



SUMMARY OF HEARING PANEL DECISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND REASONS

Following an adjournment on the 26th of September 2025, the Hearing Panel of Dover District Council reconvened on the 24th of November 2025 and considered a report of an investigation into the alleged conduct of Councillor Leon Prescott, a member of Aylesham Parish Council.

The complaint concerned an allegation that just before the commencement of a meeting of Aylesham Parish Council on 4 June 2024, in the upstairs meeting room at Aylesham House, Councillor Prescott made a comment that the complainant regarded as deeply offensive and reflective of a discriminatory attitude.

The Hearing Panel considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, which included the Investigators final report relating to the matter. The Hearing Panel heard from the Independent Persons, the Investigating Officer, and the complainant. Councillor Prescott did not attend.

The Hearing Panel noted the Local Government Association guidance with regard to 'disrepute' and 'freedom of expression'.

The Hearing Panel found that on a balance of probabilities, Councillor Prescott had made the comment and that it was racist and highly offensive. Furthermore, the Hearing Panel found the comment to indicate a suspicion of any outsiders within the village.

The Hearing Panel determined that Councillor Prescott had breached the Aylesham Parish Council's Code of Conduct:

Paragraph 3(2)(f)	You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Authority into disrepute.
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The Hearing Panel was satisfied that any restriction on Councillor Prescott's right to free speech was justified on this occasion.

Sanction:

The Hearing Panel applied the following sanction:

5.1(j) The Monitoring Officer to send a formal letter to Councillor Prescott, as soon as possible.

Recommendations to Aylesham Parish Council:

5.1(a) That Councillor Prescott be issued with a formal censure (i.e. the issue of an unfavourable opinion for judgement or reprimand) by motion;

- 5.1(b) That Councillor Prescott be removed from committees or sub-committees of the Parish Council;
- 5.1(d) Arrange training for Councillor Prescott within 6 weeks, noting that wider training is to be arranged by the Parish Council and this may be as part of wider Parish Council training;
- 5.1(e) That Councillor Prescott be removed from one or more outside appointments, if Councillor Prescott has been so appointed or nominated; and
- 5.1(k) Issue a press release