

## Publication of Minutes & Draft Minutes

### Officers' Recommendation

**That the Minutes (draft and final) from Authority Meetings and Sub-Committee Meetings are published in accordance with the timetable as set out in the Officers' Paper.**

### Background

D&S IFCA has the aim to be as transparent as possible with information<sup>1</sup>. To meet this goal, the Authority has adopted both a Freedom of Information Policy and a Publication Scheme (Policy). The D&S IFCA website includes a selection of display pages and a Resource Library which delivers the Publication Scheme as an interactive system.

All Authority and Sub-Committee meetings are open to the general public. Notes are taken at all Authority and Sub-Committee meetings to create detailed minutes of the proceedings, including the decision making of Members.

It is standard practice for the Officers to produce draft minutes which remain unpublished until they are approved for accuracy at the following meeting. The draft minutes are therefore only available for Member's to view via direct circulation and posting on the Members' secure area of the website for a period of approximately three months. The recent training on D&S IFCA's Standing Orders, that was provided to both the Members and Officers by Devon County Council Democratic Services, highlighted that it would be possible to publish draft minutes, providing they were clearly marked "draft".

### Presentation & Version Control

There is a clear difference between draft minutes and the finalised minutes that have been approved for accuracy. This is achieved via the use of front covers on the minutes, watermarks, version control tables, and the electronic labelling of the documents (word & pdf). All draft minutes are assigned version control number beginning with zero and, when finalised at the following meeting, the version control box is amended as shown in the example below:

*Example - Version Control Table for Authority Minutes (March 2021 meeting):*

Version & Date	Comments
Version 0.1 (8th April 2021)	1st Draft of minutes completed for circulation to officer's present at the meeting for potential internal amendment and or additions.
Version 0.2	Sarah Clark reviewed and made additions/amendments
Version 0.3	Olga Pepper review and made additions/ comments
Version 0.4	MM comments
Final Version 1.0 20th July 2021	Minor amendments (spelling errors on pages 5 and 13) applied following the Authority meeting held on 16th July 2021.

In the above case, version 0.4 of the draft Authority minutes was circulated to all Members prior to the subsequent Authority meeting (16<sup>th</sup> July 2021). Following that Authority meeting, amendments were made to the draft minutes and then they were finalised and published as final minutes (version 1.0) on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

<sup>1</sup> D&S IFCA Freedom of Information Policy (March 2019)

## Website – Display Areas

To meet the requirements of the Publication Scheme (Policy), all finalised minutes are currently accessible on the website within Section B of the website Resource Library (public display). This will continue; however, the opportunity exists for these display areas to also host the draft minutes.



### Section B - Internal Practice & Procedure

Selected minutes (more recent) are also posted on the Members' Secure Area of the website, accessible via login details and password.

## Support by the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC)

During the B&PSC meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, the publication of minutes was raised by B&PSC Members. There was a consensus that the B&PSC minutes are of value, both as a record of decision making, but also to help inform an outside audience regarding the work and decision making of the B&PSC. It was highlighted by Members that publishing draft minutes could be advantageous if B&PSC members are asked to inform stakeholders about decisions taken or wish to potentially use the draft minutes as part of any correspondence with stakeholders. It was the opinion of the B&PSC that the publication of draft minutes should be raised at an Authority meeting.

## Timetable for Publication

It is the view of the Officers that the publication of both Authority and Sub-Committee draft minutes will be advantageous for the Authority and harmonise with the Authority's approach to transparency with information. If Members support the Officers' recommendation and the timetable for publication, slight amendment will be made to D&S IFCA's Publication Scheme (Policy). It is the view of the Officers that the following timetable could be implemented to publish both draft and finalised minutes of all Authority and Sub-Committee meetings.

Time Period	Action	Publication Status
Week 0 to 2 Weeks	Draft Minutes are produced and circulated internally for amendments.	<b>Initial draft minutes not published.</b>
Week 2 to 4	Draft Minutes complete and circulated to all Authority Members for feedback.	<b>Draft minutes are published on the Members' secure area of the website only.</b>
Week 4	Deadline for Initial feedback from Members	
Week 4 to the date set for the following meeting	Comments/feedback from Members applied to draft minutes.	<b>The draft minutes are published and remain on the public display on the website.</b>
The following meeting of Authority/Sub-Committee	The draft minutes are "Approved for Accuracy" by Members.	
Week after the Authority/Sub-Committee/s meeting.	Amendments applied as highlighted at the meeting – Changes to titles, version control and removal of water mark.	<b>Finalised minutes are published on the public display areas of the D&amp;S IFCA website.</b>

## Background Papers:

- [D&S IFCA Freedom of Information Policy](#)
- [D&S IFCA Publication Scheme](#)