



City of Westminster

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Title: **Council Meeting**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 20th September, 2023**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road,
London, NW1 5PT**

Members: **All Councillors are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting
for the transaction of the business set out.**

**In line with legislation Committee members will attend the
meeting in person. This meeting will be live streamed
through the Council's website.**

**Limited admission to the public gallery is available from
6.30pm. Please telephone if you are attending the meeting in
a wheelchair or have difficulty walking up steps. There is
wheelchair access via the Sammy Ofer Centre.**

**If you require any further information, please contact the
Committee Officer, Janis Best, Committee and Councillor
Support Manager.**

**Email: jbest@westminster.gov.uk Tel: 07971 920521
Corporate Website: www.westminster.gov.uk**

**11. REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:
COUNCILLORS PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY**

(Pages 3 - 4)

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following report which contains recommendations to the Council for approval and adoption.

**12. REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:
POLICY AND SCRUTINY REVIEW**

(Pages 5 - 6)

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following report which contains recommendations to the Council for approval and adoption.

**64 Victoria Street
London, SW1E 6QP
12 September 2023**

Chief Executive

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).

Report of the General Purposes Committee held on 14 September 2023

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

Policy and Scrutiny Review

- (a) The Committee considered the independent review that had taken place into policy and scrutiny at Westminster by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny ("CfGS"). It was recognised that it had been instigated to ensure the function met the high expectations of the Council, local communities and partners by providing the most effective and impactful scrutiny function possible. It was noted how the Scrutiny Commission agreed to establish a Task Group to work through each recommendation and following consensus the preferred option was now before the Committee.
- (b) Members were interested to learn how it had been recommended that the Policy and Scrutiny Committees be restructured and constituted based on strategic themes, which were important to the organisation and prioritised by scrutiny members. It was explained that this would represent a move away from the existing practice of constituting Committees solely in opposition to Cabinet Member portfolios. It was explained that this had caused committees to try to performance manage Cabinet Members and the Committee considered how it was felt this had led to a lack of focus with committees trying to do too much across sometime disparate portfolios of work. Instead, the Committee considered how the new thematic approach would allow scrutiny to take a more strategic approach to its work, focusing in on areas of major policy or service priority/change with a view to making impact through meaningful and timely recommendations to decision makers.
- (c) The Committee discussed the replacement of the existing Policy and Scrutiny Committee structure with a revised Policy and Scrutiny Committee structure and noted that if approved the new structure would take effect from 27 September 2023.

Recommendation:

That Full Council be recommended to approve:

- 1) The replacement of the existing Policy and Scrutiny Committee structure with a revised Policy and Scrutiny Committee structure as summarised in the report, and for this new structure to take effect from 27 September 2023, following the current round of committee meetings;
- 2) A revised Chapter 4 ("Policy and Scrutiny") of the Council's Constitution as set out at Appendix A of the report, including revised terms of reference for Policy and Scrutiny Committees, including the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and

- 3) The delegation of authority to the Monitoring Officer to make other minor amendments to provisions in the Constitution consistent with the contents of this report.

David Boothroyd, Chair

Background Papers

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