

Committee: **Council**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

Report Subject: **Elected Member Maternity, Paternity, Newborn Adoption, Parental and Adoption Leave (Family Absence Policy)**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Gemma Wasley, Service Manager Performance and Democratic**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To provide Elected Members with a Family Absence Policy which includes:

- Maternity absence;
- Newborn absence;
- Adopter’s absence;
- New adoption absence; and
- Parental absence.

The policy can be found at appendix 1.

The policy has been developed using the requirements as set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, subject to compliance with the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

2. **Scope and Background**

The aim of the policy has been developed to enable Elected Members to take appropriate leave for family absence reasons.

The Policy outlines the arrangements required for Elected Members when taking leave for the following reasons:

- **Maternity absence** - for the mother of a child, granted up to a maximum of twenty six weeks;
- **Newborn absence** - for the parent of a child other than the mother, for a period of up to two weeks during the first 56 days after childbirth;
- **Adopter’s absence** - for the adopter of a child, for a period of up to twenty six weeks;
- **New adoption absence** - for the partner of an adopter, for a period of up to two weeks; and
- **Parental absence** - for a member who becomes responsible for a child under the age of 14 (and does not meet the conditions for newborn

absence, adopter's absence or new adoption absence), for a period of up to three months.

Members are entitled to family absence as set out in legislation:

- Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011; and
- Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

This policy provides members with entitlements to enable members who have babies or become responsible for looking after children to be able to continue as members with recognised, legitimate, absence, in an open fashion.

Improved provision for parents and new parents should contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age, sex and background of local authority councillors. It should also support the retaining of councillors and making public office more accessible to people who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CLT/Committees/Other groups*

The Policy has been considered by the Monitoring Officer, Head of Democratic Services, Head of Organisational Development and CLT.

#### **Option 1**

For Council to approve and publish the Elected Member Maternity, Paternity, Newborn Adoption, Parental and Adoption Leave (Family Absence Policy) as set out in Appendix 1.

#### **Option 2**

For Council to suggest amendment to the Elected Member Maternity, Paternity, Newborn Adoption, Parental and Adoption Leave Policy (Family Absence Policy) as set out in Appendix 1, before approval and publication, noting that there are certain requirements that must be followed by law.

### 4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Policy supports arrangements for Elected Members and the Council's Corporate Plan priority, 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place'.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales outlines requirements of payments to members and this includes during family absence. There is no additional impact to budget from introducing the policy.

## 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The policy has been developed using the requirements as set out under legislation and supports continued arrangements for Elected Members in their roles.

## 5.3 ***Legal***

The policy has been developed using the requirements as set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, subject to compliance with the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

## 5.4 ***Human Resources***

As outlined in appendix 1 the Head of Democratic Services has a role to keep a record of all notifications and periods of family absence taken and will inform the Presiding Member, the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, and the leaders of each political group, and other recognised groups, of the authority.

## 5.5 ***Health and Safety***

There are no health and safety concerns with this report.

## 6. ***Supporting Evidence***

### 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

As outlined in appendix 1 the Head of Democratic Services has a role to keep a record of all notifications and periods of family absence taken.

### 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Elected Members have a duty to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently, while also balancing their personal and family lives. A family absence policy provides the necessary support and flexibility for Elected Members to manage their personal and professional obligations.

### 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Key Officers have also had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Strategy.

### 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The policy should support the diversity and representation of elected members from different backgrounds as part of future elections.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The policy is intended to support the well-being and performance of elected members, and to enhance their diversity and representation. The policy also reflects the changing needs and expectations within communities and the enhancement of the Council's democratic function.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Legislation as well as policies from other local authorities and the WLGA were considered in the development of the Blaenau Gwent Policy.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Key Officers have also had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Strategy.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

***N/A***

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (All decisions, policy reviews or policy implementation will now require a completed Integrated Impact Assessment) To note a screening template no longer needs to be completed***

The policy enables for Elected Members to take family absence supporting equalities.

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

7.1 ***State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements***

The Head of Democratic Services has a role to keep a record of all notifications and periods of family absence taken and will inform the Presiding Member, the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee, and the leaders of each political group, and other recognised groups, of the authority.

***Background Documents /Electronic Links***

- *Appendix 1 Elected Member Maternity, Paternity, Newborn Adoption, Parental and Adoption Leave (Family Absence Policy)*