

SPSO decision report

Case: 201602131, East Dunbartonshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: communication, staff attitude and confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the council regarding a meeting he had with them to discuss proposed design changes to a public space. He told us that he felt the staff present had communicated in a manner which was hostile and patronising and that he had left with the impression that the purpose of the meeting was to bully and intimidate him rather than discuss the merits of the proposal in question.

Mr C had originally advised that he held a recording of the meeting in question, taken with the permission of everyone present. However, the recording had become corrupted and Mr C was unable to provide this.

On investigation, we found that the council had not taken minutes or made any other written record of the meeting. We did not consider this unreasonable in the circumstances but this did mean we were unable to reach a definitive conclusion, basing our decision on the limited records that were available.

On balance, we concluded that while it was clear that Mr C had left the meeting extremely dissatisfied with the manner council officers communicated with him, the evidence available did not support this complaint. What written communication was available was considered and professional in tone and appeared to suggest that the council were willing to discuss the issues in question openly and thoroughly. We therefore did not uphold the complaint.