



**2 December 2025**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

### **GLASGOW CITY COUNCILLOR CLEARED OF ALLEGED BREACH OF COUNCILLORS' CODE**

Glasgow City Councillor Audrey Dempsey was found not to have breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct at a Hearing held in Glasgow on 2 December 2025, in respect of an allegation she had behaved disrespectfully towards a fellow councillor during a podcast interview broadcast on 10 October 2024.

At the Hearing, the Standards Commission's Panel heard that it was not in dispute that, during the podcast, Cllr Dempsey recounted a story her child had apparently told her about alleged incidents involving black children attacking white children and indicated that she had resolved to ask a question about the issue at a Council meeting.

The Panel noted it was not in dispute and was also evident from the recording of the podcast interview, that Cllr Dempsey then narrated that another councillor, being the then Business Manager of the Labour Group, had advised her that the Group did not want her to ask the question as it was not sufficiently politically correct. Cllr Dempsey alleged that after she had said the matter required to be addressed, the then Business Manager asked her whether she could "change the white to black", [as in, to refer to black children being the subject of the alleged attacks, rather than white]. The Panel noted that Cllr Dempsey then recounted that she had stated, in response, that doing so would change the context of the question.

While the Panel accepted that on the podcast Cllr Dempsey was speaking, as a mother, about her child's experiences, it noted she also discussed her work as a councillor and a question she wanted to ask at a Council meeting. The Panel further noted that Cllr Dempsey was referred to as a councillor both during the episode in question and in the written description of it that appeared on YouTube. The Panel was satisfied, therefore, Cllr Dempsey would be objectively considered to be acting as a councillor when making the comments on the podcast and, as such, that the Code applied to her conduct.

Having heard evidence from both Cllr Dempsey and the former Business Manager, the Panel was satisfied the then Business Manager had suggested the Respondent re-frame her proposed question. The Panel was satisfied that Cllr Dempsey understood the then Business Manager had made general comments to the effect she then recounted during the podcast, even if he did not use the exact words she attributed to him. The Panel was therefore satisfied that what Cllr Dempsey had narrated was her genuine interpretation of what had been said.

The Panel therefore proceeded to consider whether Cllr Dempsey's conduct, in recounting the comments on a public podcast, in the manner she had, would meet the threshold for amounting to a breach of the respect and courtesy provision in the Code.

The Panel acknowledged that by the time of the podcast, Cllr Dempsey was no longer a member of the Labour group and that it was accepted there was some ill-will between her and some of her

former colleagues, including the then Business Manager. The Panel nevertheless accepted Cllr Dempsey's position that, in making her comments and recounting her conversation with the then Business Manager, she was motivated by a desire to highlight an issue she considered had not been addressed, rather than by a desire to make him look bad or cause him reputational damage.

The Panel accepted that the then Business Manager may have had an expectation that Cllr Dempsey would not repeat, in public, what appeared to have been a private conversation between them. It agreed, nevertheless, that recounting that the then Business Manager had asked her to re-frame the question, out of concern that the party group might not appear to be politically correct, could not be characterised reasonably as being a serious, personal attack on him as an individual. In support of this, the Panel noted that the then Business Manager did not appear to have serious concerns in this regard and had not made a complaint himself. It further noted that while Cllr Dempsey had referred to his job title in recounting her experience, she had not named the then Business Manager in the podcast. Indeed, the Panel considered that it was evident from the recording that Cllr Dempsey's motivation was to make public her concerns that she was being silenced or censored in some way, rather than to criticise the Business Manager as an individual.

In the circumstances, the Panel did not consider that Cllr Dempsey's conduct, in making the comments in the specific circumstances, would in itself meet the threshold for disrespect in terms of the Code.

Ms Helen Donaldson, Chair of the Hearing Panel and Standards Commission Member, stated: "the Panel nevertheless wishes to emphasise that the Standards Commission, and indeed the public, expect politicians, including local councillors, to lead by example and be respectful at all times. The Panel notes that a failure to do so only serves to lower standards of public discourse and encourage the exchange of abuse, rather than reasoned and respectful debate."

A full written decision of the Hearing will be issued and published on the Standards Commission's website within 7 days.

ENDS

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Complaints about councillors are made to the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC). The Standards Commission and ESC are separate and independent, each with distinct functions. The ESC is responsible for investigating complaints. Following investigation, the ESC will refer its report to the Standards Commission for Scotland for adjudication. Email: [info@ethicalstandards.org.uk](mailto:info@ethicalstandards.org.uk), <https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/> Tel: 0300 011 0550
2. The [Standards Commission for Scotland](https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/) is an independent public body, responsible for encouraging high standards of behaviour by councillors and those appointed to boards of devolved public bodies including in education, environment, health, culture, transport, and justice. The role of the Standards Commission is to encourage high ethical standards in public life; promote and enforce the Codes of Conduct; issue guidance to councils and devolved public bodies and adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, applying sanctions where a breach is found.
3. The [Codes of Conduct](#) outline the standards of conduct expected of councillors and members of devolved public bodies. In local authorities, there is one Code of Conduct, approved by Scottish Parliament, which applies to all 1227 councillors elected to Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.