

## COUNCIL MEETING - 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 NOTICE OF MOTION

### **This Council notes:**

- That analysis of the 2018 Local Election results by the Fawcett Society found that only 34% of councillors in England are women, up 1% since 2017. Of the seats that were up for election in 2018, 38% went to women, up just 3 percentage points on 2014 when these seats were last contested;
- That across England, Labour has improved its representation since seats were last up for grabs, with 45% women compared with 40% in 2014, Liberal Democrat representation up from 34% to 36% whilst the Conservative Party saw a fall from 31% to 29% in the share of its councillors who are female;
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background, and that having a parental leave policy is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors;
- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.
- As of summer 2017, only 4% of councils in England and Wales have parental leave policies, according to research by the Fawcett Society;

### **Council further notes:**

- That Merton Council does offer full parental leave rights for councillors that mirrors those of council employees, but that this can be made much more explicit in the Constitution by adopting the LGA Labour Group's Women's taskforce parental leave policy
- That in order for councillors to be able to carry out their duties often they must claim for reimbursement of the dependent carers' allowance.

### **This Council resolves:**

- To adopt the parental leave policy drafted by the LGA Labour Group's Women's Taskforce to give all councillors an entitlement to parental leave after giving birth or adopting, and to have the full range of rights in the policy reflected in the constitution when the members' allowances scheme is renewed in February 2020;

- To ensure that councillors with children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate, and therefore raise the dependent carers allowance entitlement to the London Living Wage;
- To notify the LGA Labour Group that this council has passed a motion at full council to adopt the parental leave policy.

Cllr Laxmi Attawar

Cllr Joan Henry

Cllr Brenda Fraser