

Notes of Guidance for Members on Completion of the Register of Members' Interests Forms

General Advice

All members are required to complete the documentation in order to declare details of personal interests and gifts and hospitality received in the Register of Members' Interests. No other documentation will be accepted. The forms are available in hard copy or electronic format. The electronic form will need to have a name inserted in the signature areas before it is returned. The forms are:

- (a) A form for declaring interests
- (b) A form for declaring gifts and hospitality received.

The forms can be updated at any time, but in any event when you need to amend your declaration you must submit your updated form within 28 days of becoming aware of the change.

Completion of Forms

You should complete the form with sufficient detail to identify clearly what the interest is or the gift or hospitality received. Do not use abbreviations, initials or acronyms. You are personally responsible for the accuracy of the contents of your register.

Please mark 'none' on the form if you have no interest to register in any category.

Please note that under the Localism Act 2011, where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI), it is a criminal offence to:

- (1) fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest (details of the circumstances in which this requirement to notify arises are set out below);
- (2) fail to disclose it at a meeting (unless it has already been registered);
- (3) participate or vote on any matter in which a member has a DPI unless they have obtained a dispensation* from the Council;
- (4) take any action on a matter in which a member has a DPI (other than to refer it to another member for action).

Sensitive Information

Please be aware that where you consider that the information relating to any of your personal interests is sensitive information and the Monitoring Officer agrees, this will not be published.

In the Code of Conduct, 'sensitive information' means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subjected to violence or intimidation.

You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances (which means that information excluded because it is sensitive, is no longer sensitive information), notify the Monitoring Officer asking that the information be included in your Register of Interest.

County councillors who are also members of other relevant authorities

If, in addition to being a county councillor, you are a member of a district, borough, town or parish council, it would be prudent for you to consider whether an interest on one Register of Interests should also be included on another or others.

**An application form and guidance notes are available for any member wishing to seek a dispensation.*

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

The information you need to provide under each heading is listed below, together with examples, which are for guidance purposes only.

Please note that for DPIs it is necessary for you to record the interests of your spouse, civil partner or any person with whom you are living as if husband or wife or as civil partners, when such interests are known by you.

The following notes link to the 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' (DPI) and Local Non-Pecuniary Interest' (LNPI) boxes as numbered on the register.

DPI 1: Include all employments, whether full or part-time, identifying the nature of each employment by use of job title or trade, occupation or profession. Your job or your business should be detailed, together with a brief description of the type of work that is undertaken, e.g. accountant, painter and decorator, farmer etc. It is not necessary to state that you are a member of the County Council or of a district/borough council.

Include the name of the person or body employing you. If you are a director, give the name of the body or company appointing you. Include all directorships.

DPI 2: Give the name of the political party, or other person or body that has made a payment to you for election expenses, including the amount. Include the name of any person or body (other than the Council) making any payment to you for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a member (e.g. travelling expenses).

DPI 3: If you own shares or other form of equity in a company or other body which has a place of business within Suffolk or owns land or property in Suffolk, you will need to consider whether the interest is to be included. Identify the nominal value; this is the amount of the shares indicated on the certificate, not the market value. If this exceeds £25,000, you need to register the name of the company or body. If this is less than £25,000 but the holding is more than 1% of the total issued share capital, you need to register the name of the company or body. It is not necessary to state the value of the shares.

DPI 4: You must include a clear description of any contract with the Council with which you, your firm, your company or a company or body registered under DPI 3 above, is a party.

DPI 5: You must include a clear description sufficient to identify land you register. Land includes property and buildings on land and you should include the postal address, map reference or field number. Beneficial interest includes freehold and leasehold (tenancy) interests and any legal rights you may have over property, for example a right of way or an option to purchase.

DPI 6: Include here any land or property leased (tenanted) from the Council by yourself, your firm or company, or body registered under DPI 3 above. Please include postal address, map reference or field number.

DPI 7: This includes grazing agreements, allotments, garage licences and other short-term arrangements to use the Council's land or property. Please include postal address, map reference or field number.

Local Non Pecuniary Interests (LNPIs)

LNPI 1: List all the bodies (external to the Council) of which you are a member (appointed or nominated by the Council), i.e. not committees or sub-committees of the Council to which you have been appointed by the Council. Give the full name of the body (not acronyms or initials). Appointments or nominations may include local committees and charities, partnerships and companies in which the Council is involved, and other related organisations. Include nominations to regional and national bodies such as local authority associations and organisations where you represent the Council. In each case you should specify the body and the nature of your involvement, e.g. arts organisations, school governor, trustee of a charity, Broads Authority member etc.

Include any public bodies of which you are a member (e.g. district or borough council, parish or town council, school governor, NHS organisations, government agency, other non profit organisations in the public sector, local committee etc).

Include any charity of which you are a trustee or member and any non-profit making body such as a cultural, sporting, environmental or social association, club or organisation. Include the name of any political party of which you are a member, any national or local body operating as a pressure group and any trade union or trade association and other public authorities or organisations, which deliver public services. Please specify the body and the nature of your involvement, e.g. magistrate, district/borough council member, probation board member etc.

Include companies, industrial and provident societies, charities or charitable organisations. Please specify the body and the nature of your involvement, e.g. Freemasons, St John's Ambulance, youth development groups, church councils etc.

Include organisations with a main purpose, which includes influencing public opinion or policy. Please specify the body and the nature of your involvement, e.g. local clubs or societies, pressure groups etc.

Political party councillor associations should also be registered under this heading.

LNPI 2: This requirement is not intended to cover gifts and hospitality received by you in your private capacity (i.e. not as a member). The requirement covers gifts and hospitality received by you as a member. With some hospitality, for example, weddings and special events, you will need to consider in what capacity you are involved. You are advised to register all gifts that you accept as a member, and all hospitality (other than incidental refreshment of modest nature). You must register the nature and approximate value of the gift and hospitality, and the person or body giving it. You should register it as soon as possible after accepting it and, in any case, within 28 days. Make sure you indicate the date when you register as this is important to determine how long you will need to disclose the receipt of the gift or hospitality in the event of any business of the authority relating to it (three years from the date of registration).

You are required to register any gifts or hospitality estimated to be or actually worth £25 or more that you receive in connection with your official duties as a member. This disclosure must be made within 28 days of accepting the gift or hospitality. You do not need to register gifts and hospitality that are not related to your role as a member, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. However, you do need to register gifts such as tickets for events where the face value has been reduced to 'nil or zero' value and which you reasonably believe to exceed a value of £25. You are not required to disclose the amount paid.

There is a separate form for declaring gifts and hospitality.

If you have any specific query whether an interest should be included in your records please refer this to Linda Pattle, Democratic Services Officer (see contact details below).

Return of forms and updating your records in the future

In order to register your interests, please complete and return the electronic form to:
XXXXX.XXXXXX@XXXXXXX.XXX.XX

If you are returning a paper form, please return to Linda Pattle at Endeavour House, Councillors' Area, Gold Block, Floor 2.

Please ensure that you insert the date and your name in the relevant signature section.

Your Declaration of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality forms will be published on the Council's website, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed with you that sensitive information should be excluded.

If you need to update your records in the future, it will be necessary for you to complete, sign and date a new form. Your updated form will then be included in the register and on the website in place of your previous declaration.

Contacts at Endeavour House

A copy of your existing form can be obtained from Linda Pattle, Democratic Services Officer, Democratic Services, on 01473 260771 or in her absence by telephoning Councillor Services on 01473 265119.

Retention policy

The Register of Interests (and any supporting records) will be retained for each councillor during their current four-year term of office. The Register and associated records relating to the previous four-year term of the Council will also be retained.

Issued by:
Tim Ryder
Monitoring Officer

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