



# Carlisle City Council

## Report to COUNCIL

### Report details

Meeting Date: 9 November 2021  
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources  
Key Decision: No  
Policy and Budget Framework: Yes/No  
Public / Private: Public

Title: Code of Conduct complaint: Cllr G Ellis  
Report of: Chair of Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer  
Report Number: GD.75/21

### Purpose / Summary:

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 the Standards Committee heard and upheld two complaints that Cllr G Ellis had breached the Council's Code of Conduct for Elected Members. The Standards Committee determined that a formal report should be brought to Council.

### Recommendations:

That Council receive and note the decisions of the Standards Committee.

### Tracking

Standards Committee:	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Council:	

## **1. Background**

1.1. The Monitoring Officer received two complaints that Cllr Ellis had breached the Code of Conduct for Members. Specifically, the complaints were as follows:

### **1.1.1. Complaint No 1:**

1.1.1.1. During a meeting of the City Council on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020, in the Council Chamber, a Member was on her feet speaking to her motion which had not, at that point, been seconded. As the Member was speaking, Cllr Ellis spoke over her, interrupted her and tried to put an amendment. The manner in which he did so was rude and insulting and the interruption was designed to put her off and detract from what she was saying.

1.1.1.2. During the subsequent debate, Cllr Ellis was rude, insulting and bullying. He referred to the other Member in a dismissive manner and dismissed points which she had made. As she responded to his points, he sat speaking to another councillor and paid no attention to her, showing a lack of respect.

1.1.1.3. The conduct of Cllr Ellis fell below the standard to be expected of an Elected Member.

### **1.1.2. Complaint No 2:**

1.1.2.1. Following the meeting of the City Council on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 Cllr Ellis made a number of posts on social media about a fellow councillor, including to his facebook account on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 20.24 in which he referred to the councillor as a 'violent little thug', referred to his 'violent little outbursts' and 'using violence and threatening behaviour' and also described the councillor as being a member of Momentum which was incorrect.

1.1.2.2. The conduct of Cllr Ellis thereby fell below the standard to be expected of an Elected Member.

1.2. The complaints were heard at a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

## **2. Decision**

2.1 Having weighed the evidence the Standards Committee held that:

### **2.2 Complaint No 1:**

2.2.1 Cllr Ellis did breach the Code of Conduct, in particular paragraphs 5(5) (to treat people with respect, regardless of their sex, race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability) and 5(11) (to promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in office).

2.2.2 The Committee did not, however, consider that Cllr Ellis had brought his office or the authority into disrepute.

2.3 Complaint No 2:

2.3.1 Cllr Ellis breached the Code of Conduct, in particular paragraphs 5(5) (to treat people with respect, regardless of their sex, race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability) and 5(11) (to promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in office).

2.3.2 The Committee did not, however, consider that Cllr Ellis had brought his office or the authority into disrepute.

**3. Sanctions**

3.1 That a formal letter be sent to Cllr Ellis; and

3.2 That the findings of the Standards Committee be reported to the Council for information.

**Contact details:**

Contact Officer: Clare Liddle

Ext: 7305

**Appendices attached to report:**

- None

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

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**EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2021**

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**ST.13/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (1)**  
(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Elected Member  
Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.62/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Elected Member's Representative addressed the Committee on behalf of the Elected Member.

The Elected Member's Representative responded to questions from the Committee.

The Investigating Officer and the Elected Member's Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Elected Member and Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.62/21 and listened to the submission made by the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct by failing to treat another with respect and failing to promote high standards of conduct.

The Standards Committee considered the sanctions available to them and agreed the following sanctions for the Elected Member:

That a formal letter be sent to the Elected Member  
That the Standards Committee report its findings in public to the Council

**ST.15/21 ALLEGATION THAT AN ELECTED MEMBER HAS BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT (3)**  
(Public and Press Paragraph 1)

Also Present – Complainant  
Complainant's Representative  
Elected Member  
Elected Member's Representative

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented report GD.64/21 regarding an allegation that an Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officer presented his finding.

The Complainant addressed the Committee.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided legal advice regarding the relevant legislation and case law which the Committee must take into account.

The Complainant responded to questions from the Elected Member's Representative and Investigating Officer.

The Elected Member's Representative addressed the Committee on behalf of the Elected Member.

The Elected Member's Representative and the Elected Member responded to questions from the Committee, the Investigating Officer and the Complainant's Representative.

The Investigating Officer and the Complainant's Representative each summed up.

The Investigating Officer, Complainant, Complainant's Representative, Former Elected Member and Former Elected Member's Representative withdrew from the meeting whilst the Committee gave detailed consideration to the matter. The respective parties returned, and it was:

RESOLVED – That the Standards Committee had considered the evidence set out in report GD.64/21 and listened to the submissions made by the Complainant and the Elected Member's Representative.

The Standards Committee agreed that the Elected Member had breached the Members' Code of Conduct by failing to treat another with respect and failing to promote high standards of conduct.

The Standards Committee considered the sanctions available to them and agreed the following sanctions for the Elected Member:

That a formal letter be sent to the Elected Member

That the Standards Committee report its findings in public to the Council