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Complaint submitted by Eileen O'Connor to Sefton Council

Complaint against Councillor Leslie Byrom arises from a comment he made to me at the end of a private meeting following a Public Consultation and Engagement Panel meeting on Monday 3 June 2024. The private meeting was recorded, with permission from Cllr Byrom and Cllr Liz Dowd, who was also in attendance. The unabridged video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXUloBLEzDQ>

The comment to which this complaint pertains is transcribed below (24 mins 30 into the video):

“I feel that the hectoring attitude you have taken into this meeting has not helped your case, and if you write to me, honestly, I’m less likely to give it credibility only in the way (please record this) that this has been conducted today.”

I contend that this statement breaches the Members’ Code of Conduct, in particular, the sections below:

General Principles

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person

APPENDIX A – THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Cllr Byrom's description of my attitude at the meeting as "hectoring" is a purely subjective judgement. Others who have viewed the video have strongly disagreed with this descriptor, and have suggested adjectives such as "passionate", "robust", "well-informed" instead. Cllr Byrom is of course entitled to his opinion, but it is my contention that, as a councillor for his local community, he is not entitled to give any evidence I submit to him less "credibility" on the basis of his perception of the manner in which my arguments at the meeting were conveyed. Cllr Byrom's explicit statement of intent in this regard represents a breach of the 'impartiality' clauses of the Members' Code of Conduct, which prohibits councillors from improperly conferring a disadvantage on any person, and requires councillors to act and take decisions "without discrimination or bias".

Download the EM Radiation Research Trust letter sent to officials following this meeting regarding the councils lack of public engagement along with serious concerns about 5G.

<https://www.radiationresearch.org/news/sefton-councils-consultation-on-digital-strategy-2024-2027-review-and-observations-following-sefton-councils-public-engagement-and-consultation-meeting-3rd-june-2024/>