



19 November 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

ANGUS COUNCILLOR SUSPENDED FOR BEHAVING IN AN INAPPROPRIATE AND DISRESPECTFUL MANNER TOWARDS FEMALE COLLEAGUES AND OFFICERS

An Angus councillor has been suspended for a period of three months after being found to have behaved in a disrespectful manner towards female councillors and officers.

Liberal Democrat Councillor Richard Moore, who serves the Arbroath West and Letham ward, was found to have behaved inappropriately towards two fellow councillors and two officers at a briefing event on 11 October 2017 in relation to the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership and the Angus Care Model.

Councillor Moore's actions contravened the Councillors' Code of Conduct, which states that elected members must treat their colleagues and officers with courtesy and respect at all times when they are acting as a councillor.

Councillor Moore appeared before a Panel at a public hearing of the Standards Commission for Scotland (SCS) in Forfar on 19 November 2018, where he was suspended from the Council for three months for his conduct.

The finding and sanction reflected that SCS's decision that Councillor Moore had breached the Code and that his actions had fallen below the standards expected of those in public life.

Having heard evidence from the councillors and officers concerned, the Hearing Panel was satisfied that Councillor Moore had made unwarranted and inappropriate physical contact with them at the event on 11 October 2017. The Panel was further satisfied that Councillor Moore's behaviour towards the officers, including references to them being "lovely ladies" in the context of a workplace and formal meeting where the officers were acting in an official capacity and undertaking work functions, was patronising and demeaning. The Panel did not accept that Councillor Moore would have made similar remarks to male officers.

The Panel noted that Councillor Moore proffered an apology and had further advised that he had amended his behaviour in light of the concerns raised. However, the Panel found that he had been disrespectful towards fellow councillors and officers in four separate incidents. The Panel was concerned that Councillor Moore did not appear to understand the impact of his behaviour on others. The Panel was particularly concerned that Councillor Moore had not demonstrated insight into how the language he had used in a professional

environment would have made female colleagues and officers feel and, instead, had sought to minimise this. The Panel was further concerned that Councillor Moore had not demonstrated insight into the fact that unwarranted physical contact was wholly inappropriate.

Professor Kevin Dunion, OBE, Chair of the Hearing Panel, said: “it was Councillor Moore’s personal responsibility to be respectful and to have an awareness of the impact or potential impact of his behaviour on others. The Panel considered that there were certain and universal standards of behaviour expected in the workplace and that this included avoiding any unwarranted, unprofessional and inappropriate behaviour and physical contact.

“A failure on the part of an elected member to abide by the Code and behave in a respectful manner has the potential to disrupt effective working relations between elected members and officers and, further, can be a threat to reputation of the council and the role of an elected member.”

A full written decision in respect of the Hearing will be issued and published on the Standards Commission’s website within 14 days.

The Councillors’ Code of Conduct is based on nine key principles, which include integrity, honesty and transparency.

The SCS works independently of Government and political parties. It promotes and enforces Codes of Conduct for councillors, as well as individuals appointed to a wide range of national and regional public bodies across Scotland such as the Accounts Commission, the Scottish Qualification Authority, sportscotland, Scottish Water and the Scottish Police Authority and many other organisations, including NHS Boards and further education colleges.

Further information on the work of the SCS can be found at www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk.

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