

Response to Complaint NDC01/24

The email communications as described by Cllr Vickers are correct. He is also correct that I disclosed the contents of the emails during the Extraordinary Council meeting, and to the press and on social media.

However, the content disclosed does not meet the Council's own definition of confidential or exempt information. The content was the Liberal Democrat Executive Member for Planning giving his analysis of policy options on how to proceed with the Local Plan Review.

It contained no information about individuals, their financial affairs, contract negotiations or matters subject to legal privilege. There was a wide distribution list including Executive members and senior officers.

There was a clear public interest in the disclosure of the information, showing as it did Cllr Vickers' privately-held negative opinion on the policy he proposed at the Extraordinary Council meeting.

That said, if Cllr Vickers wishes to pursue this complaint, I would be more than happy for the matter to be debated publicly at a meeting of the Governance Committee, where Cllr Vickers can explain why he thinks the public should not be aware of his and his colleagues' true opinion on the policy they proposed.

Cllr Ross Mackinnon

14th January 2024