



27 October 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOUND TO HAVE BREACHED CODE OF CONDUCT

At a Hearing held in Hamilton on 27 October 2026, South Lanarkshire Councillor Gerry Convery was suspended for one month. This was after he was found to have breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Morag Ferguson, Standards Commission Member and Chair of the Hearing Panel, said: *"The Panel found Cllr Convery was disrespectful towards a Council housing officer during a telephone conversation in August 2025."*

Having considered carefully the evidence led at the Hearing and provided to the Ethical Standards Commissioner during his investigation, from various witnesses, the Panel concluded, on the balance of probabilities, that during a telephone call with the Complainer on 18 August 2025, concerning a housing matter involving one of his constituents, Cllr Convery:

- Spoke to the Complainer in a raised voice for the majority of the telephone conversation (which lasted for at least five minutes).
- Was asked by the Complainer repeatedly not to speak to her in a particular way, meaning it was evident that his manner and tone was unwelcome and inappropriate.
- Persisted in asking the same question of the Complainer.

The Panel determined that, in behaving in such a manner, Cllr Convery was disrespectful and discourteous towards the Complainer.

The Panel accepted that Cllr Convery was entitled to seek an update from the Complainer regarding his constituent's issue. The Panel further accepted that Cllr Convery was entitled to relay his constituent's concerns about the perceived lack of progress with the matter in question. The Panel agreed, however, that Cllr Convery should have been able to do so in a courteous and respectful manner. The Panel further found that Cllr Convery's conduct undermined the mutual trust and respect necessary for effective working relationships between elected members and council officers. The Panel concluded, therefore, that he had breached the Code.

The Panel considered council officers have a right to work in a safe and respectful environment, without being subjected to disrespectful behaviour. Having taken into account its nature and this context, the Panel determined, on balance, that Cllr Convery's conduct was sufficiently excessive as to justify, as proportionate, a restriction on his enhanced right to freedom of expression that such a finding would entail.

In determining the sanction to be imposed, the Panel noted that the requirement for councillors to treat everyone with whom they come into contact, in their capacity as elected members with respect is a key provision of the Code. The Panel noted that a failure to comply with the Code's provision in this regard can adversely affect the rights and reputations of others, as well as harming the mutual bond of trust and confidence between councillors and officers that enables local government to function effectively. It further has the potential to erode public confidence in the role of a councillor and the local authority itself.

The Panel agreed that, as an experienced councillor, Cllr Convery should have been able to seek an update on behalf of his constituent without being disrespectful. The Panel was concerned that while that may not have been Cllr Convery's intention, he had not demonstrated any insight, understanding or remorse, either at the time or at the Hearing, into how his conduct could be perceived and the impact it both could and, indeed, did have on others.

The Panel nevertheless noted, in mitigation, that Cllr Convery's conduct was limited in duration to one telephone call. In addition, the Panel noted that Cllr Convery had cooperated fully with the investigation and adjudication processes. In the circumstances and context, the Panel concluded, on balance, that a full suspension of one month was an appropriate sanction.

A full written decision of the Hearing will be issued and published on the Standards Commission's website within 14 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, <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.