

Standing Orders and Members' Declaration of Interests

Officers' Recommendation

That Members agree to amend the Standing Orders to reflect the requirements of the Localism Act 2011

Background

The Association of IFCA's recently commissioned a review of the decisions making processes of all the IFCA's in respect of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. The Localism Act 2011 requires all Members of D&S IFCA to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests within 28 days of taking their position on the Authority and must review such interest every 12 months or sooner should any changes to the declared interests occurs. The interest that must be declared are set out in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. The requirement is also set out in the D&S IFCA Standards of Performance, Conduct, and Behaviour Policy (for Members).

The review highlighted some differences among the IFCA's including the use of Dispensations under S33 of the Localism Act 2011. D&S IFCA is one of only two IFCA's that currently uses Dispensations to allow Members with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest to participate in the discussions and also, on limited occasions, vote on any relevant motion. D&S IFCA's Standing Orders 9.39 and 9.40 set out the procedure that must be followed for the Members to seek such a Dispensation.

Dispensations are used to allow MMO appointees, that have been selected for their knowledge and experience in matters relating to the business of the Authority, to participate in the decision making process. To prevent those members from contributing to the discussions may mean that other Members are not provided with all the relevant information to make decisions. Members that have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must only contribute their specialist knowledge and experience and not to improperly seek to favour their own interests or those of anyone connected with them.

The Localism Act sets out that the requirements to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests only applies to the member or their partner¹. However, a Member should also declare any interest where a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would regard the Member, their relatives, or their close friends as having an interest in any business of the D&S IFCA being considered. The declaration of an interest is required where the matter affects the financial interest or well-being of the Member, their relatives or close friends to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of the public in the area affected by the decision such that it is likely to prejudice the Members' view of the wider public interest.

¹ As defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

It is very important that the public and those affected by the decisions taken by the Members of D&S IFCA have confidence in the decision making process and the role of Officers. Established in 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life developed Seven Principles of Public Life, referred to as the Nolan Principles:

1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Proposed Changes to D&S IFCA's Standing Orders

In line with the requirements of The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Officers will update the Members' Declaration of Interest form and circulate it to all Members by 1st October 2026.

D&S IFCA’s Standing Orders will be amended to reflect that all Members (this includes Elected Members and Statutory Appointees) must update their interests with 28 days of receiving the Declaration of Interest form (**Agenda Item 9 Annex A**) and before 30th April each year thereafter.

The returned information will be published on the D&S IFCA’s website (Our Members’ page).

D&S IFCA’s Standing Orders will be amended so that any Member that has not returned the Declaration of Interest form within the required period will not be able to attend a meeting of the Authority until such time the form is updated and returned to the Clerk of the Authority.

D&S IFCA’s Standing Orders will be amended so that any Member that declares an interest in an Agenda Item at an Authority meeting, that would require a dispensation to participate in the discussions or vote will be asked to remove themselves from the meeting whilst the relevant item on the agenda is debated.

D&S IFCA Officers

D&S IFCA Officers are already required to declare any relevant outside interest relating to their role that a member of the public would consider potentially compromises how an Officer would undertake their role. Officers declarations will be published on the D&S IFCA website.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers

[D&S IFCA Standing Orders \(Version 1.9 – July 2026\)](#)

“The importance of being earnest – a declarations of interest project for the AIFCA”