

For immediate release

Renfrewshire Councillor found to have breached the Councillors’ Code of Conduct for the second time in two years

The Standards Commission for Scotland, at a Hearing held in Paisley on 23 October 2017, suspended Councillor Paul Mack for seven months for a second breach of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct in as many years.

The Hearing Panel viewed a webcast of a Council meeting on 29 September 2016 and noted that Councillor Mack had repeatedly talked and shouted over the Provost, as chair of the meeting, and had failed to comply with her rulings such that the meeting had to be adjourned twice. The Hearing Panel noted that the Council ultimately agreed a motion to have Councillor Mack suspended from the meeting.

The Hearing Panel further found that, during the same meeting, Councillor Mack made a number of gratuitous, personal and offensive remarks and a number of serious allegations about other councillors.

The Hearing Panel was therefore satisfied that Councillor Mack had failed to observe the requirement in the Code to respect the Chair and any colleagues at meetings of the Council. The Hearing Panel was of the view that councillors should be able to undertake a scrutiny role, represent the public and any constituents; or make a political point in a respectful, courteous and appropriate manner without resorting to personal attacks, being offensive, abusive and / or unduly disruptive.

The Hearing Panel was disappointed to note that Councillor Mack failed to comply with the Code despite the Standards Commission having previously suspended him for a similar breach. It suspended Councillor Mack from attending all meetings of the Council for a further period of seven months.

The Hearing Panel Chair, Mr Michael McCormick, said:

“The Hearing Panel considers Councillor Mack’s behaviour which, by his own admission was a deliberate course of action, went well beyond that which is acceptable in that he shouted over the Chair and seriously disrupted the meeting. The Hearing Panel was concerned that Councillor Mack showed no appreciation that he was obliged to comply with the Code of Conduct, which applies to all councillors”

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

23 October 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 paragraph 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, Mr Michael McCormick, Professor Kevin Dunion, OBE, and Mrs Lindsey Gallanders.