Systems Review of the Comments and Complaints Procedure

Committee	Audit and Standards

Date of meeting	22 March 2013 		Date of report	30 January 2013

Report by Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)

1. Object of report

To advise the committee on the findings of a systems review of the Comments and Complaints procedure. This engagement is included in the annual Audit Plan for 2012/13.

2. Background

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 gave the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) the authority to lead the development of simplified and standardised complaints handling procedures across the public sector. In February 2011, SPSO published guidance on a 'Model Complaints Handling Procedure' to support this decree.

The objective of this audit engagement was to identify, assess and evaluate the current system for recording and reporting comments and complaints within SPT, in accordance with best practice guidance.

This audit engagement tested elements of the internal controls and mitigation against the following corporate risks:

- SPT 21 Adverse Publicity; and
- SPT 22 Governance arrangements.

3. Outline of findings

A comments and complaints procedure has been in place for many years and a centralised database has been established to administer the process.

The audit engagement identified a number of enhancements which can be made to the current arrangements to reflect recent organisational changes, including:

- review and update reporting media;
• the use of e-reporting; and
• performance reporting.

There are areas for improvement, and these areas have been addressed by fourteen audit recommendations. Departmental management have agreed to implement these recommendations, which are currently being actioned.

4. Conclusions

The Audit and Assurance team has undertaken a systems review of the Comments and Complaints procedure. Areas for improvement have been identified and fourteen recommendations have been agreed. Key controls exist and are applied consistently and effectively in the majority of areas. Reasonable assurance can be taken from the controls in place for the areas covered in this engagement.

5. Committee action

The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and agree that the Audit and Assurance Manager submits a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations to a future meeting.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences  None
Legal consequences  None
Financial consequences  None
Personnel consequences  None
Social Inclusion consequences  None
Risk consequences  As detailed in the report

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