



15 September 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCILLOR SUSPENDED FOR DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

A West Dunbartonshire Councillor, James Bollan, was suspended from attending the next two ordinary Council meetings by the Standards Commission at a Hearing held in Dumbarton on 14 September 2020. The Hearing Panel of the Standards Commission found that Councillor Bollan had behaved disrespectfully towards a council officer and had disclosed confidential information at a Special Council Meeting on 14 May 2019.

The Panel found that Councillor Bollan breached the Code of Conduct when he spoke to a Council employee in what witnesses described as an aggressive and demeaning manner prior to the Council meeting. The Code requires that councillors treat employees with courtesy and respect and, by behaving in such a way, Councillor Bollan had been disrespectful.

The Panel further found that, at the Council meeting that same day, Councillor Bollan had disclosed confidential information which had been redacted from an Internal Audit report. This referred to the name of an individual, company and contractor who had been awarded Council contracts.

Mr Paul Walker, Chair of the Hearing Panel, said: “the requirement for councillors to behave in a respectful manner towards officers and to maintain confidentiality are important parts of the Code, as a failure to do so can undermine the effective running of the Council.

“Councillors should be able to undertake their scrutiny role without being offensive or demeaning”.

“In this case, Councillor Bollan failed to conduct himself in a courteous and respectful manner.”

The Hearing Panel accepted that Councillor Bollan had disclosed the information in the course of a public meeting. While he may have considered it was in the public interest for the information to be disclosed, the Panel was of the view that the fact that the information had been redacted from the report meant that it was apparent the information was confidential and was to be treated as such.

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

Notes:

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

The Standards Commission 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, Sport Scotland, 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 <http://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/>

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Issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland. For further information please contact the Standards Commission on 0131 348 6666 or enquiries@standardscommission.org.uk