

Cllr John Lamb  
Chairman of the Association of IFCAs  
127 Nowton Road  
Bury St. Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 7AR

14<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Dear John,

Further to our resignation from the AIFCA, it has come to my attention that discussions are being held with Defra and others as to the reasons for our resignation. Several telephone calls have been made to the D&SIFCA Chief Officer by Defra officials with regard to the reason for the resignation and there seems to be some confusion. We therefore felt it appropriate to write to you so that there is clarity over the reasons for our resignation which have previously been explained to you and others but these reasons appear to have been forgotten.

Defra are under the impression that the resignation is due to a lack of budgetary funds available to the D&SIFCA and our disquiet about the allocation of New Burdens Funding to the IFCAs from Defra. This is not the case.

The issue of New Burdens Funding is certainly a concern to the D&SIFCA and we will continue to seek a rebalance of the funding through discussions with Defra whilst accepting that there is not a consensus view on this matter. We will continue to request that the funding allocation is reviewed to give parity to those who have received the largest burden in terms of regulation required by the Government.

The D&SIFCA budget is indeed limited when compared to other IFCAs given the size of the district and the work requirements. But, that is a matter for this IFCA to resolve with its funding Authorities. There are sufficient funds within the budget year 2018/19 to cover the full cost to this IFCA of membership of the AIFCA and a copy of our agreed budget is enclosed with this letter for your information. However, it is the will of the full Authority that we resigned from the AIFCA due to unresolved concerns over the operation of the organisation and the spending of public money.

To clarify our concerns and the reason that the Authority voted to resign from the AIFCA I will state the concerns we currently have with regard to the AIFCA and its operation.

1. The issue of governance and value for public monies is our main concern. The governance of the AIFCA in the view of this IFCA is inadequate to deliver the varied and complex duties of the AIFCA and to ensure that public money is protected and used to its full potential. Changes to governance have not been scrutinised and approved by the Directors of the Association. There are no review dates for documentation and no process in place to ensure reviews are carried out and that the operation of the AIFCA is in line with best practice. As matters stand the accounts for last year have yet to be approved by the Directors of the Association and on that basis we believe that the AIFCA is not currently compliant with its own governing document or indeed what is expected of a body in receipt of public funds.

The lack of an annual general meeting and voting for the position of Chair and Vice Chair of the AIFCA were also raised. The annual voting for the two positions are laid out in the Articles of Association but this was never followed until this was pressed by the D&SIFCA. A clear procedure laid out in the Articles that was not being adhered to.

There is a lack of papers and those that are prepared are often submitted on the day and not ahead of the Association meetings. Discussions are held and decisions made upon matters for which there has been no prior information presented, other than a listed agenda item. All IFCA's prepare and deliver papers to members prior to meetings in order for the discussion to be informed prior to decisions being made. It is not unreasonable for the AIFCA to have a similar format for its meetings. This has been requested on numerous occasions over the last 6 years.

2. There is a lack of performance and impact measures for the Association laid out in any terms that can be monitored and evaluated. The D&SIFCA have suggested a set of standard metrics be developed that the AIFCA could adopt that would allow this to happen and for reporting on delivery of objectives to be simplified. This would enable transparency and an evidence base for demonstrating effective use of public funds. This request has been declined.
3. The attendance at nationally important meetings by the AIFCA on behalf of all IFCA's is difficult to monitor. The report to the members on a quarterly basis sets out that meetings have been attended but not the agendas nor what was discussed at these meetings. A quick summary of the relevance to the individual IFCA's and what commitments were required or made at these meetings on behalf of the IFCA's is also not available to members. For the national body to go into these meetings without asking individual IFCA's for any points of view or questions they may wish to be raised brings into question the validity of the AIFCA presence and the value to the IFCA's of having the AIFCA at the meeting and not sending one of their own officers.
4. There is an absence of clear collective positions on matters of collective interest that define the Association's position on matters of national policy and discussions. As an Association of ten different members it will always be challenging to define a position but this is perceived as a weakness of the AIFCA within other national groups and partner organisations. Whilst attending nationally important planning meetings and discussions into the future of the IFCA model there is a requirement to have such agreed policies to guide the AIFCA and other IFCA representatives.

I hope that this sets out the concerns of the Devon & Severn IFCA clearly. I reiterate that the decision of the D&SIFCA members was that we will review our position with regard to the AIFCA membership in twelve months and we remain hopeful that we are able to find a way to resolve these issues to everyone's benefit.

Yours sincerely



Elaine Hayes  
Chair of D&SIFCA



Tim Robbins  
Chief Officer