

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Standards Committee
Place: Council Chamber - Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge
BA14 0RD
Date: Wednesday 18 May 2011
Time: 2.00 pm

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 10 May 2011 and indicated that the reports detailed below would be to follow. These are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Pam Denton, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718371 or email pam.denton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

9. **Standards Committee Plan and Business Plan** (Pages 1 - 14)

Report of the Monitoring Officer to follow

12. **Outcome of the Standards Committee Workshop on the Localism Bill**
(Pages 15 - 20)

To receive a verbal report

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 12 May 2011

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Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

18 May 2011

Wiltshire Council Business Plan

Purpose of Report

1. To report on the outcome of a review of the Committee's Work Plan against the Council's Business Plan, as requested by the Committee at its last meeting.

Background

2. At its meeting on 9 March 2011 the Committee reviewed its Work Plan and asked me to review this against the Council's Business Plan to ensure that the Committee's objectives are consistent with it and to report back to this meeting.

Main Considerations for the Council

3. On 22 February 2011 the Council agreed its Business Plan for the next four years. An executive summary of the Plan is attached as Appendix 1. The full version of the Plan is available on the following link:

<http://thewire.wiltshire.council/wiltshire-council-2011-business-plan.pdf>

4. The Council's vision and goals remain the same under the Business Plan:

To create stronger and more resilient communities, underpinned by the following goals:

- *provide high quality, low cost, customer focused services;*
- *ensure local, open and honest decision making;*
- *working with our partners to support Wiltshire Communities.*

The Standards Committee's vision and goals, as set out in its Work Plan, continue, therefore, to align with the Council's vision and goals, particularly in relation to promoting local, open and honest decision making and supporting Wiltshire's communities. The work being undertaken by the Standards Committee in anticipation of the proposed changes to the standards regime under the Localism Bill also supports these goals.

5. Apart from the overall vision and goals a large part of the content of the Business Plan does not have a direct bearing on the work of the Standards Committee.

The section on Culture at pages 40-43 is, however, relevant, and is reproduced for convenience at Appendix 2.

6. The Council has developed and agreed the following values for the organisation:

- placing our customers first;

- strengthening our communities;
 - adopting a 'can-do' approach in everything we do.
7. The Shaping the Future Group Board is responsible for developing the Council's Culture Plan. The Board is chaired by the Chief Executive, Andrew Kerr, and comprises senior officers and members, including Councillor Laura Mayes, Portfolio Holder for Organisational Culture and Councillor Allison Bucknell, Portfolio Holder for Customer Care. The Board has arranged a further series of consultative meetings involving various staff groups to develop a set of key behaviours which reflect the agreed values. These will be used to promote the new culture and ensure that it is embedded consistently across the organisation.
 8. Progress on the development and implementation of the Culture Plan will be reported to the Committee on a regular basis. The Chairman of the Standards Committee and I will also be meeting with the Chief Executive and the Leader to discuss how the Standards Committee can support the Council in the promotion of its culture and in the realisation of its vision and goals in the Business Plan.

Environmental Impact

9. None.

Equalities Impact

10. None

Financial Implications

11. None arising from this report.

Legal Implications

12. None arising from this report.

Proposal

13. The Committee is asked to note the outcome of this review.

Ian Gibbons
Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Ian Gibbons

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: None

The next four years

Executive summary

We will invest



We will save



Focus on customers



We will protect



Focus on a can-do approach



Focus on communities



Welcome



Wiltshire Council has published its first four year business plan. The following executive summary highlights the approach the council is taking to manage the challenges it faces over the next four years. It sets out plans to invest, protect and save to make Wiltshire a better place.

The general election in May 2010 has changed the way that local government will be organised and the amount of resources it has for the foreseeable future. This change, the greatest since the Second World War, will mean Wiltshire Council absorbing a cut of more than 28% in its grant funding from the government, as well as managing more than 300 new pieces of legislation. Increases in the number of older people living in our county in the next few years will also have to be managed.

Our business plan is bold and different to many other authorities. It sets out how we intend to meet the challenges whilst delivering our vision to create stronger, more resilient

communities. It defines our goals:

- to provide high quality, low cost customer focused services
- to prioritise local issues
- to be open and honest in all our decision making
- to work with our partners to support Wiltshire's communities.

We believe we can do this because we have taken a long term, pragmatic view and we can take advantage of being a new unitary authority.

We are ambitious – and we have visionary, realistic strategies – for the next 10 to 20 years. We will radically change how we provide some of our key front line services and we will drastically reduce the number of our offices and buildings. Our biggest shift will be developing our work with communities to help them to be more self sufficient and less reliant on our services.

We plan to realign our resources to:

- ✓ protect our most vulnerable citizens by investing in their services
- ✓ invest in the future of Wiltshire by enhancing key service areas
- ✓ keep the council tax low

The way we do things – our approach to customers – and how we communicate with local people and the rest of the world is critical.

We have established our core values that underpin what we do – what we stand for and how we do things. These make us unique – a modern, new organisation that embraces change, treats everybody fairly, values diversity, and:

- ✓ places its customers first
- ✓ strengthens its communities
- ✓ adopts a 'can-do' approach in everything it does.

Jane Scott OBE, Wiltshire Council Leader

Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive

Our vision

Is to create stronger and more resilient communities

This is all about people and places, fostering a sense of community belonging and self-sufficiency where communities can solve problems locally with our support.

Our goals

Provide high quality, low cost, customer focused services

We must provide the services Wiltshire needs, to the standard that residents want, and give value for money. Our customers must be the starting point for our services so that we know that what we are providing is what they want and need. Those services are provided in a way that our customers can easily understand and access.

Ensure local, open and honest decision making

We want people to have a real say on decisions that affect them and their communities. They must be able to influence those decisions and be part of the decision making process. We are committed to doing things 'with' people not 'to' people. Our 18 community area boards have been a success and we will build on that success over the next four years.

Working with our partners to support Wiltshire's communities

We will work closely with our customers and communities to resolve issues and challenges. We will also work with the voluntary sector, businesses and other public organisations such as the NHS, the Homes and Communities' Agency, emergency services and the justice system. By doing so, we can be more effective and achieve so much more.

We want to reflect a strong service mentality, which focuses on the whole experience for our customers and how we can make it a good one. We are developing a culture where we go the extra mile to help our customers and make Wiltshire Council one of the best in the country.

Our plan is ambitious, but realistic. We are confident that Wiltshire is well placed to deliver a new and exciting local government that will shift the roles between public sector and community – we want to support our communities to be able to help themselves and improve the quality of life and the economy of Wiltshire in these difficult times and beyond. These are not easy times and we face difficult challenges, but we know we can make Wiltshire a better place by building on the strong foundations that we have in place. We see the next few years as a real opportunity to deliver improvements and the biggest cultural change ever seen in local government.

Our vision for the future

Introduction

Our four year business plan sets out what, together, we will achieve between now and 2015. It highlights our business model for the next five to 10 years. The changes from where we are now will be phased so that the first four years set the foundations to make the council as efficient as possible and equipped for the future.

We are facing significant challenges and there are consequences for the council and for local people if we don't manage these well. The coalition government is radically changing the role of the public sector by reducing funding and transferring power and responsibility to local communities. The proposed changes in legislation and regulation will alter the relationship between the public sector, citizens and service users.

Our vision

To create stronger and more resilient communities – is all about people and places, fostering a sense of community belonging and self-sufficiency where communities can solve problems locally with our support. The government refers to this as The Big Society.

In Wiltshire a new relationship is forming between public services and communities. Our communities are becoming more self-reliant, reducing the resources needed and the dependency on public services as service providers. We have to trust, empower and enable local communities to take control of their futures.

We want to encourage and support local communities to get involved and work with us to strengthen their ability to deal with local challenges. We will work closely with town and parish councils, voluntary groups, local people and other public sector organisations to establish community needs and to help meet those needs in the best way.

These communities will require less intervention from public services which is good for people and reduces the pressure on increasingly scarce public resources.

14% more older people will receive our services



We will provide 450 new affordable homes each year of which 250 – 350 additional new affordable homes for rent will be from the PFI scheme



50% of our waste will be recycled

We will safeguard 8,000 existing jobs



We will increase examination results for 11 year olds by 5% at the end of KS2 (combined maths and English), and in GCSE performance (percentage of young people achieving 5 A*-C, including English and maths)



We will reduce the roads maintenance backlog by 10%



e next four years

6,000 new jobs to be created in the private sector



Making savings

We will become a smaller organisation working with many different providers in Wiltshire. Our role will be to support and enable to make things happen. We will help local people and communities to help themselves and improve their neighbourhoods. We have taken action to make the savings needed to cover the government cuts and the investments we will make.

- £8 million reduction in our management costs – this has been achieved – all managers who left opted for voluntary redundancy – 220 managers will have left by end March 2011
- £36 million reduction in the cost of purchasing goods and services
- £8 million reduction by managing our assets better
- £47 million reduction by transforming our services, including adult care and highways
- All services made proposals to achieve 12% reduction in budgets
- Reducing from 95 offices and buildings to four main hubs.

5% more looked-after children will receive high quality local placements, either in foster care or residential placements close to family, friends and community



We will reduce our level of carbon emissions by 20%



85% of Wiltshire will be covered by superfast broadband

24% less waste will go to landfill



www.wiltshire.gov.uk

We are investing in

We are taking a robust, ambitious and realistic approach to managing the challenges we face over the next four years. These challenges include a 28% reduction in Local Authority funding nationally at a time when we need to invest in local priorities.

We know that some things that we need to do are bigger or longer term than individual people or communities can be expected to achieve, and some people need particular support and protection. As well as helping communities to help themselves, we are setting aside money to protect vulnerable people, to invest in priorities for Wiltshire and to keep the council tax low. We will focus on the following priorities:

- Protect and safeguard vulnerable adults and children and meet cost pressures as a result of changes such as the growth in the ageing population. We will also take action to mitigate the potential impact that job losses will have on Wiltshire
- Invest in priority services – roads; waste collection and disposal; leisure; children’s attainment; economy and broadband; energy efficiency; housing and helping communities to help themselves
- Save to allow us to protect and invest and to absorb the expected cuts in government grant of 28% and meet unavoidable cost pressures of £87m.

We will maintain the level of other important services such as anti-social behaviour reduction, alcohol services, and ‘aiming high’ for disabled children.

We will invest
£4.7m



Energy efficiency – £4.7m

We currently spend £14m a year on energy and transportation and from April we will have to pay a levy for every tonne of carbon dioxide we emit. This investment will help us to reduce our carbon footprint by 20%.

We will invest
£3.3m

Vulnerable children – £4.6m

The number of looked-after children has continued to increase. Our services for these vulnerable children will be strengthened to meet their needs better.

We will invest
£4.6m



We will invest
£34m



Vulnerable adults – £34m

We need to invest in this area to meet the increasing need for this service created by our ageing population.

The money will be invested across services for older people and adults with a learning disability, physical impairment or mental health problems to provide social care services that will help them to live as independently as possible.

We will invest
£23m



Waste management and recycling – £23m

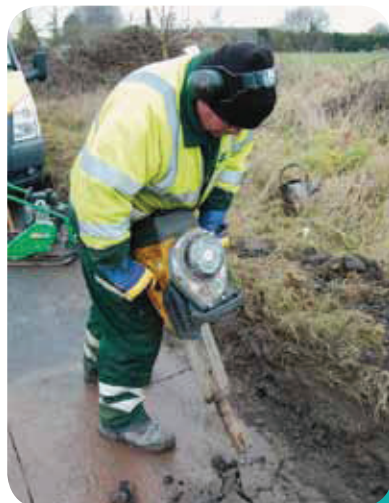
One of our key priorities is to increase the amount of rubbish we recycle from 40% to 50% to reduce land fill costs and the impact on the environment.

Wiltshire residents will receive kerbside collections every week on an alternate weekly basis collecting plastic bottles and cardboard; glass, paper, cans, foil and textiles (the existing black box service); non-chargeable optional garden waste; and remaining waste.

key services

Children's attainment – £3.3m

Improving life chances for children and young people is an important goal for individuals and for Wiltshire's and the nation's economy. We will improve examination results at Key Stage 2 and at GCSE level.



We will invest £3.2m

We will invest £4m

Economy – £4m

The number of people in Wiltshire claiming unemployment benefit has risen during the recession by 4,500. We will invest in helping the long-term unemployed back into work, and in supporting young people and local businesses.



Communities – £3.2m

We have a long track record of investing in our communities through grants, new ways of doing things with the area boards and in supporting community area partnerships. This further investment is about supporting the delivery, shared by our partners, of our vision to build strong and resilient communities. The investment is also linked to what we want to achieve in terms of the Big Society and localism in Wiltshire.



We will invest £4.5m

Leisure – £4.5m

This investment will help ensure our leisure centres are sustainable, cost effective and high quality.

We will invest £2.9m



Digital inclusion – £2.9m

High performance internet access is becoming an increasingly important factor for people in Wiltshire. Good digital literacy skills and access to technology and connectivity will allow people to benefit economically, socially and educationally. This investment will be used to bring superfast broadband to many rural areas, increase take up of online services and help give the skills to local people to use this technology.

Council tax frozen for the year



Council tax – 2011/12

As council tax will be frozen for 2011/12 a Band D household will pay £1,222.43 for the year. We aim to achieve a zero increase in council tax for 2012/13 as well. We then expect to raise council tax by a below inflation rate of 2.5% in both 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Key achievements we will build on

Building programme

Bourne Hill offices and Milford Street Customer Access Centre

Pewsey Library

Chippenham – Olympiad Leisure Centre – redeveloped studio hall as children and adult learning and development centre and a youth facility

Monkton Park PFI office in-sourced saving £350,000 per year – first local authority to in-source a PFI

Wellington and Sarum Academies opened

472 affordable houses have been started this year and 311 completed to date

Savings delivered

£8 million saved from reduction of 220 managers

12% cost reduction across back office services

Communications spend reduced by 40% – saving £1.4 million

£6 million saved through better procurement and purchasing this year

SAP system achieved annual savings of £5 million

ICT in-sourced in January 2011 – saving £2.4 million in next year's budget

Inspections – feedback and achieving targets

Three star (excellent) adult care services – one of the best in the country

Children's services rated by Ofsted as performing well

We pay our housing benefit and collect our council tax well – top 25% nationally

Our housing benefit service rated fair with 'promising' prospects – equal to the best new unitary councils

74% of children are achieving level 4 in English and maths – 3% better than last year and better than the national average

Our internet security is equal to the best in England

Our website was awarded 3 stars – putting it in the best 25% in England

We repair 96% of all repairs on time (as requested) for our council houses



Culture - our approach

What we are already doing

Our role is changing - public services will be delivered in a totally different way and we must change our attitude and working practices to respond to this.

Our role will be to make things happen. Therefore, we need to adopt a new and different approach in everything that we do. We will have to work more efficiently and better to give our customers a great service, despite budget cuts.

We are still relatively new. Following the amalgamation of five former councils we inherited several different cultures and, as such, have still to develop and embed a culture and way of doing things that defines the new council. As a new organisation we have a real opportunity to develop a culture that reflects a new, modern and customer focused organisation.

Working with staff and councillors through a series of forums, a set of core values that will underpin our work, and represent what we stand for, have been developed and agreed:

- √ placing our customers first
- √ strengthening our communities
- √ adopting a 'can-do' approach in everything we do.

Staff feedback at the forums has also helped to shape an action plan that focuses on: communication – recognition – leadership – behaviour.

Communication – looks at improving the intranet and contact directory – the who's who in the organisation, as well as agreeing standards for future communication and leadership of communication across the organisation. The new contact directory will be launched shortly.

Recognition – we launched the Corporate Awards Scheme (CAS) and held the first awards ceremony in October 2010. The 2011 awards have been launched and include monthly awards for team and employee of the month. Recognition of the team and employee of the month will be well publicised.

Leadership – whilst we have still to agree corporate standards for communication, there are areas of excellent communication practice across the organisation, such as the department of resources away-days, staff forums, team briefings and regular one-to-one meetings.

We also held a series of face-to-face forums in November and December 2010 to update staff on the challenges facing the council over the next four years. The leader and chief executive met more than 3,000 members of staff and invited questions and discussion about the future.

Regular news updates are published on the intranet to update staff and members of council news and the changes that the organisation is facing – often directly from the chief executive as an update or video blog.

New members of staff meet the chief executive and leader at their induction and have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the culture that they promote.

What we intend to do

We need to promote our culture – the values that underpin what we do, our brand and what we stand for, what we're like and how we do things. Our values make us unique - a modern organisation that embraces change. An organisation that:

- √ places its customers first
- √ strengthens its communities
- √ adopts a 'can-do' approach in everything it does.

We want to be an organisation that reflects a strong service mentality, which thinks about the whole experience for our customers and how we can make it good one. We want to adopt a consistent 'can-do' approach and make things happen.

Re-organising and transforming our services will focus on our customers' experience and how we can make this better. Our aim is to develop a culture where we go the extra mile to help our customers and make Wiltshire Council one of the best in the country.

Our culture plan sets out how we will:

- embed the council's values and what we stand for – our brand Wiltshire
- adopt a 'can-do' approach in everything that we do

- deliver a leadership development programme that promotes key competencies and behaviours that reflect our culture
- promote team work and collective responsibility and accountability
- develop entrepreneurs and empower staff to take risks to reflect an innovative dynamic organisation
- place our customers and communities first and increase their confidence, trust and satisfaction levels in the council
- involve our customers and communities in shaping services and the future direction
- increase staff satisfaction and confidence in the council and the services it provides – the staff survey will provide a bench mark on current satisfaction and areas relating to culture
- increase staff involvement in decision making and change in the council and the services in which they work
- ensure that staff and elected members are well informed and are ambassadors for the council
- ensure that communication underpins the way we do things
- recognise success: celebrate and value our staff members, councillors and other community leaders.

What we want to achieve

We need to create a sense of pride in the council, which will, in turn, increase morale, satisfaction and motivation. This will be reflected in the way we do things and how we talk to one another and to our customers and stakeholders.

We want to be an organisation that works corporately and openly, engaging its staff, elected members, customers and communities in its work, decision making and any changes that need to happen.

Embedding a culture takes time, focus, energy and the belief and drive of all our leaders and managers to make it happen and underpin everything we do.

Our behaviour reflects what we stand for and how we do things. How we behave will make or break our relationship with our customers and communities. How they see us is our reputation and this is a key driver for us. We know we have to adopt a new and positive culture that reflects a modern, innovative and different council.

Our success over the next few years will be largely dependent on how we do things; how we embrace change and the relationships and trust that we build. A true 'can-do' approach needs to emanate throughout the council and all its services and customers and communities will come first.

Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

18 May 2011

Summary of Feedback from the Standards Committee Workshop on the Localism Bill

Purpose of Report

1. To report back to members of the Standards Committee with a summary of the feedback from the workshop held on 9 March 2011 on the subject of a voluntary standards regime for Wiltshire Council under the proposals contained in the Localism Bill.

Background

2. On 9 March 2011 members of the Standards Committee attended a workshop to consider the implications of the Localism Bill for standards in Wiltshire. The workshop focused on whether a voluntary code of conduct should be adopted by Wiltshire Council under the Bill's proposals, and, if so, the principles that should govern the complaints process under a voluntary regime.
3. Members were reminded of the key points arising from the Localism Bill concerning the future of the standards regime, as reported to their January meeting.,
4. Members' views were sought on the following:

Should Wiltshire Council have a voluntary code of conduct?

If so, what should it contain?

What arrangements should be made to deal with complaints under a voluntary regime?

5. Members agreed unanimously that a voluntary code of conduct for members of Wiltshire Council would be desirable and would encourage high standards of conduct by members. Members also felt it would be desirable for town and parish councils to adopt a voluntary code, but appreciated that they would need to be supported in implementing such arrangements.
6. Members, therefore, agreed that a voluntary code should be adopted by the Council and that it should:
 - utilise the existing 'Nolan principles' as its core standards for conduct;

- feature mechanisms for safeguarding Council officers in respect of member conduct;
- make available a range of appropriate and applicable sanctions for breaches of the code;
- serve primarily as a set of positive values and standards of conduct which members should aspire to meet;
- help members attain high standards of conduct, rather than merely present technical pitfalls;
- account for the different perceptions of 'acceptable behaviour' as between members and officers, members and the public, and between members and other members, recognising the political context; and
- recognise the differences between the requirements of Wiltshire Council Members and those of Town and Parish Councils (and in turn the varying sizes of these), and to take opportunities to work with these councils to improve standards of conduct wherever possible;

7. The following suggestions were made in relation to the process for dealing with complaints under a voluntary code. :

- screening process to quickly resolve, mitigate or dismiss any trivial or unsubstantiated complaints;
- delegation of some authority to the governance team to resolve complaints without requiring councillors' involvement;
- options for the governance team to mitigate, or if sufficient, facilitate face-to-face resolution between member and complainant in the first instance;
- in order to enable the above, subject members to be made aware of complaints against them from an early stage, where appropriate;
- fast-tracking of certain complaints e.g. where these can be resolved through correspondence between interested parties and the investigating officer;
- imposition of clear timeframes within which complaints must be investigated and, if possible, resolved;
- evaluation of complaints to ensure proportionality between severity of complaint and resource allocation;
- greater scrutiny on the relevance of evidence gathered and considered in the determination of complaints;
- build in sufficient flexibility to enable processes to be swiftly reviewed in future;
- assessment committees, if utilised, to be able to give direction to investigation to streamline process;
- rapidly identify any complaints of a criminal nature and refer these to the police;
- removal of one or more layers in the sub-committee determination process, and possibly use the same sub-committee more than once in process;
- having investigating officer present at sub-committee earlier in the process could enable a more robust and efficient process;
- the size of the standards committee could be reduced;

- representation by independent co-opted members on the standards committee and sub-committees remains important in facilitating both real and perceived impartiality and fairness;
- reducing membership could, however, limit the scope for political balance on Sub-Committees, for which currently no standard approach exists; and that approaches taken are flexible and can be revised where improvements are identified by the standards committee

8. Other points emerging from the discussion included:

- the absence of a voluntary code or sufficient sanctions would increase the vulnerability of officers and the public to inappropriate conduct by councillors?
- in designing a new code and complaints procedure it would be necessary to ensure that the cost of the arrangements, which would have to be borne by the Council, were reasonable and proportionate;
- consideration needs to be given as to how parish and town councils might be supported by Wiltshire Council in adopting voluntary arrangements for standards;
- As the Bill stands Wiltshire Council will no longer be responsible for determining complaints relating to the conduct of town and parish councillors;

Conclusions:

9. The following principles were agreed by all members present, in respect of the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct and in dealing with complaints:

- A voluntary code of conduct should be adopted by the Council , and should also be useable by town and parish councils;
- No need to amend current underlying principles, unless good reason provided otherwise;
- Code should be a good practice guide to encourage best possible standards of conduct by members;
- Process of complaint investigation and determination must be, and be perceived to be, fair and transparent; and
- Complaints should be dealt with at the lowest possible level, with emphasis on resolution, rather than immediate censure or other action, wherever possible.

Recommendation:

That the Standards Committee notes the feedback received from the members present at the workshop and agrees that this is referred to the Constitution Focus Group to assist them in formulating their views on voluntary arrangements for standards in Wiltshire Council in accordance with the Committee's decision on 12 January 2011.

Ian Gibbons
Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

None

Report author:

Chris Marsh, Democratic Services Officer

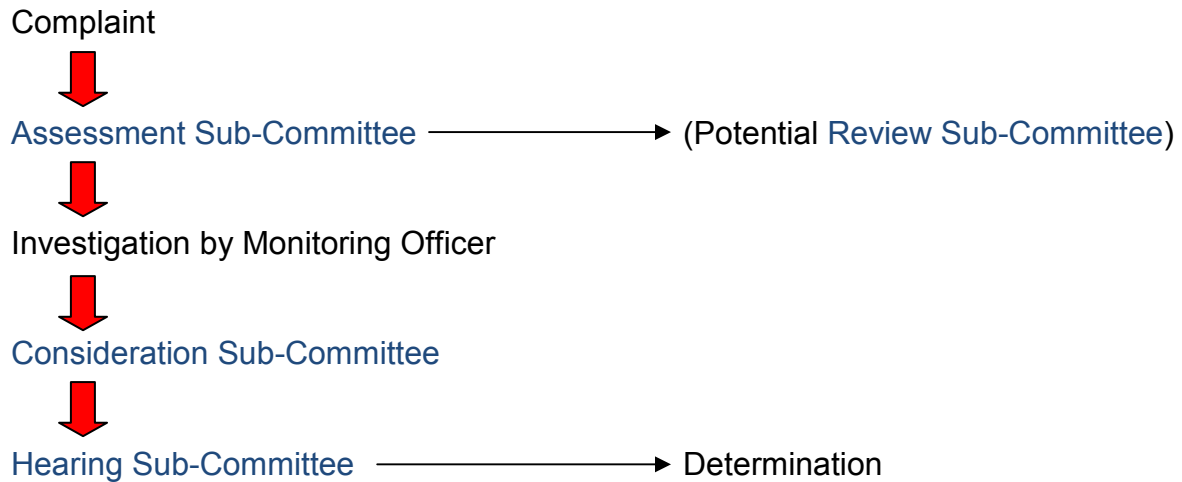
Appendices:

Appendix 1: Existing and proposed complaints procedure

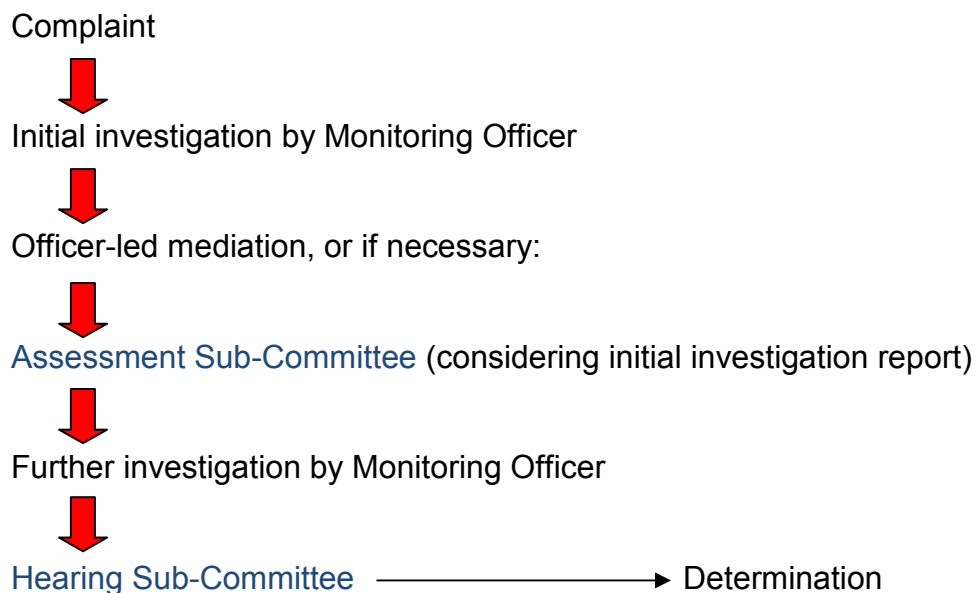
Appendix 2: Attendance at workshop on 9 March 2011

Existing and proposed complaints procedures

Complaints procedure at present: (if upheld at each stage)



Potential new complaints procedure:



List of Attendees at workshop 9 March 2011

Mrs Isabel McCord
Mr Stuart Middleton
Mr Paul Neale
Mr William Bailey
Mrs Jane Bayley
His Hon David MacLaren Webster QC
Mr John Scragg
Mr Robert Oglesby
Cllr Peter Fuller
Cllr Julian Johnson
Cllr Nigel Carter
Cllr Malcolm Hewson
Cllr Ernie Clark