

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

11 December 2012: 11.00.a.m.

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
3**

UPDATING NWIFCA STANDING ORDERS TO COMPLY WITH THE 2011 LOCALISM ACT

Recommendations:

1. **NWIFCA Standing Orders be updated to comply with the Localism Act 2011**
2. **Chairmen be given authority to apply Standing Orders more rigorously in NWIFCA meetings.**
3. **Members agree to comply with Standing Orders**

The context and problem

1. The Localism Act 2011 requires the NWIFCA to update its Standing Orders and amend its code of conduct for members to ensure it complies with the new regulations.
2. Members will also be aware that in recent meetings, the Authority has had difficulty getting through its business in the time available. The Chairman and Chief Executive have reviewed this matter and are clear that the Authority does not wish to limit contributions especially in areas where members have specialist knowledge; however, recordings of meetings show that more attention could be paid to making interventions quickly and concisely.
3. Members are reminded of the Standing Orders which govern how interventions should be made. They are adapted from Local Authority procedures. **If you propose** a motion (which rarely happens because Officers generally prepare the agendas) **you can speak on that item for 5 minutes; otherwise 3 minutes only (12d) and only once on each agenda item (12e).**
4. Whether members can speak **at all** on matters on which they have a pecuniary interest is unclear. The rules in the new act as before are that members cannot vote on such matters. The current NWIFCA Code of Conduct includes this prohibition. However, in many Council Committees members cannot even speak on something in which they have an interest. However, to enforce that would be against good decision making in a Committee like the NWIFCA.

Proposed solution

5. As before, members of Councils representing their Authority on the NWIFCA are all subject to their own councils' Codes of Conduct and are legally bound to follow those standards. However, Members of Joint Committees of Local Authorities, appointed by other bodies such as MMO appointees to the NWIFCA must have particular rules in place created by the NWIFCA to suit their needs. Members are invited to confirm our current practice that all non-council members are permitted to speak on matters in which they have a pecuniary interest.

However, members must note that this allowance is discretionary and must be used with restraint.

6. If any member considers that another member is speaking for too long on items in which they have an interest they should notify the Chairman, Chief Officer or Clerk and ask that it be investigated.
7. If this proposed solution is acceptable, then the NWIFCA Code of Conduct in the Standing Orders will be redrafted so that the Code better reflects modern standards in the holding of public office. The Code will be returned to a future meeting for approval.
8. Some guidance for members on achieving their objectives in Authority meetings may be helpful. Accordingly a short guidance note is provided below which is open for development.
9. Members are invited to offer their ideas for improving the Authorities decision making processes.

Guidance on making the most of meetings:

Do:

1. work out beforehand what decisions you want to get to using officers reports and your own knowledge and expertise.
2. state briefly, when you speak, the outcomes you want and the reasons why; make the case concisely and stick to the point.
3. consider recommendations in relevant reports, if you agree, propose they be adopted.
4. ask direct questions to make points then listen to and use answers to build your case.
5. Remember you have to get at least half the votes for what you want. If you know you can't win, make sure your objection is registered and fight another battle.
6. Propose the decision you want and look for a seconder.

Don't:

1. Just comment on reports. They are only meant for background evidence, advice and suggestions to help members reach decisions.
2. Criticize officers or other members personally.

**Chief Executive
December 2012**