

Wiltshire Council
Standards Committee
Dispensation Requests
Application Process and Criteria for Determination

Introduction

- 1 The Standards Committee is responsible for determining requests for dispensation by members of Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Town, Parish and City Councils under the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009.
- 2 This note explains:
 - the purpose and effect of dispensations;
 - the procedure for requesting dispensations;
 - the criteria which the Standards Committee apply in determining dispensation requests;

Dispensations

- 3 In certain circumstances members may be granted a dispensation which enables them to take part in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because the member has a prejudicial interest. Provided members act within the terms of their dispensation there is deemed to be no breach of the Code of Conduct.

Process for Making Requests

- 4 Any member who wishes to apply for a dispensation must complete the attached form at Appendix A and submit it to the Monitoring Officer at least 14 days before the meeting for which the dispensation is required. Applications may be accepted within a shorter period in exceptional circumstances. The Monitoring Officer will arrange a meeting of the Dispensation Sub-Committee to consider the request at the earliest opportunity.
- 5 In order to avoid delay members must ensure that they give full details of the grounds for their request and submit it to the Monitoring Officer as soon as they become aware that a dispensation is necessary.
- 6 A request for dispensation must be made on an individual basis. Group applications are not permitted.
- 7 Meetings of the Dispensation Sub-Committee will normally be open to the public and any member who has submitted a request will have the opportunity to attend and make representations in support of their application.

Criteria for Determination of Requests

- 8 The Dispensation Sub-Committee may grant a dispensation where the transaction of the Council's business would otherwise be impeded by, or as a result of, the Code of Conduct

because:

- a) more than 50% of the members who would be entitled to vote at a meeting are prohibited from voting; or
- b) the number of members prohibited from voting at a meeting would upset the political balance of the meeting to such an extent as to prejudice the outcome of voting in that meeting;

9 Dispensations will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- a) to allow a member to vote at an overview and scrutiny committee in respect of a decision made by any body of which that person was a member at the time the decision was taken;
- b) to allow a member of the Cabinet with a prejudicial interest in an item of executive business to take an executive decision on the matter on their own.

10 The Dispensation Sub-Committee may grant a dispensation:

- a) for one term of business
- b) for a period not exceeding 4 years
- c) allowing the member to participate in the meeting and vote
- d) allowing the member to speak but not vote

11 In reaching a decision on a dispensation request the Dispensation Sub-Committee will:

- a) have regard to guidance issued by the Standards Board for England - see Appendix B;
- b) disregard any dispensations that have already been granted to other members of the same body;
- c) take into account:
 - (i) the nature of the member's prejudicial interest;
 - (ii) the need to maintain public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business;
 - (iii) the outcome of the proposed vote;
 - (iv) the need for efficient and effective conduct of the Council's business;
 - (v) any other relevant circumstances.

Notification of Decision

12 The Monitoring Officer will notify the member of the Sub-Committee's decision and reasons in writing at the earliest opportunity and in any event within 5 working days of the meeting.

13 Any member who has been granted a dispensation must declare the nature and existence of the dispensation before the commencement of any business to which it relates.

14 A copy of the dispensation will be kept with the Register of Members' Interests.

Appendix A
Wiltshire Council
Standards Committee
Dispensation Request Form

Please give full details of the following in support of your application for a dispensation. You should refer to the accompanying guidance “Dispensation Requests - Application Process and Criteria for Determination”

If you need any help completing this form please contact Ian Gibbons, Monitoring Officer on 01225 713052 or by e-mail ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk

Full Name

Address

.....

Telephone / E-mail

Name of Council

Please set out below your reasons for applying for a dispensation having regard to the criteria set out in the accompanying guidance. Your statement in support of your application should cover the following:

- the decision-making body in respect of which you require a dispensation, including details of membership;
- details of the matter for which you require a dispensation (meeting(s) and item(s) of business);
- details of your interest in the business for which you require a dispensation;
- reasons why you consider a dispensation is necessary;
- the terms of the dispensation you are seeking;

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Signed

Please send your completed form to the Monitoring Officer, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 JN, by post, by fax (01225 718399) or by e-mail to ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk

Your request will be considered by the Dispensation Sub-Committee at the earliest opportunity. You will receive written notification of their decision within 5 days of their meeting.

Appendix B

Guidance from the Standards Board for England on Dispensations

Please use the following link:

<http://www.standardsforengland.gov.uk/TheCodeofConduct/Guidance/Standardscommittees/Dispensations%20FINAL.pdf>