



London Borough of Enfield

Report Title	Arrangements for the Leader's absence
Report to	Council
Date of Meeting	27 th September 2023
Executive Director / Director	Terry Osborne
Report Author	Claire Johnson
Ward(s) affected	N/A
Key Decision Number	'non-key'
Classification	Part 1 Public

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks approval for arrangements for the period of maternity leave taken by the Leader of the Council.

Recommendations

- i. Agree to increase the SRA of the Deputy Leader during the period of absence of the Leader on maternity leave as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to agree the start and end date for the increased allowance, after which date the SRA for the Deputy Leader will revert to its current level.

Background and Options

2. The Councils members allowances scheme provides for maternity, parental and adoption leave. A councillor will be entitled to take a leave of absence from all or part of their official duties for up to 6 months.
3. The members' allowance scheme ensures that during periods of maternity, parental or adoption leave, members continue to receive their basic allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) in full, and that 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.
4. If the Member appointed already holds a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowances shall apply, whichever is the higher.
5. During periods when the Leader is unavailable, and during the Leaders full-time absence on maternity leave, the Deputy Leader will be responsible for covering the day-to-day responsibilities of the Leader and will cover her Regeneration portfolio in addition to his existing portfolio responsibilities. The Deputy Leader will also chair the Cabinet and take any decisions which would otherwise have fallen to the Leader.
6. In recognition of the additional responsibilities of this role and in accordance with the Members Allowance Scheme, it is proposed that the Deputy Leaders SRA is increased to the level of Leader for the period whilst he is deputising for the Leader on maternity leave. This is in line with the members allowance scheme which recognises the need to appoint replacements to cover periods of maternity or paternity leave.
7. During the period of the Leader's part time return to her duties (from March 2024) it is understood that the Leader, whilst acting part-time, will resume all decision-making duties and aims to attend and chair Cabinet meetings. It is therefore likely that the increase in the Deputy Leaders SRA will last for just a few months, the end date to be determined by the Monitoring Officer, based on the resumption of duties by the Leader.

Preferred Option and Reasons For Preferred Option

8. The arrangements for the Leaders absence are in line with the members allowances scheme.

Financial Implications

9. The additional cost in allowances to cover the Leaders absence whilst on maternity leave is £913 per month.

Legal Implications

10. These have been addressed in the body of the report.

Equalities Implications

11. London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel have looked at barriers to being a councillor, and how it is important that obstacles to becoming a councillor should be removed wherever possible. The report of the IRP stated that members' allowances schemes should allow the continuance of Special Responsibility Allowances in the case of sickness, maternity and paternity leave in the same terms that the council's employees enjoy such benefits.
12. This would apply for the person covering the absence, in that they should be remunerated equally to the same level as the postholder they are covering.

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