

The Crown Prosecution Service has authorised the police to institute proceedings against the leader of Dorset County Council for three offences under the Localism Act.

Cllr Spencer Flower, 72, is accused of three offences under sections 31 and 34 of the 2011 Act.

The Act imposes a duty on members of a local authority to disclose certain pecuniary interests on taking office and to refrain from participating in council business which will affect these interests unless dispensation is given.

These offences relate to Cllr Flower's involvement with East Dorset District Council as well as the county.

In a statement John Locke, Senior Crown Prosecutor for the CPS Wessex Complex Casework Unit, said: "It is alleged that whilst Cllr Flower was leader of East Dorset District Council, he failed to declare his interest in Zebra Property Solutions LTD (ZPSL), a company for which he was a Non-Executive Director. It is also alleged that he failed to declare his interest in the same company to Dorset County Council.

"The third allegation relates to Cllr Flower failing to disclose his interest in Synergy Housing Ltd (SHL), a company in which he was also a Non-Executive Director, before a meeting of Dorset County Council on 25 February 2013 at which its Core Strategy for the provision of social housing was discussed. It is alleged that Cllr Flower participated and voted during this meeting."

Locke added: "I carefully reviewed all the evidence provided to me by Dorset Police and was satisfied that there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and that it is in the public interest to prosecute Cllr Flower for these three offences."

Cllr Flower has been asked to attend Bournemouth Magistrates' Court on 2 December 2014.

He [told the BBC](#) that he would stand aside temporarily as Leader to fight the claims.

Cllr Flower said: "I want to put the people of Dorset first at a time when the council is going through a difficult period of service transformation.

"I cannot fulfil my duties in the way I wish at this time."