

SPSO decision report

Case: 201003683, The Highland Council
Sector: local government
Subject: complaints handling
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C is a commercial user of a harbour which is the council's responsibility. He said that in 2007 and 2008, he and others drew the council's attention to a derelict pontoon dragging its moorings. The council did not take action to have the pontoon removed, but in response to Mr C and others pursuing the matter they decided, as part of a general review of harbour finance, to introduce annual charges for the mooring of pontoons.

Mr C was unhappy about the charges. He complained to the council that officers had ignored the communications regarding derelict pontoons and then denied them. After complaining, he remained unhappy with the council's responses, and complained to us about the charges and the council's complaints handling.

We found that Mr C's complaint about the imposition of the charges fell outside our jurisdiction so we could not look at that complaint. We did, however, uphold his second complaint - that the council did not reasonably investigate his complaint after he made it to them. We found that they did not handle the complaint well at any stage.

Recommendation

We recommended that the council:

- apologise for the flaws identified in their complaints handling.