

MEMBER INTERESTS

Part 2 – Member Code of Conduct

General Obligations:

10. Interest

10.1 You will register and disclose your interests in accordance with the provisions set out in Appendix A.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members of the Council. The register is publically available and protects you by demonstrating openness and willingness to be held accountable.

You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting which allows the public, Council employees and fellow Councillors know which of your interests gives rise to a conflict of interest. If in doubt you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in Appendix A of the Code of Conduct, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Advice from the Monitoring Officer:

On reading the agenda it is advised that you:

1. Consider whether you have any form of interest to declare as set out in the Code of Conduct.
2. Consider whether you have a declaration of any bias or predetermination to make as set out at the end of this document
3. Update Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer and or Deputy Monitoring Officers of any declarations you have to make ahead of the meeting and take advice as required.
4. Use the Member Interest flowchart to consider whether you have an interest to declare and what action to take.
5. Update the Chair at the meeting of any interest declarations as follows:

‘I have an interest in Item xx of the agenda’

‘The nature of my interest is therefore the type of interest is
DPI/ORI/NRI/BIAS/PREDETERMINATION

‘The action I will take is.....’

This will help Officer record a more accurate record of the interest being declared and the actions taken. You will also be able to consider whether it is necessary to send a

substitute Members in your place and to provide Democratic Services with notice of your substitute Members name.

Note: If at the meeting you recognise one of the speakers and only then become aware of an interest you should declare your interest and take any necessary action

6. Update your Member Interest Register of any registerable interests within 28days of becoming aware of the Interest.
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Ask yourself do you have any of the following interest to declare?

1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

A “Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” is any interest described as such in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and includes an interest of yourself, or of your Spouse/Partner (if you are aware of your Partner's interest) that falls within the following categories: Employment, Trade, Profession, Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Tenancies and Securities.

2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

An “Other Registerable Interest” is a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority; or
- b) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management.

3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

“Non-Registrable Interests” are those that you are not required to register but need to be disclosed when a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial

interest or wellbeing or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate that is not a DPI.

A matter “directly relates” to one of your interests where the matter is directly about that interest. For example, the matter being discussed is an application about a particular property in which you or somebody associated with you has a financial interest.

A matter “affects” your interest where the matter is not directly about that interest but would still have clear implications for the interest. For example, the matter concerns a neighbouring property.

Declarations and Participation in Meetings

1 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

1.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which include both the interests of yourself and your partner then:

Action to be taken

- **you must disclose the nature of the interest** at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, whether or not such interest is registered in the Council’s register of interests of Member and Co-opted Members or for which you have made a pending notification. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
- **you must not participate in any discussion** of that particular business at the meeting, or if you become aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting you must not participate further in any discussion of the business, including by speaking as a member of the public
- **you must not participate in any vote** or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting and
- **you must withdraw from the room** at this point to make clear to the public that you are not influencing the meeting in anyway and to protect you from the criminal sanctions that apply should you take part, unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

2 OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

2.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests i.e. relating to a body you may be involved in:

- **you must disclose** the interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, whether or not such interest is registered in the Council's register of interests of Member and Co-opted Members or for which you have made a pending notification. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
- **you must not take part in any discussion or vote** on the matter, but may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting
- **you must withdraw from the room** unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

3 NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

3.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting, which is not registrable but may become relevant when a particular item arises i.e. interests which relate to you and /or other people you are connected with (e.g. friends, relative or close associates) then:

- **you must** disclose the interest; if it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
- **you must not take part in any discussion or vote**, but may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting; and
- **you must withdraw** from the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

Dispensation and Sensitive Interests

A "Dispensation" is agreement that you may continue to participate in the decision-making process notwithstanding your interest as detailed at section 12 of the Code of the Conduct and the Appendix.

A "Sensitive Interest" is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the Member, or a person connected with the Member, being subject to violence or intimidation. In any case where this Code of Conduct requires to you to disclose an interest (subject to the agreement of the Monitoring Officer in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of this Appendix regarding registration of interests), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, if it is a Sensitive Interest in such circumstances you just have to disclose that you have a Sensitive Interest under S32(2) of the Localism Act 2011. You must update the Monitoring Officer when the interest is no longer sensitive, so that the interest can be recorded, made available for inspection and published.

BIAS and PREDETERMINATION

The following are not explicitly covered in the code of conduct but are important legal concepts to ensure that decisions are taken solely in the public interest and not to further any private interests.

The risk in both cases is that the decision maker does not approach the decision with an objective, open mind.

This makes the local authority's decision challengeable (and may also be a breach of the Code of Conduct by the Councillor).

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officers, if you need assistance ahead of the meeting.

BIAS

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. If you have been involved in an issue in such a manner or to such an extent that the public are likely to perceive you to be bias in your judgement of the public interest:

- a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
- b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
- c) you should leave the room.

PREDETERMINATION

Where a decision maker has completely made up his/her mind before the decision is taken or that the public are likely to perceive you to be predetermined due to comments or statements you have made:

- a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
- b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
- c) you should leave the room.



