

For immediate release

North Lanarkshire Councillor censured for breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct

The Standards Commission for Scotland, at a hearing held in Motherwell on 5 June 2017, censured former Councillor Marina Lyle of North Lanarkshire Council for a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The Hearing Panel found that, while a councillor, Ms Lyle failed to include in her Register of Interests a property in Motherwell, despite having become a part owner of the property in 2012.

Ms Lyle did not attend the Hearing and was not represented. The Hearing Panel noted that Ms Lyle had previously indicated that she did not consider she had to register an interest in the property as there continued to be a life-rent over it in favour of the previous owners. The Hearing Panel determined, however, that while Ms Lyle's interest in the property was limited until the end of the life-rent, the land register title nevertheless demonstrated that she had become a part owner in 2012. As such, Ms Lyle should have registered her interest in the property.

The Panel Chair, Mr Michael McCormick, in delivering the Hearing Panel's decision said:

"Whilst accepting the failure to register the interest may have been based on a misunderstanding of the legal position, the Hearing Panel considered that the requirement to register ownership of property is an integral part, and absolute requirement, of the Councillors' Code of Conduct as it provides the opportunity for openness and transparency in a councillor's role and affords members of the public the opportunity to consider whether a councillor's interests may or may not influence their discussion and decision-making. It is a councillor's personal responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and comply with, the provision in the Code."

For further information contact the Standards Commission on 0131 348 6666 or by email to enquiries@standardscommission.org.uk

5 June 2017

Note for editors:

(1) 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.

(2) The Hearing Panel concluded that the Respondent had breached paragraphs 4.18 and 4.19 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.