

FOI Request 2013-493695 – Part 2

1. The attached pieces of correspondence relate to point No 2 in FOI Request 2013-493695. This correspondence was received in advance of the SPSO's evidence session on 23 January 2013, as was circulated to Committee MSPs, along with their papers for that meeting, on 18 January 2013.

2. Unredacted copies of correspondence were provided to MSPs.

3. In accordance with Data Protection legislation and issues of third party confidentiality, specific contact details have been redacted from the correspondence, as required. This is indicated where necessary.

David Cullum
Clerk to the Committee
25 March 2013

Submission No 1

From: [name redacted] [*Email address redacted under data protection requirements*]

Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 10:58 AM

To: Public Service Reforms

Subject: Ombudsman - Lack of independent scrutiny

Dear Sirs,

Following a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman over faults and irregularities in a neighbours' planning application process, I submitted a complaint. This was refused on the basis of time barring, despite this being the fault of the legal officer of Argyll and Bute Council issuing wrong timetabling.

COPY OF Details sent to Integrity4Scotland:-

QUOTE

Thank you for your detailed reply.

The time limit was wrongly advised to me in the Council and Ombudsman's complaints procedures sent me by [name redacted] of Argyll and Bute Council and the Council was reprimanded by the Ombudsman for this mis-information. The Ombudsman still refused to take on my case even though he recognised that lateness was not my fault but that of the Council.

They did not even go through the complaints with the Council so I have no evidence of any possible outcome.

The faults by the Council Planning Department were documented by us and I even had my time as Chairman of the Community Council evidence from serving on the Draft Structure Planning stages (amongst 30 other years of service). The agricultural shed notification mess even had a written apology from the Council!

I may have another chance at the Ombudsman if our complaints against the Keeper of the Land Register refuses to answer why he has issued two wrongly detailed land certificates and never advised us, the property owners, either in writing, by telephone, or when sending a representative to study our faulty boundaries or when we spent time in their Glasgow offices. He kept contacting solicitors no longer used by us even when he had been in correspondence with the present solicitors. It is not known why the sacked solicitors never responded nor contacted us (two different Glasgow firms).

I have visited the statistics of the SPOS as you suggested, which is pretty comprehensive and does show what a considerable workload they have. Pity they are so ineffectual. Will look again.

I have also visited your site and signed on.

Regards

[name redacted]

END OF Quote

I therefore joined Integrity4 Scotland who have a membership also suffering from faulty, inconsistent and negative attitudes and inaction towards valid complaints against the operation of the Ombudsman's services.

I would ask the Committee to add my comments to those others now being submitted from members of the public.

[Private postal and email contact address redacted under data protection requirements]

Submission No 2

From: [name redacted] [*Email address redacted under data protection requirements*]

Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 8:53 AM

To: Stewart K (Kevin), MSP; Wilson J (John), MSP; McTaggart A (Anne), MSP; Pentland J (John), MSP; Mitchell M (Margaret), MSP; Smith SW (Stephen); McMillan SM (Stuart), MSP; Local Government and Regeneration Committee

Subject: SPSO complaints about their decisions are not reported to Parliament

The Local Government & Regeneration Committee is to take oral evidence from Jim Martin Scottish Ombudsman on 23rd January 2103.

I would like to bring to your attention some disturbing facts about the spso:-

1. Since inception of the spso in 2003, the spso has deliberately withheld from the Scottish Parliament all details of the level of complaints from the members of the public about their decisions. They have been able to do this by having two categories of complaints. The first category is “service delivery” complaints relating to being treated unfairly or rudely, failed to explain things clearly, or caused unreasonable delays which they are happy to report to Parliament. The Second category is “decision complaints” which they have never reported to Parliament or included in their annual reports as confirmed by the spso in their FOI response dated 27th April 2012 (included below).

2. The FOI response dated 27th April 2012 also shows that the level of complaints about the spso’s decisions has increased by a factor of 5+ times since Jim Martin took over as Ombudsman compared to the previous Ombudsman Professor Brown (There was 120 decision complaints in the period 2004 to 2008 and 640 decision complaints in the period 2009 to 2012).

640 complaints about the spso’s decisions in the last 4 years is a significant indicator of the level of dissatisfaction by members of the public regarding the supposed provision of administrative justice from the spso.

I would like to request that the Local Government and Regeneration committee ask Jim Martin to explain why the spso has never reported any complaints about their decisions to Parliament and ask what action he intends to take to re-build confidence that the spso is in fact providing an administrative justice service to the public.

I would also request that my email is provided as background evidence supplied by the public to the LG&RC and published with the minutes of your 23rd January meeting with my email address to be redacted before being published.

Regards

[name redacted]

From: HLittlemore@spsso.org.uk **On Behalf Of** Ask@spsso.org.uk
Sent: 27 April 2012 11:46
To: [name redacted] [*Email address redacted under data protection requirements*]
Subject: RE: Decision complaints FOI request
Importance: High

Dear Mr [name redacted]

Your request for information reference [reference number redacted]

I refer to your email of 30 March 2012 for information relating to requests for reviews of SPSO decisions for each year since 2002.

Your request has been processed in line with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), and I can now respond as follows.

1. *Number of complaints/year made to the spso about their decisions.*

Decision review requests by year

2003-04	4
2004-05	29
2005-06	16
2006-07	12
2007-08	63
2008-09	153
2009-10	172
2010-11	150
2011-12	165

2. *Were these decision complaints /year reported to Scottish Parliament and if so provide a copy of the document where they were reported.*
Decision reviews were not reported to the Scottish Parliament.
3. *Were these decision complaints /year reported in the spso's annual reports and if so provide a copy of the annual report where they were reported.*
Decision reviews were not reported in the SPSO Annual Reports.
4. *Have the spso ever reported the numbers of complaints about their decisions and if so provide a copy of the documents.*
Decision review figures have not been reported externally.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Littlemore
Freedom of Information/Data Protection Officer

Submission No 3

From: [name redacted] [*Email address redacted under data protection requirements*]

Sent: 18 January 2013 12:41

To: Cullum DJ (David)

Subject: Complaint against Dumfries & Galloway Council and SPSO Response

Dear Mr Cullum

I refer to the email I sent you yesterday, 17 January 2013.

In my haste to get this to you, I have noted some typing errors and apologise for not doing a very good editing job.

Also, I should have given you some background to the case with timing and sequence of events involved:

2004: Statutory Notice served by Dumfries & Galloway Council to fix windows and roof covering.

2006: Work completed - roof work unsatisfactory per professional reports. Council says work satisfactory

2007: Court action initiated by Contractor against me Counterclaim lodged.

2008: 15 September Contractor sequestrated during Court process

2009: 18 June, Case determined by Sheriff. Claim dismissed, Counterclaim upheld with judicial expenses.

2010: 18 May, Dumfries & Galloway Council offer sum as compensation. Point me in direction of SPSO

2010: November - letter of complaint to SPSO re amount of compensation offered

2011: 7 February 2011, letter from SPSO stating investigation not complete but support Council offer.

2011: 21 February 2011, letter from SPSO defining my complaint.

2011: 14 March 2011, final report from SPSO confirming decision of 7 February 2011. But, they now accuse me of re-negotiating contract after approval on 30 November 2004. None of my complaints are upheld. There follows an exchange of correspondence but SPSO decision stands.

2012: Further exchange of correspondence with SPSO demonstrating that accusation about my re-negotiating contract with contractor must have been based on misunderstanding of 'averment' in Court pleadings. SPSO rejects this and then claims that 'negotiation' took place when in 2006 I was advised by both the contractor and Case Officer of the Council that the roofing underfelt specified in the contract was not suitable for 'sarking' roofs and would cause

'sweating'. This advice, admitted by the contractor in his Court pleadings and supported by the Case Officer is now defined by the SPSO as a 'negotiation' by me.

2012: 30 October 2012 letter from SPSO to my MSP in which the initial accusation (of my having on 30 November 2004, after the approval by the Council, re-negotiated a contract with the contractor) now changes to refer to exchanges between me and the contractor in the period between the quote for grant purposes being submitted in July 2004 and my formal acceptance of the contractor's quote on 30 November 2004.

This is not only a disingenuous recasting of what they have consistently alleged but is dishonest. The approval to award the contract was given by the Council on 8 September 2004. I wrote formally to the contractor on 30 November 2004 advising him that his quotation had been approved by the Council. The quotation approved by the Council on 8 September 2004 was not altered in any way and there was no 'negotiations' between myself and the contractor between the approval on 8 September 2004 and 30 November 2004, nor were there any negotiations with the contractor on 30 November 2004.

The SPSO goes on to say that 'the case reviewer has assured me that he did not base his decision on his reading of averments in the court action in 2009'. The complaints reviewer has at no time seen the pursuer's full pleadings in the court case or the rebuttal lodged on Mr [name redacted] behalf. The only documents in this connection that Mr [name redacted] supplied to this office were a single page note of Sheriff [name redacted] decision on 18 June 2009 and on page (page eight) of the pursuer's court submission, which does not refer to the changes.'

On the first point made in the above paragraph, the only place where the accusation made by the case reviewer appears in all of the documentation in this case, is in an 'averment' contained in the pleadings lodged by the Solicitor representing the contractor and nowhere else. The SPSO has refused to provide my MSP with the evidence upon which he based the charge against me. Why? On the second issue above, I fail to understand the point being made. All of the relevant evidence in the case was passed to the SPSO. Unfortunately, the Sheriff's 'interlocutor' aka decree, aka decision required only one sheet of paper. The 'decision' was signed by Sheriff [name redacted]. Mr [name redacted], Solicitor, represented me at the hearing. If page 8 was the only page from the pleadings available to the SPSO and this does not refer to 'the changes' which only he claims to have been made, then why is my MSP's request for the evidence on which he bases his claims about 'changes' being refused?

In his letter to my MSP the SPSO complains that I contacted him again on 18 September 2012 but that in advance of his reply of 11 October 2012 I contacted my MSP on 8 October 2012.

I might apologise for appearing to be discourteous except for the fact that the SPSO in an earlier letter to me dated 30 April 2012, said 'If you choose to correspond with us further about this complaint, any letters you send will be filed without response'.

His reply of 11 October 2012, written and signed by his Senior Personal Assistant said 'In his letter of 30 April 2012, Mr Martin confirms that Mr [name redacted] decision (Complaints Reviewer) on the case represents this office's full and final position on your complaint. This letter brings the SPSO involvement in your case to a close and we will not be in a position to

respond to any future correspondence from you about the complaint we have already investigated.'

CONCLUSION

A very serious and false charge that I re-negotiated a contract with the contractor in 2004 has been made against me by the SPSO.

The SPSO now moves to a different ground and says 'I am satisfied that the word 'negotiation' accurately describes what occurred in this case; your contractor made changes to the originally agreed specification, you had misgivings about these which you raised with the contractor but, eventually, you reluctantly agreed to the changes'

'I do not, therefore, consider that Mr [name redacted] reference to you negotiating with your contractor was incorrect nor that his decision rests on an inaccurate conception of the facts. As I previously advised you, the criteria for conducting a review in your case have not been met and , consequently, I will not be reviewing your case'.

'I do feel, however, that it may be helpful to comment briefly on the substantive point of your complaint about the Council agreeing changes to your contract with your contractor. In my view, Mr [name redacted] letter deals with this point fully and clearly. The fact is that the Council could not agree changes to your contract as they were not party to it'. 'Only you could agree any changes'.

The Solicitor representing the Pursuer in the case said that my complaint against the Council (Case Officer) agreeing with the contractor to change the original roof underfelt had not been answered. In addition, an email from the Case Officer supporting the contractor plus other correspondence, including the Case Officer later stating that the work was satisfactory, despite a copy of professional advice given to him setting out the problems with roof, is not even mentioned by the complaints reviewer in his decision on this complaint.

The notion that I 'negotiated' to ruin the roof of my house is outrageous and there is no rationale given for using this word except to question my integrity and hope that this exercise in obfuscation, conflating the 30 November 2004 allegation about me re-negotiating a contract after Council approval, with the situation in February 2006 where I sought advice from the Case Officer, will somehow explain away a thoroughly flawed decision by the SPSO. The evidence of an email from the Case Officer stating that the contractor must know what he is talking about and I have always found him reliable on roofing matters , is totally ignored, as is the decision by the Case Officer to tell the contractor that his work was satisfactory, thus setting in train the legal action against me.

This distorted view of events cannot stand serious examination of the facts. Nobody, neither the Council, or the Solicitor representing the contractor, or indeed the contractor tried to put the kind of spin on the February 2006 incident as being a 'negotiation'. Advice was sought from the Case Officer, acting on behalf of the Council about the contractor's proposed changes. The Case Officer supported the changes and I believe that as a layman, I was entitled to rely upon his judgement and that he was acting in my best interests and those of the Council who had a financial stake in this case through the allocation of public money in the form of a repairs grant.

Because of the interest he and others had taken publicly in the activities of the SPSO, I emailed Alex Neil in February 2011 to acquaint him with my case and the SPSO's response to my complaint at that stage. I followed this up with a copy of correspondence and other documentation which included extracts from the Court pleadings.

My email was passed to the Legal System Division of the Justice Directorate who advised me that Ministers and the Scottish Government were unable to comment or intervene on specific cases. I accepted that but have been unable to find trace of the correspondence and other documentation mentioned in the preceding paragraph that I sent to the Ministerial Correspondence Unit. The Legal System Division say they did not receive it. A copy of the email to Mr Neil was attached to my email to you yesterday.

I hope that this case can be examined independently in the public interest and the interests of justice for myself.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[name redacted]

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: [name redacted] [*Email address redacted under data protection requirements*]

To: "scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk" <scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, 14 January 2013, 17:52

Subject: Complaint Against Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

For the Attention of Alex Neil

Dear Mr Neil

I refer to my previous correspondence on this matter.

Further important developments have taken place since I last wrote to you regarding the false allegations made against me by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

In response to a complaint I had lodged with him against Dumfries and Galloway Council, the SPSO accused me of having negotiated a new contract directly with a Contractor after approval of a contract for work on the roof of my house, for which a grant had been awarded by the Council.

What actually happened was that the Case Officer appointed by the Council had declared the work to be satisfactory in spite of professional evidence I had provided him that said it was not. On the basis of the support from the Council, the Contractor sued me for money he falsely claimed I owed him and I entered a Counterclaim. When the case came to Court, the Contractor decided not to proceed with his claim. I proceeded with my Counterclaim, was absolved from any liability in respect of the Contractor's claim and awarded the sum I had sought to with Judicial expenses.

Only after the Court verdict did I receive any apology from the Council who also offered a token sum in recognition of their part in placing me in the position of having to completely dismantle the Contractor's work and appoint a new Contractor to carry out the work as it would have been had the contract been properly performed. The Council advised me that the sum they had offered me was the maximum they could offer (c.£2,900) under the protocols by which they were bound. They advised me that my next step was to complain to the SPSO which I did.

I had provided the SPSO with copies of the relevant correspondence between myself and the Council together with copies of Court pleadings lodged by the Solicitor acting for the Contractor. I received a reply from the SPSO stating that although they had not completed their consideration of my case, they considered the offer of the Council to be proportionate and constructive and they would not be recommending any further recompense. I appealed this decision and had a reply rejecting my appeal but in this letter they accused me of having, 'after the approval [by the Council of the original contract] you accepted a revised quotation from the Roofing Contractor'. This was totally untrue and I wrote again to the SPSO to say so. They refused to disclose the source of this accusation and for some time I was unable to find it myself. Eventually I found the source to be a claim within the copy of pages of the Court pleadings of the Solicitor representing the Contractor that I had sent them.

I decided to consult the Solicitor who had acted for the Contractor and ask him to comment on the SPSO response to my complaints to them about the Council.

The reply from the Solicitor was as follows ' It does indeed appear that in reaching their conclusions in respect of your application, SPSO placed reliance on certain isolated averments within the Court pleadings that you had copied to them. In particular, the averments which they appear to have singled out and relied upon were from the pleadings of the Pursuer Mr [name redacted] rather than your own defences in the case. To that extent SPSO appear to have fundamentally misunderstood the information which you were attempting to present to them and thus sought to justify their conclusion that you had in some way agreed to re-negotiation of the contract involving the funding from the Council'.

The 'averment's concerned were totally without foundation and had been rebutted by my own Solicitor at the time in her Court pleadings and no evidence was ever produced by the Pursuer. In addition, the Contractor's Solicitor has picked up the point that my main complaint was simply not answered by the SPSO. This complaint concerned the advice I received and accepted from the Contractor and Case Officer of the Council to change the specified underfelt shortly before work commenced on the roof in February 2006. I had been advised by both men that the specified underfelt had to be changed because it was unsuitable for 'sarking' roofs and if used would cause my roof to 'sweat'. This advice is well documented both in the Contractor's Court pleadings where this advice is specifically admitted. The Case Officer, in an exchange of emails with myself at the time, questioning this advice, supported the contractor.

When all of this information was presented to the SPSO I had a letter in which he still refuses to accept the facts presented to him and states that 'negotiation' accurately describes what occurred in this case. What the evidence actually shows is that on 30 November 2004 I wrote to the contractor awarding him the contract exactly as it been approved earlier by the Council. Before the commencement of work in February 2006, I received and accepted the advice mentioned above from the contractor and the Case Officer.

At no time has the Council, the Solicitor for the Contractor or the Contractor claimed that this professional 'advice' was a 'negotiation' by me. It is a complete falsehood. Apart from not being competent to negotiate on such an issue, had I actually 'negotiated' this change as charged, the Council would never have made any apology or payment to me, and even more importantly, my Counterclaim would never have been made let alone been successful.

As the SPSO had refused to accept his error in assuming the 'averment' to be fact, and indeed had told me he would not reply to any further letters from me, I asked my MSP if she would write to him asking for a copy of the evidence upon which he had made the accusation about me that, 'On 30 November 2004, after the approval, you accepted a revised quotation from the Roofing Contractor'.

The reply she eventually got from the SPSO was that he had already personally reviewed my case twice and that the 'SPSO Act 2012 [I have assumed that he means 2002] sets out my powers in this regard and specifically excludes influence on my investigations or decisions by elected members'. On receipt of this my MSP wrote to say that in view of this response she was unable to offer any further assistance.

I believe that what the Act actually uses the words 'direct' and 'control' which is very different from an Elected Member, on behalf of her constituent, asking for a copy of information held about him by the SPSO and that evidence was provided by the constituent in correspondence on the issue. If the SPSO was certain of his accusation against me he could have solved the

issue there and then by providing the evidence. He has stated that his decisions were based solely on documentation supplied by me.

As I have provided all relevant information and documentation to the SPSO in regard to my complaint to him I find this response perverse and effectively disfranchises me from proper representation by my MSP. There is no doubt that the accusation made by him that 'On 30 November 2004, after the approval, you accepted a revised quotation from the contractor' is false and this is confirmed by Contractor's Solicitor who had filed the pleadings containing that 'averment'.

Although I want to be rid of this matter having consumed far too much of my time over the past six years, I believe there is an important public interest issue involved here. And it is to do with integrity, impartiality and accountability. I do believe that when Parliament agreed to the establishment of the SPSO, and denied themselves the right to exercise any direction and control over that body, they would not have expected an innocent member of the public to be inflicted with such a blatant injustice as I have suffered with no practical means of redress.

I believe this is what has happened here and more importantly what the evidence demonstrates has happened. This is not a case where a determination has to be made involving different professional opinions. This is about a Complaints Reviewer getting entirely the wrong end of the stick by picking up an 'averment' in copies of unedited pleadings that had been provided to confirm 'admissions' made by the Contractor in response to my pleadings. Although I had highlighted the 'admissions' to be considered when I sent the extracts to the SPSO, the Complaints Reviewer decided to examine unhighlighted parts of the text and in so doing assumed unsubstantiated 'averments' were facts and wrote his report accordingly.

Because of the expense I have incurred in this issue due to the Sequestration of the Contractor and the fact that I will be lucky to recover a very small part, if anything at all, of the Court award, I am not in any position to pay for a Solicitor advising on the possibility of seeking satisfaction through judicial review let alone the cost of going up that path. I am appealing therefore to have this case independently examined in the light of all the available evidence.

What concerns me very much as a member of the public is the attitude adopted by the SPSO when he attended the meeting of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee in March 2012 (pp793). We have there someone whose purpose, according to his own website is to be fair, impartial, helpful to the citizens coming to him with complaints they have with the public services, telling elected members that he is getting tired of people complaining about him and how he wants to come to future meetings to discuss what he does rather than the agendas of other groups etc. I believe that all MSPs have a genuine personal commitment to represent, without fear or favour, the best interests of their individual constituents and groups and the Nation at large and it is surely not appropriate, especially of an Ombudsman, to tell MSPs what their job is.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

[name redacted]

Submission No 4

From: [Name and email address redacted]
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2013 3:34 PM
To: Cullum DJ (David)
Subject: RE: Meeting Follow-up
Importance: High

Dear Mr Cullum,

Thank you again for your promptness of reply.

Your comments are noted and in the circumstances I will not on this occasion forward more questions than I have raised previously with your committee. I can only trust that your description of the forthcoming meeting will produce results that will satisfy the Scottish Public on the latest performance of the LG&RC?

Sincerely,
[name redacted]

From: David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk [<mailto:David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk>]
Sent: 21 January 2013 09:26
To: [email redacted]
Subject: RE: Meeting Follow-up

Dear [name redacted]

Thank you for your kind offer of questions for the committee's use in their session with the Ombudsman and his senior officials. The session is designed to centre on scrutiny of his annual report which of course encompasses his operations and operation generally during the period in question; it will not cover individual cases or complaints. I expect the Committee to ask a range of questions and understand that they are fully seized of issues, including having been informed by a number of individual correspondents.

You are however most welcome to submit your questions but I cannot guarantee that any of them will be directly utilised.

Regards

David Cullum
Clerk
Local Government and Regeneration Committee
Scottish Parliament
Room T3.60
Holyrood
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5217
(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)
FAX: 0131 348 5252
(Central) Textphone: 0131 348 5415

From: [name and email redacted]
Sent: 18 January 2013 11:38
To: Cullum DJ (David)
Subject: Meeting Follow-up
Importance: High

Dear Mr. Cullum,

Thank you again for your promptness of reply.

It was extremely disappointing to be faced with what appears an un-necessary intransience in this matter, especially in the light of the Nolan? Ideally participation is the obvious solution in order that the committee can maximise my knowledge and experience in the matter at hand. However, would a suggested range of questions that could be put to the Ombudsman be an acceptable alternative? Obviously I do not wish to waste either the committee's time or my own, if there is not a strong possibility that they will adopt these questions. Perhaps you could let me have your thoughts on this proposal?

Sincerely,

[name redacted]

From: David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk [<mailto:David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk>]
Sent: 17 January 2013 15:09
To: [email redacted]
Subject: RE: Request for Attendance

Dear [name redacted]

Thank you for the clarification of your request which unfortunately I cannot facilitate at this time. The Committee agreed their approach to consideration of the SPSO annual report some time ago and do not therefore at this stage wish to take oral evidence from other witnesses.

Regards

David Cullum
Clerk
Local Government and Regeneration Committee
Scottish Parliament
Room T3.60
Holyrood
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5217
(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)
FAX: 0131 348 5252
(Central) Textphone: 0131 348 5415

From: [name and email redacted]
Sent: 17 January 2013 14:31
To: Cullum DJ (David)
Subject: RE: Request for Attendance
Importance: High

Dear Mr. Cullum,

Thank you for your most speedy response to my inquiry.

I must apologise for not making myself clear, in that whilst I understand the meeting is open to the Public (thanks anyway), my desire was to be invited to participate at the meeting as applicable; in the role of say a qualified witness or whatever? I believe my evidence or comments would particularly be of benefit to the Committee: if as you suggest there will potentially be an enhanced scrutiny process? I trust you will be able to grant me such an opportunity, given my clarification of my earlier request?

Sincerely,

[name and telephone number redacted]

From: David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk [<mailto:David.Cullum@scottish.parliament.uk>]
Sent: 17 January 2013 11:55
To: [email redacted]
Subject: RE: Request for Attendance

Dear [name redacted]

Thank you for your e-mail. The meeting next week is open to the public and you are welcome to attend in the public gallery. Admission is by ticket only and you can obtain one through our Visitors Services. I attach a link to further details on the Parliament website.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/28753.aspx>

Regards

David Cullum
Clerk
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(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)
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From: [name and email redacted]
Sent: 17 January 2013 11:50
To: Cullum DJ (David)
Subject: Request for Attendance
Importance: High

Attention: David Cullum – PPC Chief Executive / Clerk

Dear Mr. Cullum,

I understand that the Scottish Ombudsman will be attending the forthcoming meeting of the LG&RC on the 23rd January 2013. May I respectfully request an invitation to attendee this meeting as a witness or whatever role may be pertinent?

I trust you will be able to extend such an invitation and look forward to your response.

[name and telephone number redacted]

Submission No 5

-----Original Message-----

From: [email redacted]

Sent: 21 January 2013 20:38

To: Mitchell M (Margaret), MSP

Subject: LG&R Committee 23 January

To Margaret Mitchell MSP

This Wednesday the SPSO is appearing in front of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee. You are no doubt already familiar with his Annual Report and the latest Craigforth report, so I trust you will not mind me commenting. I write as [title redacted] after discussion with [name redacted].

One thing that concerns us is that the briefing document accompanying your Agenda conveys nothing of the continuing public dissatisfaction with the SPSO.

Thus, concerning Craigforth satisfaction surveys, it is stated simply that "overall satisfaction with the service received from the SPSO remained broadly consistent", whereas it could more informatively have said "remained consistently bad". The dissatisfaction rate was 40% in 2010, equal to the satisfaction rate.

The more recent Craigforth report based on focus group and interview also indicated much, but unquantified, dissatisfaction. Some of this was due less to inadequate rulings, but rather to poor, even rude, communication on the part of investigators. Jim Martin promised to do something about the latter (at last) and one wonders what he has now achieved.

I apologize if this seems to have been hurriedly written; it was.

Yours sincerely,

[name redacted]