

LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Declarations of Interests Guidance Note for Town Councillors

This note explains the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (ss 29-34) in relation to declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

These provisions are enforced by criminal sanction and came into force on 1st July 2012.

1 Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests'.

A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself **OR** your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) within the following descriptions:

Interest	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and

Securities continued.	<p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
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These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

- “the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;
- “body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;
- “director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;
- “land” includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;
- “M” means the person M referred to in section 30 of the Act;
- “member” includes a co-opted member;
- “relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;
- “relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Act;
- “relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;
- “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000() and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

2 Register of Interests

All interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer and will be included in the register of interests.

A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the Town Council’s website.

3 Sensitive Interests

Where you consider that disclosure of the details of a disclosable pecuniary interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees, if the interest is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, the details of which are withheld under Section 32(2).

4 Non Participation (in case of disclosable pecuniary interest)

If you are present at a meeting of the authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting,

1. You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
2. You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
3. If the interest has been formally notified to the Monitoring Officer for registration but is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
4. If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must disclose the interest to the meeting and also notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Note: In addition, the Council's adopted arrangements require you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

5 Dispensations

Where:

- so many members of the Parish or Town Council or one of its committees or sub-committees have disclosable pecuniary interests that it would impeded the transaction of the business, or
- without a dispensation the strengths of any political groups on the body would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote on the matter, or
- the grant of the dispensation would be in the interests of the inhabitants of the authorities area, and
- it would be in the interests of the inhabitants of the authority's area, or
- it is otherwise appropriate to grant the dispensation.

the Town Council may grant dispensations allowing members with DPI's to speak and /or vote on a matter at a meeting of such a body – on written application by those members made to a Town Council meeting.

6 Offences

It is a criminal offence to

- Fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election
- Fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register
- Fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of a disclosable pecuniary interest that is not on the register that you have disclosed to a meeting
- Participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest
- As an executive member discharging a function acting alone, and having a disclosable pecuniary interest in such a matter, failing to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the interest.
- Knowingly or recklessly providing information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a disclosable pecuniary interest or in disclosing such interest to a meeting

The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.

7 Interests Arising (in relation to overview and scrutiny committees)

In any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where:

- (a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
- (b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken,

Members may only attend a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee for the purpose of answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, and you must leave the room where the meeting is held immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence.