



News in Brief

- The Standards Commission will shortly launch its revamped website using the existing website address. We would welcome any feedback or suggestions on how to further improve it. Please contact us with your comments or suggestions using the contact details outlined below.
- Dates of any forthcoming Hearings and Decisions arising from Hearings, which have already taken place, will continue to be published on the Standards Commission website.
- If you would like to be involved in the review of the draft revised Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct, please get in touch with us using the contact details below.

Standards Officers' Workshop

The Standards Commission is holding a workshop for Standards Officers on **3 November 2015** from 09:30-13:00 at the COSLA Conference Centre, Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh, EH12 5BH. If you are a Standards Officer and would like to attend but not yet booked a place, please contact us on 0131 348 6666 or by email at enquiries@standardscommission.org.uk. Topics on the agenda include issues arising from the implementation of the revised Model Code of Conduct 2014 and Guidance, matters relating to the ethical standards framework arising from the creation of the new Health & Social Care Integration Joint Boards and, changes following further mergers within Further Education Colleges.

New Standards Commission Member

Professor Kevin Dunion OBE commenced his appointment as a Member of the Standards Commission on 1 September 2015. Professor Dunion is Honorary Professor in the Dundee Law School, University of Dundee, where he is also Director of the Centre for Freedom of Information. During his time in post as the first Scottish Information Commissioner, Professor Dunion issued over 1,500 formal determinations on appeals made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Last year he was appointed by the President of the World Bank as a member of the Bank's Access to Information Appeals Board. As a Member of the Standards Commission, Professor Dunion brings to his appointment experience of dealing with disputes and appeals, as well as a high level of integrity and discretion and a strong commitment to encouraging high ethical standards in public life. He continues to serve as a Board Member of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission.

Revised Guidance on Councillors' Code of Conduct

Following a review, the Standards Commission has revised its Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct. We are inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on the revised Guidance with a view to publishing and issuing it by the end of 2015.

Crofting Commission Training Event

The Standards Commission undertook a training event on the revised Model Code of Conduct at the Crofting Commission in Inverness in September 2015. The training presentation can be found on the website at: <http://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/content/training> .

CASES

Overview

Since the last briefing in March 2015, three cases have been referred to the Standards Commission by the CESPLS. The Standards Commission held one Hearing in respect of a case concerning one councillor.

Outcome of Hearing

The Standards Commission determined that there had been a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct by the councillor involved. The Standards Commission suspended the councillor from all planning meetings of the Council for a period of two months.

Details

Details of the outcomes of cases and scheduled Hearings can be found at:
www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/full_list

Learning Outcomes from Cases

1. Section 7.12 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct states that if a councillor has an interest, whether financial or non-financial, in the outcome of a planning application, they must declare that interest and refrain from taking part in making the decision. This requirement is unambiguous and is not qualified by the application of the objective test.
2. The declaration of interests (including non-financial interests and the interests of close relatives) and the application of the objective test were a fundamental requirement of the Councillors' Code on Conduct. Councillors should be extremely diligent when considering whether they had any interests to declare.



INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

For further information on the support we can offer councillors and members of devolved public bodies, please either speak to your Monitoring Officer or Standards Officer or look out for new information on our website.

Alternatively, please contact us at:

Room T2.21
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

T: 0131 348 6666

E: enquiries@standardscommission.org.uk

W: www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk