

SPSO decision report

Case: 201703748, The Highland Council
Sector: local government
Subject: handling of application (complaints by opponents)
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C complained about the way the council handled two planning applications for a new house being built near to their home. They also complained that the actions of council officers at a planning meeting had been unreasonable, as the council officers had met with the applicant.

We took independent advice from a planning adviser. We did find some omissions in the report of handling relating to the initial planning application, and we provided feedback to the council about this. However, on the whole, we concluded that the council's handling, processing and assessment of the planning applications were reasonable. We did not uphold these aspects of the complaint.

Regarding the meeting council officers had with the applicant, we found that this happened in order to check some information about the application. They did this at the committee meeting to avoid the need for the decision on the application to be deferred to another meeting. We considered that this was reasonable, and we noted that the council had apologised to Mr and Mrs C for not explaining why the discussion was taking place at the meeting and for not including them in the discussion. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.