

Motion Title: Dependent Carers Allowance

Proposer: Councillor Smith

Secunder: Councillor Hemingway

Council notes the increasing challenge seen locally and nationally at increasing and maintaining the diversity of elected members in local government. This requires a consistent approach to resolving the challenges different groups of people face. The payment of allowances to elected members who are parents and carers helps to bring a wider range of people into public office and supports them in remaining there.

Council further notes that data from The Fawcett Society report Does Local Government Work for Women? and the Local Government Information unit (LGiU) makes clear that women councillors experience more barriers to holding office. These barriers include unpaid caring responsibilities, the timing of meetings and a lack of flexibility in how councils do business. Women councillors experience these barriers much more than their male counterparts. This has created an imbalance in local government throughout the country.

Council is justly proud of our record in supporting diversity and inclusion and encouraging people from all backgrounds to aspire to and assume public office and positions of leadership.

Council notes the recent report and recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel that Sandwell Council extend our existing member allowances scheme to include wider dependent carer responsibilities as well as removing the requirement to use the Council House Workplace Nursery.

Council therefore resolves to call on the Governance and Constitution Review Committee to bring forward proposals to amend and update our Dependent Carers Allowance Scheme, taking note of the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel and in line with the recommendation from the Fawcett Society as well as best practice from existing schemes around the country.