

**Barrow Borough Council
Council**

19 October 2021

**Request for Authorised Absence from Council and
Committee Meetings**

Report from: Head of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Jon Huck

Wards: Dalton South

1.0 Summary and Conclusions

1.1 That Council considers a request from Councillor Blezard for his absence from Council and Committee meetings to be authorised by the Council in accordance with section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council, in accordance with section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, authorises Councillor Blezard's absence from Council and Committee meetings until and including 26 January 2022 for the reasons set out in this report.

3.0 Background and Proposals

3.1 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires elected Members to have attended a qualifying meeting (generally a Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting) within 6 months of their last qualifying attendance. The Act makes provision for leave of absence to be granted if approved by the Authority prior to the expiration of the six month period.

3.2 Councillor Shaun Blezard is one of three elected members for the Dalton South Ward. The reason for Councillor Blezard's absence is due to having a clinically extremely vulnerable partner and he is currently not able to attend a Council or Committee period within 6 months of his last attendance at Council on 21 April 2021, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

3.3 Consequently, Councillor Blezard has requested that under section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Council approves a leave of absence up to and including 26 January 2022.

3.4 It is anticipated that Councillor Blezard's colleagues within the Dalton South area will be able to support him in dealing with any matters that residents within the area may wish to raise without the need to make any formal arrangements for temporary cover.

4.0 Consultation

The Group Leaders have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal and that due to the circumstances and the time constraints concerns, this matter should be considered at this meeting of Council.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 Council could decide not to approve the leave of absence. In essence, if the Council meeting on 19 October decides not to approve the leave of absence, Councillor Blezard would cease to be a member of the authority, in accordance with the relevant legislation should he fail throughout a period of 6 consecutive months from the date of his last attendance on 21 April 2021 to attend any meeting of the authority.

6.0 Contribution to Council Plan Priorities

6.1 Not applicable

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

There are no finance, resource or procurement implications arising from this report

Legal

7.1.3 The legal implications are set out in the report.

Equality and Diversity

7.1 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No.

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Councillor could decide not to approve the leave of absence.	Cllr Blezard would cease to be a member of the authority in accordance with the relevant legislation should he fail throughout a period of 6 consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority.	Council could grant the leave of absence requested

Contact Officers

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Appendices Attached to this Report – None

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
Nil	