



Governance Committee

11 June 2025

Multi hatted councillor dispensation Report

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:
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Purpose

To seek a general dispensation for multi hatted members. It should be noted that due to the fact that most voting committee members are multi hatted the Monitoring Officer has granted a dispensation, in consultation with an independent person, to any multi hatted Governance Committee member to vote in relation to this agenda item.

Recommendations

1. That the dispensation approved by the Monitoring Officer to any multi hatted councillor attending Governance Committee in relation to the above dispensation to enable committee to reach a decision is noted.
2. That Governance Committee grants a dispensation to any city councillor who (i) is also a County and/or Parish Tier Councillor or (ii) whose Spouse or Partner is a County and/or Parish Tier Councillor within Essex and who might have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Registrable Interest in any decision making or scrutiny matter at Chelmsford City Council notwithstanding the fact that they and/or their spouse or partner is a member of other public bodies.

3. The dispensation does not apply to :-

- a. The consideration of any approval, consent, licence or permission or registration in relation to that authority: or
 - b. The award of a contract to that authority following a competitive procurement.
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4. This will enable any multi hatted member to fully participate in decision making and scrutiny including speaking, voting and in relation to cabinet members taking executive decisions, as necessary. By way of example, this includes items of business about devolution, local government reorganisation and community governance.
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1. Background and proposal in relation to Multi hatted members

- 1.1. The City Council currently has 57 Councillors of which many are also County and/or Parish Tier Councillors, including two councillors who are representatives across all 3 tiers of local government (collectively called “multi-hatted”). There are also a number whose spouse or partner are also councillors.
- 1.2. Indeed, there is an insufficient quorum of voting members appointed to this committee who are not multi hatted which has led to the Monitoring Officer granting a dispensation under Section 33(1)(a) of the Localism Act 2011 to relevant members of this committee to enable this decision to be considered and voted upon.
- 1.3. Under the Code of Conduct these City Councillors might be considered to have a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or other registrable interest (ORI) in any matter coming before a meeting which would impact on the County or Parish tier Council eg where they (or their Spouse/Partner) are in receipt of a member’s allowance from that other Council.
- 1.4. The City Council already has in place several general dispensations and it is proposed that the above is added to these. This will put beyond doubt that councillors can fully participate in important forthcoming decisions that may arise at Chelmsford City Council.

- 1.5. Agree that the dispensation should last for a period of 4 years, or in the event that the Council be abolished in April 2028 (as a result of local government reorganisation), whichever is the sooner.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – proposed change to standing dispensations

Background papers: Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: The Monitoring Officer has approved a dispensation in consultation with an independent person under ground (a) as there would be insufficient quorum to take the decision without the dispensation being granted to all multi hatted members that sit on the committee or maybe substituted to sit on the committee when this decision is made. This will enable all city councillors to participate and vote in relation to the general dispensation thus enabling the council to take a decision.

The general dispensation is sought to put beyond doubt whether it is appropriate for multi hatted members to participate in decisions and scrutiny including those relating to devolution, local government reorganisation and/or community governance matters. So far as the Monitoring Officer is concerned there is no reason why councillors should not be able to fully participate in such matters simply because they are multi hatted councillors. Appropriate exclusions are proposed for scenarios where it would not be ethical for the councillor to participate or vote. It is recommended that the general dispensation is approved to avoid multiple unnecessary declarations to be made or confusion arising in relation to forthcoming decisions.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None