

Upper Beeding Parish Council

COUNCILLOR EXTENDED AND PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Introduction

This Policy sets out Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental, adoption leave and other extended leave and relevant allowances.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that insofar as possible Members are able to take appropriate extended leave whether at the time of birth or adoption, or other circumstance as agreed by the Council and adequate arrangements are in place.

Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of Upper Beeding Parish Council. It will also assist with retaining experienced councillors, particularly women, and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

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 councillors and has been the subject of lengthy debate. This policy can therefore only currently be implemented on a voluntary basis. Discussions are ongoing about changing the law to enable compulsory provision, but until then these policies constitute best practice.

1. Leave Periods

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 Members shall be entitled to take a minimum 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).

1.5 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.

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1.6 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 50 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.

1.7 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 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. Basic Allowance

2.1 All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance (where taken) in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

3. Resigning from Office and Elections

3.1 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.

3.2 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, if appropriate, will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.