



WNDC Board Report

Report by Chief Operating Officer

Paper Reference: 2011-02-09-01

Agenda Item: 9

14 March 2011

Subject: Operational Report

Advice: That the Board:

1. **Note** the report

1. Health & Safety

1.1 There are no accidents or near misses to report.

2. Business Continuity

2.1 The first exercise to test the robustness of the Corporation's Business Continuity plan was held on 24 February. A follow-up exercise is due to be conducted later in March. Full reports will be provided to the Audit & Risk Committee's April meeting.

3. Corporate Plan (April 2011-March 2014) / Business Plan (April 2011-March 2012)

3.1 Confirmation of WNDC's financial settlement from the Spending Review is expected towards the end of March. Departmental sign-off for our 2011-2014 Corporate Plan and 2011-2012 Business Plan is therefore likely to be delayed until April or May.

4. Transparency / Freedom of Information requests

4.1 All WNDC spend over £500 is now routinely placed on our website.

4.2 There have been no Freedom of Information requests throughout January or February. We have had one Subject Access Request where an individual asked for a copy of a recording of a planning committee where he spoke and was referred to. The time limit for providing this was 40 calendar days. It was provided in 8 calendar days.

5. Complaints, compliments and comments

5.1 Feedback from members of the public, whether in the form of complaints, compliments or comments, is a key mechanism for driving continuous improvement within the Corporation, as it provides an external view on the effectiveness of our procedures and how well they are being implemented. Further details on our policy can be found at <http://www.wndc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Making-complaints-comments-compliments.pdf>

Complaints

- 5.2 There are three stages to WNDC's complaints procedure. Stage 1 requires an informal response. Stage 2 requires a response from an appropriate Director. Stage 3 requires a response from the CEO. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with this response they can refer their complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman or the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 5.3 Since September 2010, WNDC has received six complaints. Of the six, one is currently at Stage 1, three reached stage 2 and two reached stage 3. No complaint has been referred to the Ombudsman. Four of the six complaints are closed. Two complaints relate to the administration of determining the South Meadow Road planning application. One complaint was regarding the speaking procedures at planning committees. A further three complaints relate to the conduct of a planning officer, the conduct of a committee member and the planning process, in determining the Belle Baulk application.
- 5.4 Of the six complaints, all were from members of the public and three were from the same person. One of the open complaints is being managed at stage 2, and a number of actions have been agreed with the complainant to address their concerns. This includes a review of our procedures for ensuring accurate information is included in planning committee reports. The most recent complaint is being managed at stage 1, and an outcome has not yet been agreed.

Compliments

- 5.5 WNDC occasionally receives compliments, although these are not always received through the formal procedure or formally recorded. However, all comments are shared with the team. The most recent compliment was from a member of the public who was pleased with the service they had received from a particular planning officer.

Comments

- 5.6 These are not formally recorded unless received through the formal 'Complaints, Compliments and Comments' procedure. Currently no formal comments have been received.

6. Appendices

6.1 None.