency and duration of parental leave absences.

#### 4.0 **Future plans**

4.1 Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority members. It will also assist with retaining experienced members and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

#### 5.0 **Conclusion**

5.1 The Council wishes to support its members in carrying out their duties and therefore wishes to consider the voluntarily implementation of a parental leave policy that grants members periods of parental leave for maternity, paternity and adoption.

#### 6.0 **Suggested scrutiny activity**

6.1 To consider the proposed policy to inform Full Council decision in February 2020.

## Document information

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<b>Background documents</b>	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
None	
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	Parental Leave Policy for Elected Members
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment