

At a Hearing of the Standards Commission for Scotland, held in Inverness on 17 May 2016, the Hearing Panel censured Councillor Roderick Balfour of Highland Council

Councillor Balfour had breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct which requires councillors to treat others, including members of the public, with respect. The sanction was imposed as a result of Councillor Balfour seeking to take photographs without indicating his intention to do so, and by directing an offensive comment towards a member of the public, when investigating a report of possible breach of a Tree Protection Order on 29 March 2015.

In reaching its decision, the Hearing Panel:

1. Noted the Respondent accepted he had lost his temper when acting as a councillor and dealing with a member of the public. He had not proffered an apology and had indicated to the Panel he did not consider one was appropriate in the circumstances.
2. Found the Respondent had breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct, which obliges councillors to observe the rules of good conduct in all situations where they are acting as a councillor, including representing the Council.

The Panel Chair, Mrs Julie Ward, in delivering the Hearing Panel's decision said:

"Councillors must comply with the Code and must treat members of the public with respect when acting in the capacity as councillors."

17 May 2016

Note for editors:

It should be noted that complaints in terms of the Councillors' Code 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 3.1 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.