

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 5 July 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Mark Coxshall, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Barry Johnson and Fraser Massey

In attendance: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Mykela Pratt, Strategic Lead HR, Resourcing and Improvement
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager

6. Minutes

The minutes of the General Services Committee held on 15 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

7. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Paid Leave for Miscarriage

Officers presented the report. Cllr Kent asked whether the Council had compared the policy to private companies and not just local councils. Officers highlighted that the policy was very new within the workplace generally and they knew from evidence that private firms offered between 3 and 10 days for such leave, however, the Council contained its comparisons to other local councils in the report.

Cllr Holloway stated that women could bleed for 7 to 10 days after a miscarriage and therefore she suggested the leave should be extended to 10 days. Officers responded that the 5 days in the policy was the baseline for leave and there were other options available to extend this which included sick leave and compassionate leave. The manager would have discretion. It was clarified that sick leave for pregnancy issues did not count towards the usual absence triggers.

Cllrs Hebb and Coxshall supported the report and Cllr Holloway's view respectively. Cllr Kent likewise supported the report and moved that the policy be extended to cover 10 days absence not 5. Officers stated this could be implemented and drew members' attention to potential service impact.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Committee support the proposal to provide paid leave provision for employees who suffer a miscarriage.**
- 2. The provision be extended from 5 days to 10 days.**

10. Thurrock Regeneration Limited

Cllr Coxshall introduced the report giving a history of the issue coming to General Services Committee last year and the discussions that took place. Various conflicts of interest with board members in the past (who were also council officers) meant that he was supportive of option 1 in the report, namely to create an independent board to steer the body. He added that TRL could cover the commercial build aims of the council too.

Cllr Kent also supported option 1 and felt this arrangement would progress complex sites that were available for housing purposes.

Cllr Hebb also supported option 1 and suggested that update reports should return to the committee when suitable and through discussion with the committee it was felt an update report should come to them for review no less than six months a year.

Cllr Johnson thought the arrangements could work but noted that Members still needed to have the responsibility of where to build and that must be got right.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. That the Committee appoints the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery to attend the Shareholders meeting of TRL as the Council's nominated proxy**
- 2. That the Committee directs the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery to vote on behalf of the shareholder:**
 - 2.1 To agree the proposed future TRL governance and Board structure in consultation with the Director of TRL;**
 - 2.2 To agree that the Director of TRL can implement an agreed structure for the Board and TRL can commence the recruitment process of Directors to its Board;**
 - 2.3 To ensure Directors of TRL can undertake their statutory responsibilities to make decisions in the best interests of the company;**

2.4 To implement a revised Scheme of Delegation to provide certainty of governance and decision making for the company and the shareholders

3. An update report will return to the Committee when suitable but should be no less than a six month period.

The meeting finished at 6.23 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk