
Meeting: Council
Date: 27 November 2014
Subject: Leave of Absence
Report of: Cllr Jamieson, Leader of the Council
Summary: The report seeks Council's approval of absence for two Councillors.

Executive Member: Cllr James Jamieson, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer: Mel Peaston, Committee Services Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Biggleswade South and Parkside
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposed action does not fall under a particular Council priority.

Financial:

1. There are no financial implications.

Legal:

2. If a member of the Council fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, they cease to be a member of the authority unless the failure was due to some reason approved before the expiry of that period. This report seeks approval of those reasons.

Risk Management:

3. Not applicable

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Not applicable

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to nine protected characteristics including disability. The proposal to approve leave of absence will provide both councillors with an opportunity to return to their duties as and when their personal circumstances improve.

Public Health

6. Not applicable

Community Safety:

7. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council is asked to:

1. **approve the reason for Cllr Tim Woodward's absence from any meetings since 24 June 2014 as set out in paragraph 14 below, with the approval being for a period until the 4th day after the next local election;**
2. **approve the reason for Cllr Dr Rita Egan's absence from any meetings since 24 June 2014 as set out in paragraph 15 below, with the approval being for a period until the 4th day after the next local election.**

Requirement to attend meetings

10. Council Members are required to attend meetings, and if they do not meet the attendance requirement their membership of the Council ceases unless the Council has approved, prior to the expiry of six months from their last attendance, the reason for the non-attendance.
11. The Council's approval should state the reason to which the approval relates and the period for which it will run.

Period to which the approval relates

12. It is appropriate, in view of the elections to be held in May 2015, that the approval should relate to the timeframe applicable to membership of the Council of the other council members.
13. Persons not re-elected at the end of their term of office cease to be councillors on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election. It is therefore suggested that it would be appropriate for the approval of the reason for absence in respect of both parties to extend until that day.

Reasons for absence

14. Cllr Tim Woodward has suffered very poor health over the last year and is currently undergoing chemotherapy, the effects of which prevent him from taking part in Councillor duties.

15. Cllr Dr Egan has also suffered very poor health over the last year and has undergone surgery leading to the need for convalescence.

Period within six months of the next local elections

16. As the period from 27 November 2014, the date of the Council meetings, is within six months of the next local election, there is no requirement to hold a by-election if a Council member ceases to be a member.
17. Both Cllr Woodward and Cllr Dr Egan may be able to carry out some or all of their duties as Councillors as time goes on, subject to improvements in their health. If approval is not granted, and they are unable to attend any meetings before 24 December 2014 their membership would cease.
18. It is preferable for a Councillor to remain a member of the Council, and possibly able to perform duties as their health allows, than to allow vacancies on the Council to be created which would not be filled until the next local election.

Conclusion and Next Steps

19. Approval of the recommendations set out above would enable both Cllr Woodward and Cllr Dr Egan to remain members of the Council for the same period as other members, whether they do or do not attend any meetings.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

None