

## **Transparency & Publication of Officer Papers**

### **Background:**

To meet the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, D&S IFCA is in the process of reviewing a large range of policy documentation. Obligations in regard to Freedom of Information and the Publications Scheme (already implemented) form part of this on-going work.

Officers believe that increased Freedom of Information requests and managing these requests represent a risk to the Authority, in particular time spent managing these potential requests.

Increased transparency for all stakeholders helps to demonstrate the extent of the work being conducted by D&S IFCA and potentially improve the reputation of the Authority. Increased engagement and improving communications forms part of the D&S IFCA communications strategy.

### **Example:**

The work of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee is heavily orientated in regard to decision making. Recent examples include agreed amendments associated with permit conditions used to manage both potting and mobile fishing activities.

D&S IFCA has already adopted a more thorough and open approach in regard to Byelaw review work. Developments include Byelaw Development reports which fully document base level data, rationale for change, consultation response and the decision making of members. Although these reports expand over time there is an unavoidable time lag in regard to publication of this information.

To assist members of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee with their decision making, a series of officer papers (in the form of supplements) are produced at key stages. These documents are not currently published in their original form, although they are merged after the meeting into the expanding Byelaw Development Reports. Comprehensive minutes of Sub-Committee meetings are also taken and published when accuracy has been agreed. The D&S IFCA website is the primary platform for all publications.

Although Sub-Committee meetings (and Full Authority meetings) are open to the public, in the interests of increased transparency, Sub-Committee members have recommended that where ever possible their papers are published at the earliest possible opportunity. Earliest possible opportunity includes publication prior to any meetings whenever possible. Draft minutes from the previous meeting would not be published until they are approved at the meeting.

### **Consideration:**

The same approach can be taken in regard to papers circulated for Full Authority meetings. Public Interest Disclosure (on advice from a solicitor) would still be a consideration in any such initiative.

Although the potential use of web cameras at meetings has been briefly discussed by Sub-Committee members, no recommendations have yet been made in regard to their use.

### **Recommendation**

**That the officer papers for all D&S IFCA Full Authority and Sub-Committee meetings (that are suitable for publication) are published at the earliest possible opportunity and before meeting dates if possible.**