



Council
21 July 2021

ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ward(s) Affected: N/A

Motions on Notice 3

Report by the Director for Communities

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report before Council sets out a motion received from Councillor Dan Flower
- 1.2 Council is asked to deal with the motion under provisions set out in paragraph 14 of the Council Procedure Rules (under part 4 of the Council Constitution - Rules of Procedure).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the motion, upon being moved and seconded, be noted by Council and referred without debate to the Joint Governance Committee

3. Context

- 3.1 A motion on notice has been received from Councillor Dan Flower, (attached as Annex A).
- 3.2 The content of the motion is relevant to a matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties and which affects the District.

- 3.3 There is nothing substantive within the motion that would cause its rejection under the terms of the Constitution.
- 3.4 The motion before Council contains part of the subject matter that is within the remit of Joint Governance Committee as defined in para 14.4.1 and 14.4.3 of the Council's Procedure Rules. The motion includes a proposal for the Council to take any substantive action (Para 14.4.4). Therefore, it shall be moved and seconded, immediately noted by the Council and referred without debate to the Joint Governance Committee for consideration and determination.
- 3.5 If a motion on the agenda at Full Council is to be referred automatically to the Executive, a Regulatory Committee or another Council Committee, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.4, the proposer of the motion will confirm to the Chairperson their proposal of the motion as set out in the report before Council **without** a speech.
- 3.6 Where a motion has been referred by Full Council to the Joint Governance Committee, the mover, or the seconder in the absence of the mover, shall be entitled to attend the relevant meeting and explain the motion.

4. Issues for consideration

- 4.1 Motions considered by Full Council are done so under part 14 of the Council's Procedure Rules

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The motion has subject matter that comes within the remit of the Joint Governance Committee and should the Joint Governance Committee determine that the motion be accepted there may be financial implications in the future.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Rules concerning motions are set out in the Council's Constitution under paragraph 14 of the Council's Procedure Rules

Background Papers

None

Officer Contact Details:-

Chris Cadman-Dando

Democratic Services Officer

01903 221364

chris.cadman-dando@adur.gov.uk

Annex A

Proposer: Councillor Dan Flower

Seconder: Councillor Sharon Sluman

Parental leave - Having a child should not limit women's economic potential.

We would like to preface this motion by sharing our surprise that now, in 2022, we are required to bring a motion to council to advocate for a formal parental leave policy for our council.

Becoming a parent is a life changing moment. However, for many people, the joy of motherhood is tainted by the way in which society locates the responsibility for the caring role exclusively to the mother. In fact, women are three times more likely to shoulder the majority of childcare than men and this comes at a great personal and professional cost. This is an entrenched cultural hangover that is subsiding gradually as societal attitudes change. However, policy could do more to support and encourage that change.

While I am aware that councillors are not employees and strictly do not require consent or permission from the Council to take time off after becoming a parent, I do consider there should be a policy in place. This would support this leave of absence, in effect a parental leave policy for members, enabling a councillor to take a back seat in council proceedings and within their local community.

The absence of a policy would mean the community is left with reduced representation whilst the workload accumulates without the capacity to substitute the absent member and meet residents' needs. Finally, absence is exactly that: unqualified absence (and does not acknowledge parental leave). Therefore, it reflects poorly on the individual and impacts their future electoral success. As noted above, women are disproportionately disadvantaged by this, particularly in positions of leadership.

A lack of adequate parental leave should not be a barrier to public life and yet we see that in reality, it is. It is not coincidental that only 35% of councillors and only 17% of council leaders are women (Fawcett Society). In fact, it is unsurprising when only 7% of councils have a parental leave policy for councillors. If we truly appreciate and value diversity within our council, at all levels, we must make it accessible and this is a barrier we have the power to remove.

Elected officials deserve a policy that deals with these issues, and residents deserve the same level of representation during this time

We call on this council to adopt a best practice Parental Leave Policy and to lobby the national government for a change in legislation which would allow some flexibility for substitutions during councillor parental leave.