

## PRESS RELEASE

14 February 2024

### Former councillor censured for breach of code of conduct

Former councillor Patrick Brown has been censured by Assistant Local Government Commissioner for Standards Ian Gordon after accepting he breached the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors while a member of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

The breach related to an incident in 2019 in which he put information online about the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive.

Former councillor Brown's actions relating to the information he put online, his subsequent contact with the former Chief Executive of the Council, and his conduct during the investigation were held to be in breach of the following rules of the Code of Conduct:

- **4.14** *You must work responsibly and with respect, with others and with employees of councils.*
- **4.2** *You must not conduct yourself in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your position as a councillor, or your council, into disrepute.*
- **4.6.** *You must comply with any request of the Commissioner in connection with an investigation conducted in accordance with the Commissioner's statutory powers.*

Former councillor Brown issued an apology to the members of the selection panel and the former Chief Executive of the council.

Assistant Commissioner Gordon noted that while the former councillor's actions did not warrant disqualification, he would have considered a short period of suspension to be an appropriate sanction. However, as he is no longer a serving councillor this was not an option, so in the circumstances censure was the correct sanction.

#### Notes:

The full written decision and the accompanying Joint Position Paper can be found at <https://www.nipso.org.uk/nlgcs/hearings/previous-hearings>