

Committee: Audit and Standards Committee

Date: Thursday
26 March 2026

Title: Dispensation Update

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Portfolio Holder: N/A

Summary

1. The purpose of this quarterly report is to inform Audit and Scrutiny of dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's) under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is recommended to:

note the content of this report and the specific dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

Reasons

3. This is a quarterly noting report informing members of the Audit and Standards Committee of the dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer (if any) and the general dispensations which are applicable in relation to DPI's.

Financial Implications

4. There is no specific resource allocation to support the Member Code of Conduct function. Costs are usually met from existing service budget.

Background Papers

5. N/A

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	None as in compliance with best practice guidance and the Committee's terms of reference.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	<p>In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>No formal Equality Impact Assessment is required in this matter.</p>
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	<p>Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 states that dispensations may allow the member to:</p> <p>(a) participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting(s); and/or</p> <p>(b) participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting(s)</p> <p>If a dispensation is granted, the member may remain in the room where the meeting considering the business is being held.</p> <p>The Council has a duty under s. 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and to adopt a code of conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles.</p>
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A

Workforce/Workplace	The officer involvement required to comply with these obligations are factored into service plans and work plans.
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Situation

7. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that Councillors and Co-opted Members register any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) and other specified interests in the Register of Members Interests. If a Member has a DPI in relation to any matter to be discussed at a meeting they must:

Part 5 Appendix B Paragraph 4: Not participate in any discussion of the agenda item, not vote on the matter and leave the room whilst the agenda item is discussed and voted on.

8. However, a Member who has a DPI in a matter to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the authority may make a written request before the meeting to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation to enable them to participate in the discussion and vote.
9. A dispensation may be granted where the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that:
 - (a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
 - (b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business;
 - (c) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or
 - (d) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
10. Any grant of a dispensation must specify the duration of the dispensation up to a maximum of 4 years.
11. **Specific Dispensation:** On 19 February 2026 a request for a specific dispensation was received relating to the Council meeting scheduled 24 February 2026. The specific request was granted to Councillor Richard Haynes in respect of his role as Councillor. As a second homeowner he had an interest in the Council's budget setting agenda with respect to second home premium. The dispensation allowed him to speak at the meeting whilst putting certain restrictions in place in particular around the formal decision-making processes.

12. Before granting the dispensation, the Monitoring Officer consulted with the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee and the Council's Independent Person.

13. The Monitoring Officer has introduced a standard form for members to complete when seeking a dispensation in order to make the process more efficient and transparent.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
There are significant risks to the council's reputation in terms of compliance with its legal duties and community leadership if any inappropriate behaviours within its sphere of influence are not robustly addressed.			

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.