

CODE OF CONDUCT

DECISION NOTICE

Subject	Councillor Robert Betton
Matter	Allegation that Cllr Betton failed to treat others with respect and brought his office and/or the Council into disrepute.
Standards Committee Hearing Date	Wednesday, 29 June 2022

Statement of Facts

A code of conduct complaint was made that Cllr Robert Betton had breached the Council's code of conduct by virtue of his actions on 21 and 22 October 2021. The complainant was concerned that Cllr Betton's late submission of documentation on 21 October 2021 for the Development Control Committee the following day was disrespectful to the staff that had to process it. Further, on 22 October 2021, at the meeting of the Development Control Committee, Cllr Betton had requested an additional three minutes' speaking time when making his submissions to the said Committee. The request was denied by the Chair but when he spoke, despite being asked to sum up by the Chair, Cllr Betton continued his submissions. Cllr Betton was asked to stop talking on several occasions but ignored the Chair's clear instructions. Cllr Betton continued to speak even though his microphone had been deactivated. Eventually, the Head of Legal Democratic Services had to approach Cllr Betton and ask him to stop. Ultimately, Cllr Betton spoke for approximately fifteen or sixteen minutes, it was estimated.

Councillors undertake to comply with the following aspects of the Code of Conduct:

- 1.1 I treat other Councillors and members of the public with respect.**
- 1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**
- 5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

Independent Person's View

The Independent Person's view was that there was insufficient evidence to support a finding that Cllr Betton had brought the Council into disrepute or that he had failed to treat staff with the appropriate respect. However, Cllr Betton, by ignoring clear instructions at the Development Control Committee on 22 October 2021, had breached the Code of Conduct by failing to treat the Chair of the Development Control Committee with the appropriate level of respect.

Decision

The Standards Committee decided that Cllr Betton's actions had not brought the Council into disrepute and nor had he treated staff with a lack of respect.

The Standards Committee did decide that, whilst making representations as the Ward Councillor, Cllr Betton's wilful ignoring of clear instructions from the Chair of the Development Control Committee did breach the Council's Code of Conduct as he failed to treat the Chair of the Committee with respect. Cllr Betton's breach was exacerbated by the public nature of the forum.

Sanction

The Standards Committee decided that the sanctions for the breach should be this Report to Council; the decision of the Committee to be published on the Council's website; a letter to Cllr Betton inviting him to apologise to Cllr Morton and the other Members of the Development Control Committee. Further, Cllr Betton to be offered some suitable and relevant training.

Mark Lambert

Monitoring Officer

Carlisle City Council

26 July 2022