



**11 March 2026**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **TWO EDINBURGH COUNCILLORS CENSURED FOR BREACHING THE COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

At a Hearing held in the City Chambers on 11 March 2026, City of Edinburgh Councillors Neil Ross and Marie-Clair Munro were censured by the Standards Commission for having breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct. This was for failing to declare an interest when matters concerning the Braid Estate 'Quiet Route' were being considered at meetings of the Council's Transport and Environment Committee and at a workshop.

Dr Lezley Stewart, Standards Commission Member and Chair of the Hearing Panel, said: "The Panel found that Cllrs Ross and Munro failed to declare a non-financial interest in relation to matters concerning the Braid Estate 'Quiet Route' and, instead, took part in the discussion and decision-making. This was despite them having a connection to the matter by virtue of where they lived".

The Panel found that, at the time of a meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee in June 2023 and a workshop for elected members in August 2023, Cllr Ross lived on the road parallel to the road that was the subject of the 'Quiet Route'. It further found that Cllr Munro lived on the road itself (albeit at a part that was not included as part of proposed redesigned route) at the time of both the meeting and workshop, and a later meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee in March 2024. As such, the Panel was satisfied a connection existed between both Respondents and the Quiet Route that was the subject of the item being considered at the meetings and workshop.

The Panel noted that the Code requires councillors to declare any connection to a matter being considered if the objective test is met. This is where a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the connection to the particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence their discussion or decision-making.

As such, the Panel noted the test is one of perception. It noted therefore, that the questions of:

- whether the councillors' connections actually influenced their discussion or decision-making;
- the outcome of the meetings or workshop;
- whether any decision made had an actual impact on their property (either positive or negative); and
- any public support for decisions made,

were not relevant to the question of whether they should have declared an interest.

While the Panel accepted that where the councillors lived may not have actually influenced their decision-making at the meeting, it noted that the objective test is just that – objective. In other words, it is not about what a councillor might know about their own motivations and whether any connection would unduly influence them or affect how they contributed to any discussion. Instead, it is a matter of what others would reasonably think, if they were in possession of the relevant facts.

The Panel was satisfied, in this case, that the relevant facts, in respect of the objective test were:

- That the location of the properties owned by the two councillors were so close to the Quiet Route that any change to the ways in which traffic was being directed under it, and the consequent impacts (for example in respect of traffic volume, parking and pedestrian and cycle routes) were likely to affect where they lived.
- That councillors present at the meetings and workshop were being asked to consider matters concerning how the future of the Quiet Route would be planned or determined.

The Panel considered that, having applied the objective test both Cllrs Ross and Munro should have reached the view that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, as outlined above, would reasonably regard their connections as being so significant that they would be considered as being likely to influence their discussion or decision-making. This was because it was evident any decision or potential decision resulting from consideration of these matters would likely have a direct impact on the road in question and any nearby streets.

The Panel agreed, therefore, that both councillors should have declared an interest, withdrawn from the meetings and taken no part in the discussion and decision-making on the matter. The Panel found that their failure to do so amounted to a breach of the Code.

In reaching its decision on sanction, the Hearing Panel noted that both councillors had co-operated with the investigative and Hearing processes. The Panel was satisfied that there was no attempt by either Respondent to conceal their connections, or any evidence that the Respondents benefitted financially or personally.

Dr Stewart nevertheless noted: “The Panel emphasised that the requirement for councillors to declare interests is a fundamental requirement of the Code as it gives the public confidence that decisions are being made in the public interest, and not the personal interest of any councillor or their friends, family or close associates. A failure to comply with the Code’s requirements in this regard can erode confidence in the Council and leave its decisions open to legal challenge.”

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](mailto:info@ethicalstandards.org.uk), <https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/> Tel: 0300 011 0550

2. The [Standards Commission for Scotland](#) 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.