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9 March 2011

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Standards and Governance Committee
DATE: 17 March 2011
TIME: 6.00 p.m.
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Geoff Rawling

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr R V Perry
(Independent Member)
(Chairman)

Mr G A Lidgley
(Independent Member)
(Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Burgess
Councillor Chegwyn
Councillor Forder

Councillor Kimber
Councillor Scard
Councillor Wright

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm being activated, please leave the room immediately. Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

- i. Councillors are requested to note that, if any Councillor who is not a Member of the Committee wishes to speak at the meeting, then the Borough Solicitor is required to receive not less than 24 hours prior notice in writing or electronically and such notice shall indicate the agenda item or items on which the member wishes to speak.
- ii. Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

RECOMMENDED
MINUTE
FORMAT

PART A ITEMS

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 January 2011 (copy attached).

4. DEPUTATIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.5

(NOTE: The Committee is required to receive a deputation(s) on a matter which is before the meeting of the Committee provided that notice of the intended deputation and its object shall have been received by the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Tuesday, 15 March 2011. The total time for deputations in favour and against a proposal shall not exceed 10 minutes).

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.6

(NOTE: The Committee is required to allow a total of 15 minutes for questions from Members of the public on matters within the terms of reference of the Committee provided that notice of such Question(s) shall have been submitted to the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Tuesday, 15 March 2011).

6. TRANSPARENCY AGENDA AND FUTURE OF THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

Part II

To provide an update on the Government's Transparency agenda in relation to the publication of information and the future of the Standards Board for England.

Contact Officer:
Linda Edwards
Ext 5401

7. INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2010 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2010

Part II

Tabled performance of the Internal Audit Section in the first nine months of 2010/11 against the agreed audit plan. Together with an update on other key internal business within the same period.

Contact Officer:
Chris Davis
Ext 5306

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2011/12

Part II

This report provides the planned annual coverage of Internal Audit

Contact Officer:

resources for 2011/12.

Chris Davis
Ext 5306

9. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES AND ANALYSIS

Part II

The Committee to consider an analysis of complaints for the first 6 months of the current financial year (2010/11).

Contact Officer:
David Martin
Ext 5512

10. STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Part II

Workplan attached.

Contact Officer:
Linda Edwards
Ext 5401

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS

-which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman considers should be considered as a matter of urgency

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Board/Committee:	STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE
Date of Meeting:	17 MARCH 2011
Title:	TRANSPARENCY AGENDA AND FUTURE OF THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND
Author:	MONITORING OFFICER
Status:	FOR DECISION/ FOR RECOMMENDATION TO

Purpose

To provide Members with an update on the Government's Transparency agenda in relation to the publication of information and the future of the Standards Board for England.

Recommendation

To note the report.

1 Report

Publication of the Information

- 1.1 The Government have produced a number of consultation documents relating to the transparency agenda for the publication of information by local authorities. In February this year a consultation began on the draft Code of Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. The consultation period does not end until 14 March 2011 so at this moment in time there is no legislative requirement for the Council to publish or to publish in any particular manner information relating to Members attendance at meetings or their register of interest.
- 1.2 The draft code does suggest that Local Authorities may be required to provide and publish on their website data in respect of Councillors allowances and expenses and data of the democratic running of the Council. This data includes the Constitution, election results, Committee Minutes, the decision making process and a record of decisions and the Council already publishes this data on their website. The minutes of meetings indicates which members attended. The Council also publishes the Scheme of Allowances to Councillors but not the precise details under the heading of Allowances and Expenses.
- 1.3 The Council will of course be working to put any further information on its website in response to the final requirements of the Code of Practice when we are aware of what is necessary.

2 Standards Board for England

- 2.1 As Members are aware the Government has announced its intention to change the current Standards Regime and to abolish the Standards Board for England in the Localism Bill, which was published on 13 December 2010.
- 2.2 In the Localism Bill the Government have said they will abolish the Standards Board Regime and instead it will become a criminal offence for Councillors to deliberately with-hold or misrepresent a personal interest.
- 2.3 The Government have also indicated that they intend to use the Localism Bill to clarify the rules on Pre-Determination. These rules were developed to ensure that Councillors came to Council discussions, for example on planning applications with an open mind. The Government have said that they will make it clear in the Localism Bill that it is possible for Councillors to play an active part in local discussions and that they should not be liable to legal challenge as a result.
- 2.4 The Localism Bill will still include a duty on the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council. The Bill also allows the Council to adopt a Voluntary Code of Conduct which will set out the conduct that is expected of Members and Co-opted Members when they are acting in that capacity. This Voluntary Code may simply be a revision of the existing Code, the adoption of a new Code or the Council could decide not to have this Voluntary Code of Conduct in any event.
- 2.5 Where the Council has a Voluntary Code of Conduct then written allegations of a breach may be made to the Council and the Council would then still need to consider whether it was appropriate to investigate the allegation and what action to take in respect of any breach of the Voluntary Code.
- 2.6 It is unclear how the provisions in the Bill relating to the Register of Interests will differ from the current arrangements.
- 2.7 At the present time the penalties, in the Bill, for non disclosure or taking part when an interest is registered are a fine not exceeding £5,000 or the court would have a power to disqualify the person for a period not exceeding five years from being or becoming a Member or co-opted Member of the authority. Where an offence has been committed the prosecution may only be brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions.
- 2.8 The Bill is currently still at the Committee stage in the House of Commons and as yet there is no indication on the Community and Local Government's website as to when the Bill may become an Act.

Discussion has started amongst Hampshire authorities as to the possibility of a Hampshire wide Voluntary Code of Conduct and reciprocal arrangements for investigating allegations of Breach of any such Voluntary Code.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 When the requirements of the Code of Practice and the Localism Act are known the Council will respond to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the Council and its members

Financial Services comments:	None for the purposes of this report
Legal Services comments:	Contained in the report
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See Paragraph 3
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	None
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Linda Edwards

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

Committee:	Standards & Governance Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 March 2011
Title:	Internal Audit Monitoring Statement For The Period 1st April 2010 to 31st December 2010
Author:	Head of Internal Audit & Risk Assurance
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

To table the performance of the Internal Audit Section in the first nine months of 2010/11 (1st April 2010 – 31st December 2010) against the agreed audit plan to the Members with responsibility for governance.

Secondly to provide Members with an update on other key internal business within the same period.

Recommendation

That the Standards and Governance Committee review the performance of Internal Audit from 1st April 2010 to 31st December 2010.

1 Background

- 1.1 Members of this Committee approved the Annual Audit Plan for the period 2010/11 on 18 March 2010. The Plan was produced in consultation with all Service Unit Managers. Performance against the Annual Audit Plan for 2010/11, contained within the above, is reported to Members periodically. This report outlines the audit activity for the period 1 April to 31 December 2011, as summarised in Appendix One.

2 Report

Resources and the Internal Audit Partnership

- 2.1 Internal Audit resource has provided substantial support to the process of procuring the new contracts and risk management which has impacted upon the resource available to deliver the annual audit plan. However, all fundamental audits will be delivered by the year-end and other work has been prioritised to ensure that areas of high risk are covered. Some low risk audits have with the agreement of Service Unit Managers been deferred until 2011/12.

- 2.2 At the time of its preparation, the Annual Plan for 2010/11 recognised the continued partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council. As a result arrangements are now in place to contract in internal audit resources from Gosport Borough Council, as necessary, at an agreed individual daily rate as well as share the Head of Internal Audit and his costs equally across both Councils.
- 2.3 The part time Principal Auditor at Eastleigh Borough Council (currently working 24 hours a week) will be absent on maternity leave for up to nine months of 2011/12. It has been agreed to cover this shortage of resource with additional support through the Principal post from within the partnership (i.e. Gosport Borough Council). This will be on a two-day a week basis from April 2011 through to January 2012. In addition, the Head of Internal Audit will work a three-day week for the 1st nine months of the year and then a two-day week for the remaining 3 months. This will result in income for Gosport Borough Council of £60,000.
- 2.4 The partnership arrangement with Eastleigh Borough Council continues to operate extremely well throughout 2010/11. In the period to 31 December 2010 ninety-eight days (Head of Internal Audit alone) has been provided to assist in both the delivery of the Council's annual audit plan and management of the section.
- 2.5 Work is progressing in widening the partnership to include other Councils with a view to further reducing the section's overall salary expenditure.
- 2.6 The respective Chief Financial Officers (CFO's) met in October and have endorsed the future of the current arrangement into 2011/12.
- 2.7 Appendix one highlights the delivery of planned work throughout the year to date. Audit activity on the new finance suite was delayed until Q3 to enable user familiarisation with the system and teething issues to be resolved.

Major Audits

- 2.8 The following fundamental audits commenced as planned and will be the subject of comment in my next report to Members.
- Accounting and Bank Reconciliation
 - Debtors
 - Treasury Management
 - Housing Benefits

2.9 We completed the following fundamental reviews and extracts from my opinions are detailed below:

- Payroll - there were 4 important and 2 advisory recommendations arising from this review.

Audit Opinion

Overall the controls operating over the Council's Payroll system are good and are working effectively.

- Council Tax – there were 7 important and 2 advisory recommendations arising from this review. In the main recommendations will be addressed via the restructure and realignment of responsibilities in the section.

Audit Opinion

Overall the controls operating over the Council's Council Tax system are good and working effectively.

Unit Reviews

2.10 The audit of Data protection and Freedom of Information commenced during this quarter and will be subject to comment in my next report.

2.11 The following audits were completed during the year to date and I can confirm that overall no areas of major concern were highlighted.

- Loans and Grants to Voluntary Organisations
- IT Acquisitions and Disposals
- BACSIP IT Facilities
- System Security Reviews
- Cashiers
- Enforcement
- Nursery
- Open Market
- Building Control (joint audit with FBC)
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Council Garages
- Temporary Accommodation
- Utility Costs
- Gas Safety
- Inprint and Graphic Design Centre
- Process Review S106s
- Rodent and Pest Control
- VAT

External Audit Reports

- 2.12 A report has been received from the Audit Commission (attached) on their work covering the grant claim for 2009/10.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The work performed by Internal Audit assists in reducing the overall risk exposure in the Council's operations and provides a degree of support to management in placing reliance on the adequacy of controls within their Services.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 That the Committee note the update and current status of the internal audit partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The information provided within the report has a direct link to improving the overall governance arrangements within the Council. The performance of the Internal Audit section is a key operational indicator monitored closely against the agreed Annual Audit Plan.
Corporate Plan:	Internal Audit's work supports all Council services in pursuit of their overall corporate and strategic priorities.
Risk Assessment:	See Section 3
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix One – Internal Audit Monitoring Statement 01.04.10 – 31.12.10 Enclosure: Report on grant claim certification 2009/10 (Audit Commission 11.01.11)
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Chris Davis 023 9254 5306

Appendix 1

Internal Audit Monitoring Statement **(1 April – 31 December 2011)**

	PLANNED DAYS	PLAN DAYS TO Q/E 31.12.10	ACTUAL DAYS TO 31.12.10	VARIANCE DAYS (FAVOURABLE)
MANAGEMENT / VFM REVIEWS	144.75	99.5	129	29.5
FINANCIAL SERVICES	223.5	127.5	125.5	(2)
ICT SERVICES	92	65	54.5	(10.5)
CENTRAL SERVICES	26.5	26.5	22	(4.5)
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	13.5	5	1.75	(3.25)
CX UNIT	16	14.5	1.5	(13)
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	20.5	12.5	6.75	(5.75)
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	34.5	34.5	45.5	11
STREETSCENE	64	47.5	33.75	(13.75)
LEISURE & CULTURAL SERVICES	20.5	10	16.5	6.5
HOUSING SERVICES	68	69.5	42.5	(27)
CONTINGENCY	60	45	51	6
EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL	130	97.5	97.5	0
PRIOR YEAR END COMPLETION	11	11	28	17
TOTAL	924.75	665.5	655.75	(9.75)

Days over on VFM/Management due to substantial support provided for procurement of the major contracts.

**FINANCIAL
SERVICES****14 JAN 2011**

11 January 2011

Mr P Wilson
Borough Treasurer
Gosport Borough Council
Town Hall
High St
Gosport
Hampshire PO12 1EB

Direct line 0844-798-4640
Mobile 07760-173158
Email m-catlow@audit-
commission.gov.uk

Dear Peter

Report on grant claim certification 2009/10

The statement of responsibilities in respect of grant certification, available from www.audit-commission.gov.uk, requires me to report the results of my certification work to those charged with governance to highlight the errors, adjustments and qualifications arising in your claims and returns.

This letter summarises this information for your 2009/10 claims. It includes messages arising from my assessment of your arrangements for preparing claims and reports and details of those claims that were amended or qualified.

In 2009/10, my audit team certified claims with a total value of £18.7 million. Of these, we carried out a limited review of 2 claims and a full review of 4 claims. The only amendment made during this period was to your the Housing Benefit claim, which was reduced by £120,950. This amendment was agreed by officers prior to my certification.

I did not issue any qualification letters on your claims for 2009/10.

The fees charged for grant certification work in 2009/10 totalled £56,737. This is above my original estimate but reflects the additional '40+ testing' required to certify your Housing Benefits claim and to check the amendments following audit. The fees for the remainder of your claims were in line with my original estimates. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide comparative details for 2008/09 as this audit was undertaken by Mazars LLP.

I do not consider that there are any significant recommendations to make at this time. I understand that a significant proportion of the adjustment to your Housing Benefit claim was due to damaged or disposed of files following a water leak in your storage facility. Outside of this, I would urge the Council to continue to review its Benefits administration process to minimise delays and general errors in the processing of claims, but I recognise that a certain level of error is inevitable given the complexity and number of claims processed.

To fulfil my responsibilities outlined above, I would be grateful if you could arrange for this letter to be considered by the Standards and Governance committee at its earliest convenience. In the meantime, I am happy to answer any questions you may have on this subject.

Yours sincerely



Mark Catlow
Senior Audit Manager

Appendix 1

Claims and returns above £500,000

Claim	Value £	Amended claim submitted	Amended claim received	Final fee £	Final value £
Housing and council tax benefit	1,308,948	Yes	Yes Claim reduced by £120,950	No	47,135
National non-domestic rates	13,928,988	Yes	No	No	2,945
Housing Revenue Account Subsidy	2,906,630	Yes	No	No	1,812

Claims between £100,000 and £500,000

Claim	Value £	Amended	Final fee £
Disabled Facilities	289,302	No	570
Pooling of Housing receipts	245,531	No	1,425

Other Returns

Claim	Count	Amended	Final fee £
Housing Subsidy base data return	3,219	No	2,850

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

Committee:	Standards & Governance Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 March 2011
Title:	Internal Audit Plan 2011/12
Author:	Head of Internal Audit & Risk Assurance
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

This report provides the Standards and Governance Committee with the planned annual coverage of Internal Audit resources for 2011/12.

Recommendation

That the Standards and Governance Committee agree without amendment the 2011/12 Internal Audit Plan as attached in Appendix One.

1 Background

- 1.1 The plan has been developed after consultation with all Service Unit Managers in February 2011 as well as reviewing the three year strategic audit and assessing the Council's strategic risk register. Further consultation with our new External Auditors is planned later this month to ensure there is no duplication of audit resource (both internal and external) in the forthcoming year. Developing this year has again been challenging with opportunities (increase in income) emerging with Eastleigh, within the current shared arrangement, with additional support required to cover for a temporary (maternity cover at Principal level) shortfall in their resource till January 2012. This has been taken into account within the planned internal audit coverage for 2011/12. A number of risk profiles have been affected due to the current economic climate, recent staff turnover and merging of services into new Units.

2 Report

- 2.1 The annual audit plan is based on 4.00 WTE internal staff and highlights the key components of the planned output from Internal Audit for 2011/12. A further column has been added to compare the previous years (2010/11) planned coverage in each of the Councils auditable areas. Future quarterly monitoring reports will be scheduled (included in the Committee's work plan) for Members throughout the year to compare actual versus planned coverage for the forthcoming year.

- 2.2 The Internal Audit Plan also includes for a maximum of 20 days IT Audit specialist (covered within the annual internal audit budget) that is shared with Portsmouth City Council.
- 2.3 The 2011/12 internal audit plan allows for a maximum of 227 audit days to be shared, under the current arrangement, to support Eastleigh Borough Council in delivering their audit plan. This is an increase of 97 days to cover for maternity leave at the Principal Auditor level. These shared resources will generate approximately £60K (an increase of £20K on 2010/11). It's planned that audit resources will be allocated to Eastleigh Borough Council in the following way:-

Quarter	Auditor Resource (days)	Head of Audit (days)
Q1 (Apr–Jun)	26	39
Q2 (Jul - Sep)	26	39
Q3 (Oct – Dec)	26	39
Q4 (Jan – Mar)	6	26

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The work performed by Internal Audit assists in reducing the overall risk exposure in the Council's operations and provides a degree of support to management in placing reliance on the adequacy of controls within their Services.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 This report outlines the planned internal audit coverage for 2011/12.

Financial Services comments:	None
Legal Services comments:	None
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The annual plan is part of the Sections improvement plan and regular monitoring features as the operational plan for which the section is scrutinised both externally (Audit Commission) and internally (by the Standards & Governance Committee).
Corporate Plan:	The Internal Audit coverage supports all Council Services in pursuit of their overall corporate objectives.
Risk Assessment:	See Section 3
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix One – Internal Audit Plan 2011/12
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Chris Davis 023 9254 5306

Appendix One

Service Unit/ Audit Area	Planned Audit Days 2011/12
Financial Services	202.50
Legal, Democratic & Planning Services	15
Chief Executives	110
Environmental Services	69
Leisure & Corporate Services	50
Housing Services	80
Management/VFM Reviews	81
Eastleigh Borough Council	227
Contingency	45
Total	879.50

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

Board/Committee:	STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	17 MARCH 2011
Title:	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES AND ANALYSIS
Author:	CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER
Status:	FOR CONSIDERATION

Purpose

To consider an analysis of complaints for the first 6 months of the current financial year (2010/11).

Recommendation

That the Committee:

Consider the analysis of formal complaints received in the first 6 months of the 2010/11 financial year.

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Meeting of the Committee on 14 December 2006 it was resolved that six-monthly complaints monitoring reports be submitted to the Board. Members would then be in a position to identify any trends in the quality of service delivery and if necessary to also make any recommendations to Council on the operation of the Customer Complaints Procedures.
- 1.2 A detailed report and analysis of formal complaints received during each financial year is presented to the Committee at the relevant meetings in any given Municipal year.

2 Report

- 2.1 The Customer Complaints Procedures have not been changed during the current financial year. In addition to complaints being submitted by letter, the Council web site includes a link to enable the public to use an On-line Complaints Form which, on submission by a member of the public is automatically sent to the 'Comments, Complaints and Compliments' in-box for prompt action.
- 2.2 All formal complaints received, either on-line or in writing, are managed and monitored by staff in the Leisure & Corporate Services Unit. Initially the complaint is dealt with as a Stage 1 and is allocated to the appropriate Service Unit Manager for a response. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, then the complaint progresses to Stage 2 and arrangements are made for an independent Manager to

investigate the matter and write directly to the complainant with their findings and conclusions. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Stage 2 process, they can request that their complaint is considered by a Panel of Councillors, usually 3 in number; this is Stage 3 of the process. The complainant has an ultimate right to refer their complaint, at any time, to the Local Government Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman will not normally consider a complaint until, and unless, the local authority's internal complaints procedures have been exhausted.

- 2.3 All formal complaints received are logged in a Complaints Register, maintained in the form of a spreadsheet, and this is used to monitor progress and help ensure that target dates for responses are met.

- 2.4 A breakdown of complaints received for the period 01/04/10 to 30/09/10 between the responding Service Units is shown in **Appendix A**. An analysis of the type of complaints is attached as **Appendix B**.

- 2.5 During the period 1/04/10 to 30/09/10 a total of 7 formal complaints were received.

Of the Stage 1 complaints received 3 were responded to within the 10 day target time – a performance of 42.8% compared with 63% for 2009/10. Whilst the reduction in performance is unfortunate there are times when it is not possible for a reply to be done within 10 days due to other commitments. In 2 out of 7 cases a revised target reply date was notified to the complainant and in the other 2 cases both the replies took 13 days. The longest response time was 24 days.

Of the 7 complaints 2 were escalated to the Stage 2 process and were due for a response by 19 October and 16 December 2010 respectively. Both Stage 2 complaints were duly replied to within target and both were subsequently escalated to Stage 3. 1 case was referred to a Stage 3 Members Panel which was held in January 2011; that Complaint was not upheld.

The other complaint has only recently been elevated to Stage 3. Deliberations with the relevant Unit Manager are currently ongoing and a decision to convene the Stage 3 Members Panel will be made in due course, if deemed appropriate.

A number of service related “complaints” were received via the “comments/complaints” form and these were immediately forwarded to the relevant Section to be dealt with as a routine enquiry or request.

- 2.6 The complaints figures show a slight decrease in the number of complaints for the 6 month period compared with last year, down from 16 to 7. Although the figure for 2009/10 was 16, it is prudent not to draw any firm conclusions until the full year figure is available. As

can be seen from Appendix B the types of complaint run across a range of services. There is no discernible trend that gives particular cause for concern with most areas of service showing a reduction year-on-year.

- 2.7 A full review of complaints for the complete financial year will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee in July 2011. This will include a qualitative analysis to determine whether the complaints process has had positive effect in either identifying improvements in procedures or in the way services are delivered. The results of a survey of complainants, asking for opinions and comments on the procedures, will also be included.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 It is important that the Council has in place robust processes for dealing with complaints to ensure that it minimises the risk of complaints to the Ombudsman and also minimises the risk of a finding of maladministration. It is also good governance to review complaints received regularly, assess the overall number and nature of complaints, and take any necessary remedial action.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The formal complaints processes and procedures appear to be operating satisfactorily although a review of the procedure to submit a complaint is being undertaken to identify if improvements are appropriate.
- 4.2 An analysis of the 7 complaints received during the first half of the year does not reveal any trend that gives particular cause for concern.

Financial Services comments:	There are no financial implications.
Legal Services comments:	None for the purposes of this report.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	There are none.
Corporate Plan:	The effective management of complaints procedures contributes to the strategic priority of 'Delivering Quality Services' in the Pursuit of Excellence..
Risk Assessment:	There are no direct business risks associated with this report although robust complaints procedures are a means of reducing the risk of the Council being reported to the Local Government Ombudsman.
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	

Appendix 'A'	Complaints analysis by responding Unit
Appendix 'B'	Complaints analysis by type
Report author/ Lead Officer:	David Martin, Leisure & Corporate Services Manager

APPENDIX A

COMPLAINTS 1 APRIL 2010 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2010

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
BUSINESS UNIT			
Chief Executive	0	*1	0
Financial Services	1	0	0
Housing Services	2	1	0
Legal Democratic and Planning Services	0	0	0
Leisure and Corporate Services	2	1	1
Environmental Services	2	0	0
TOTAL	7	3	1

* Linda Edwards advised letter be passed direct to CE for Stage 2 response.

APPENDIX B**COMPLAINTS ANALYSIS BY TYPE
FOR THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR**

Type of complaint	2009/10	2010/11
Business rates	2	0
Housing	5	2
Grounds maintenance	1	1
Common land	1	0
Community Safety	1	0
Environmental (sewer repairs)	2	0
Finance – debtors invoice	1	0
Benefits	2	0
Council tax	1	0
Allotments	0	2
Council Tax (Bailiffs)	0	1
Environmental (noise)	0	1
TOTAL	16	7

AGENDA ITEM NO.

STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN
AS AT 20 JANUARY 2011

Work Area	Report To Committee	Lead Officer
Fraud & Corruption Strategy update	June 11	Linda Edwards / Chris Davis
Review of Financial Regulations	TBA	Peter Wilson
Members' Attendance Records	17 Mar 11	Linda Edwards
Member/Officer Protocol	21 Apr 11	Linda Edwards
Report on changes to or replacement of the Standards Board for England	When legislation announced	Linda Edwards
Complaints 2010	17 Mar 11	David Martin
Internal Audit Monitoring Statement (1 st April 2010 to 31 st December 2010)	17 Mar 11	Chris Davis
Internal Audit coverage planned for 2011/12	17 Mar 11	Chris Davis
Work Plan	Standing Item	