

At a Hearing of the Standards Commission for Scotland, held in Balloch on 12 April 2016, the Hearing Panel censured Mr Owen McKee, a former Board Member of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority. The Hearing Panel stated that the sanction would have been to suspend the Respondent from all meetings of the Authority for a period of time, not exceeding one year. However, this option was not available as the Respondent has already resigned from the Authority and has been replaced as a Member.

Mr McKee had breached the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority's Code of Conduct for Board Members. The sanction was imposed as a result of a failure by Mr McKee to declare his shareholding in a gold mining company, Scotgold Ltd and a failure to withdraw from a Board meeting of the Authority where matters concerning a planning application from Scotgold Ltd were being considered.

In reaching its decision, the Hearing Panel:

1. Noted Mr McKee's admission of his failure and his statement that this resulted from a failure of judgement and was not a deliberate attempt to breach the Code.
2. Considered regardless of whether the failure was deliberate or not, it was Mr McKee's personal responsibility to comply with the Authority's Code of Conduct. He had failed to do so.

The Convener, Kevin Dunion, in delivering the Hearing Panel's decision said:
"The Panel emphasises to all Members of Devolved Public Bodies the importance of declaring all relevant interests, financial or non-financial. The declaration of interests (including interests in shares) is a fundamental requirement. The failure to declare such interests removes the opportunity for openness and transparency in a Board Member's role and denies any member of the public the opportunity to consider whether a Board Member's interests may or may not influence the decision-making process.

14 April 2016

Note for editors:

It should be noted that complaints in terms of the Codes of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies are made to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland (CESPLS). It is for the CESPLS to investigate and determine if any matter should be referred to the Standards Commission for Scotland as alleged breach of the Councillors' Code. It is for the Standards Commission for Scotland to determine if there has been a breach and if so proven, to issue an appropriate sanction.

The Hearing Panel concluded that the Respondent had breached paragraphs 5.6 and 7.11 of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority's Code of Conduct for Board Members 2011, in place at the time.