

SPSO decision report



Case: 201003260, Argyll and Bute Council

Sector: local government

Subject: policy/administration

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council changed their policy on free school transport without consultation with the parents concerned. This meant that his two primary school age children were no longer entitled to free bus travel to school. He complained that the council had not followed the Road Safety guidelines and did not ensure that the road safety report (assessment of the walking route) was compiled correctly. He also complained that inspections, notifications and decisions on road safety were not undertaken fairly (as part of a consultation) and the council failed to give parents early advice of the alternative arrangements which might be available for their children. Our investigation found that there was no requirement for the council to consult before making the policy change because it was undertaken as part of their budget process. And although the parents had obtained an independent report which concluded that the route was unsafe to walk, there was no evidence that the council did not assess the route in accordance with requirements and guidelines. Finally, we found that the council had engaged with parents and had corresponded with Mr C when he raised his concerns about the changes.