

3 March 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Councillor suspended for 2 months

Councillor Pdraig McShane (Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council) has been suspended for two months following an Adjudication Hearing held today (3 March).

The suspension related to Councillor McShane's arrest in the Diamond area of Ballycastle, Co Antrim on 12 July 2016. Prior to his arrest Councillor McShane had been at a protest at Altananam Park, Ballycastle in respect of an Orange Order Parade which marched through the town on that day.

Following Councillor McShane's conviction and subsequent appeal, he stood convicted of the offences of resisting police (for which he was fined £100), disorderly behaviour in a public place (for which he received a conditional discharge), and taking part in an un-notified protest meeting (for which he was fined £100).

Assistant Commissioner Katrin Shaw found that a member of the public, in possession of the facts, would reasonably consider that Councillor McShane's conduct was such that it brought his position as a councillor into disrepute.

She was satisfied therefore that he had breached paragraph 4.2 of the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors. She was also satisfied that his actions had not brought his Council into disrepute.

In considering what sanction to apply, Ms Shaw noted the aggravating factors in this case, including that the councillor had been convicted of criminal offences, and that he had previously been found to have breached the Code of Conduct in November 2016.

However, there were mitigating factors in this case, which included Councillor McShane's co-operation with the investigation and adjudication process, and the recent role he had played in governance issues relating to the Council.

Having considered the sanctions available and taking account of the need to uphold confidence in the standards regime, the assistant Commissioner believed that suspension for a period of 2 months, to begin on 8 April, was a necessary and proportionate sanction.

Notes:

The Councillor may appeal to the High Court against this decision in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Acting Commissioner's full written decision will be made available shortly on the Commissioner's website at:

<https://nipso.org.uk/nilgcs/hearings-and-adjudication-decisions/>

ENDS

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