

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201002860, East Renfrewshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** handling of application (complaints by applicants)  
**Outcome:** some upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C applied, through architects, for planning consent to demolish a small bungalow and to build a substantial two storey house. There were no objections to his application and it was determined under the council's scheme of delegation (where the decision is taken by planning officers rather than by a committee of the council). Although a supportive engineer's report and landscape report were provided, the planning case officer had reservations about recommending approval. There was also a replacement local plan being discussed. Because of this, the officer suggested three times that the application should be withdrawn and resubmitted. Mr C, however, insisted on continuing with the application. When officers decided to refuse planning permission, Mr C engaged a planning consultant and requested that the decision be reviewed. The local review board considered this and, by a narrow majority, upheld the officers' decision. Mr C complained to the council about the handling of the application and the review process.

Mr C then made seven complaints to us detailing a large number of points that he wished considered. Four of the seven complaints were about his concerns that there were deficiencies in the processing of the initial application and the report of handling; two were about the administration and conduct of the local review board; and the seventh was about the council's handling of his complaint. We upheld two of the complaints - about the processing of the initial application and inadequacies in the report of handling. We did not, however, find that the officers unreasonably withheld consent, and we did not find it necessary to make any recommendations. Our investigation found that, in large measure, identical issues had been set out in the planning consultant's very detailed submission to the local review board. We did not uphold Mr C's other complaints.