

21 February 2019

Council dealt appropriately with planning application - Ombudsman

An investigation by the Public Services Ombudsman has found that Mid & East Antrim Borough Council dealt properly with a planning application for a house extension, despite objections from the applicant's neighbours.

The neighbours complained to the Ombudsman that the Council did not properly consider the impact of the proposed extension to their privacy. They also complained that they had not been informed of changes to the plans, and that the Council had failed to take appropriate action about what they thought was a breach of planning permission.

The Investigating Officer obtained from the Council all relevant documents, met with the complainants and visited and viewed the property.

The Ombudsman's role in investigating complaints about planning matters relates to the administrative actions of the Council. She cannot challenge a discretionary decision based on professional judgment unless there have been errors in the decision making process.

After considering the evidence the Ombudsman found that the Council processed the planning application properly, and dealt fairly with the alleged breach of planning permission.

However, she did find failures in certain aspects of the Council's record keeping and complaint handling, for which she recommended that the complainants receive an apology.