

At a Hearing of the Standards Commission for Scotland, held in Lochgilphead on 20 September and in Edinburgh on 19 October 2016, Councillor Michael Breslin of Argyll & Bute Council was censured for breaching the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The sanction was imposed as a result of a failure by Councillor Breslin to treat an officer of the Council with respect.

In reaching its decision, the Hearing Panel:

1. Found that Councillor Breslin breached paragraph 3.3, and paragraph 20 of Annex C of the Code of Conduct in respect of an email he sent to the Council's Head of Governance on 29 December 2014.
2. Councillor Breslin chose to circulate the email to a number of individuals, which resulted in the email being published on the ForArgyll website before the Head of Governance had the opportunity to reply. Publication on this website resulted in highly critical comments being directed at the Head of Governance. This demonstrated a lack of courtesy and respect to the officer. The Hearing Panel considered that, by his actions, Councillor Breslin had undermined mutual trust and respect between himself and a senior officer of the Council.
3. Did not find that five other allegations about Councillor Breslin to be breaches of the Code.

The Panel Chair, Mr Ian Gordon, in delivering the Hearing Panel's decision said:

"To help ensure public confidence in local government, the Standards Commission reminds every councillor about the importance of mutual trust and respect in their relations with Council officers".

19 October 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 paragraph 3.3, and also paragraph 20 of Annex C, of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.