

Former Glasgow Councillor found to have breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct

The Standards Commission for Scotland, at a hearing held in Glasgow on 26 July 2017, censured former Councillor William McAllister for a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

The Hearing Panel found that former Councillor McAllister had made comments of an abusive, insulting and personal nature to the complainer, a police officer, and had made a number of unfounded allegations about him during two telephone calls to Maryhill Police Office. The Hearing Panel further found that Mr McAllister made the telephone calls in his capacity as a ward councillor and concluded, therefore, that the provisions of the Councillors' Code of Conduct applied to him at the time of the events in question.

The Hearing Panel found that the comments made by the Respondent in the telephone conversations amounted to an unacceptable personal attack on the complainer. As the Respondent was no longer a councillor, the only sanctions available to the Hearing Panel were either censure or disqualification. The Hearing Panel noted that it would have considered a suspension if the Respondent had still been a councillor.

The Hearing Panel Chair, Mrs Lindsey Gallanders, said:

"The Hearing Panel considers that councillors have a duty under the Code to treat members of the public and public servants with courtesy and respect and they cannot, therefore, indulge in offensive personal attacks or make unfounded accusations. While politicians have a right of freedom of expression, they cannot, simply indulge in abusive behaviour. In this case, Mr McAllister's comments and behaviour went well beyond that which is acceptable."

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

26 July 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 3.1 and 3.2 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct as alleged.

(3) The Hearing Panel comprised of three members of the Standards Commission, being the Chair, Mrs Lindsey Gallanders; Mr Kevin Dunion, OBE, who is Convenor of the Standards Commission for Scotland and Mrs Tricia Stewart.