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Triennial Review of the Veterinary Products Committee

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Executive Summary

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2. The VPC is an Advisory NDPB which reports to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an Executive Agency of Defra. The VPC exists to provide independent expert technical advice in relation to aspects of veterinary medicinal products, to Ministers, in order that VMD's remit can be fully achieved.

3. The VPC requires very broad and also specialised expertise in order to be knowledgeable across the broad scope of issues the committee may be asked to consider.

4. Committee members and stakeholders considered that there is a continued need for the VPC to provide technical expertise to VMD to aid their decision making on behalf of Ministers. They were in agreement that the advice needs to be independent of the VMD and wider Defra, as on occasion the Minister, through the VMD, is required to make decisions on a product produced by an agency of Defra or as a result of Defra funding.

5. The Review has concluded that there is a lack of viable alternative delivery models due to the nature of the functions of the VPC and the need for such a role to be independent of Government.

6. The Review has been tested against the Principles of Good Corporate Governance. Due to the VPC employing no staff, many of the generic governance requirements are met by the VMD on its behalf.

7. **The Review concludes that the Veterinary Products Committee's independent scientific and technical advisory functions remain important and that it should remain as an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body.**

8. **There is currently no formal process in place to consider the VPC's performance of its functions. The Review recommends that a report is made to the VMD Executive, on an annual basis, describing the work carried out by VPC, the resulting actions and how they have influenced VMD decision making.**

9. **The Review recommends bringing the VPC into line with best practice to ensure that members clear with the Senior Sponsor, in advance, any appointment or employment taken up within two years of leaving VPC where their official duties resulted in personal involvement with the company or other organisation making the offer, or access to commercially sensitive information.**

Section 1: Introduction

10. The Triennial Review of the Veterinary Products Committee (VPC) was announced by Defra's Minister of State on 26 March 2013. The VPC is an Advisory Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) which reports to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an Executive Agency of Defra. The Review was carried out in line with Cabinet Office Guidance for Triennial Reviews of NDPBs. Its purpose was to determine whether the functions and form of the Veterinary Products Committee remain appropriate and, if so, what governance arrangements should be in place. The Review was carried out by a Defra official with no work or professional involvement in the work of the VPC and was taken forward in line with Cabinet Office guidance[1]. This report sets out the conclusions of the Review.

11. In reaching the conclusions set out in this paper, the Review carried out the following:

    a. Questionnaires were sent to committee members seeking their views on the VPC. Questionnaires were sent to individuals and bodies who may be impacted by the advice VPC gives to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). Questionnaires were also completed by Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor and the Defra Director who is the corporate customer for VMD. The EFRA Select Committee was also informed of the Review and given the opportunity to comment.

    b. Interviews were held with the Chair, the Secretariat and VMD Directors who commission and receive expertise from the committee.

    c. An examination of minutes of VPC meetings, both published and confidential, provided an understanding of the level of detail and breadth of expertise the VPC provides.

    d. Consideration of comparable functions in relation to the provision of expertise on human medicinal products licensed within the UK, The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has an NDPB, the Commission for Human Medicines (CHM), which provides

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230191/Cabinet-Office-Guidance-on-Reviews-of-Non-Departmental-Public-Bodies.pdf

similar functions to the VPC. Discussions explored any synergies that exist between CHM and VPC in their functions and delivery models.

e. Consideration of how other European countries seek scientific expertise in relation to veterinary medical products that receive national authorisation.

Section 2: Background

12. The Veterinary Products Committee was originally established in 1970 and the current provision providing for its continued existence is regulation 28 of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/2159). It is classified as an Advisory NDPB and reports to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, an Executive Agency of Defra.

13. VMD's vision is the responsible, safe and effective use of veterinary medicinal products. It aims to protect public health, animal health and the environment, and promote animal welfare by assuring the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines. VMD does this on behalf of Ministers.

14. The VPC has one sub-committee, the Medical and Scientific Panel. This committee is not actively meeting at present whilst it awaits a report into the impact on humans of Organophosphates, previously used as a veterinary medicinal product.

15. The Committee consists of a Chair and 26 appointed members[2][3] but employs no staff. The size of the Committee is due to the very broad and also specialised expertise required. Efficiency is achieved by the most relevant members working on an issue and reporting back to the wider group. The committee meets formally, at present 3 times a year, with each member serving for 3 years. The number of meetings required throughout the year varies depending on the number of applications received. For any new and re-emerging diseases or emerging issues, working groups are created to provide specific advice.

16. For each meeting they attend, members are entitled to claim a preparation fee of £76 and an attendance fee of £148 (the Chairman's fees are £94 and £185 respectively). In addition, members who are leading on a specific item can

[2] A table showing the Committee members and their relevant expertise is given in Annex A

[3] Committee members are appointed in line with the Code of Practise issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments

claim an extra preparation fee of £76. Administrative support to the Committee is provided by VMD. The cost of the VPC in 2012 was **£71,213**[4].

Section 3: Functions of VPC

17. The VPC exists to provide independent expert technical advice in relation to aspects of veterinary medicinal products to Ministers, in order that VMD's remit can be fully achieved. The VPC requires very broad and specialised expertise in order to be knowledgeable in the wide and varied nature of the issues it may be asked to consider. In the Arm's Length Body review of 2010 it was decided that this status should be retained due to its statutory, expert and independent nature.

18. The VPC's expertise contributes to the protection of animal welfare and safety, and human safety. The VPC has three recognised functions:

    a. To provide advice on specific scientific issues relating to Marketing Authorisations (MAs), Exceptional MAs, or Animal Test Certificate (ATCs) of veterinary medicines, including vaccines. It is the VMD, not the VPC, that makes the decision whether to: grant or refuse an MA or an ATC; grant one that is different from that which was applied for; vary it other than on the application of the holder; suspend or revoke it; or refuse to grant the variation applied for by the holder.

    b. To consider reports of adverse events relating to veterinary medicines. These cover adverse events both in animals, humans and the environment.

    c. To consider appeals when VMD intends to suspend a MA, on the grounds of safety, quality or efficacy, or to refuse to grant a MA or an ATC, grant one that is different from that which was applied for, vary it other than on the application of the holder, refuse to grant a variation applied for by the holder, or revoke it.

[4] A breakdown of these costs is given in Annex B

Section 4: Do the functions need to continue?

19. Completed questionnaires were received from thirteen VPC members, nine from stakeholders and others with an interest in the outcomes of VPC, plus both the Defra CSA and Customer Director responded.

20. Defining the stakeholders of VPC was not clear cut as the VPC provides advice to VMD and it is the subsequent decision by VMD that may impact on the organisation producing medicines of interest. Stakeholders of VPC include:

    a. Government departments and agencies, and the devolved administrations whose interests include the availability of veterinary medicines to mitigate health issues that may impact on animal welfare, national economy, public health and international trade; and the human health impacts that the administration of veterinary medicines may have on those using them..

    b. Animal medicines companies which, in the main, are represented by the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH)

    c. The users of veterinary medicinal products: farmers, veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, and pet owners. Their interests are primarily the mitigation of animal health issues to the benefit of individual animals, and herds and flock, and also the personal health impacts of the administration of such products.

21. Overwhelmingly, respondents considered that there is a continued need for the VPC to provide technical expertise to VMD to aid decision making; ensuring the authorization and licensed use of veterinary medicines which are safe, both to animals and humans, and effective. Respondents were also in agreement that the advice needs to be independent of the VMD and wider Defra, as on occasion VMD is required to make decisions on a product produced by an agency of Defra or as a result of Defra funding.

22. For a body to continue to operate as an advisory NDPB it must pass the Government's three tests. A table showing the assessment of VPC's functions against the three tests is given in Annex D. The Review has considered VPC's functions against the following:

a. Is this a technical function which needs external expertise to deliver;

b. Is this a function which needs to be delivered independently of Ministers to establish facts or figures with integrity; and/or

c. Is this a function which needs to be delivered with absolute political impartiality

23. The Review has concluded that the VPC passes all of the three tests.

24. As mentioned above, technical expertise is integral to the decision making of VMD to ensure the authorisation and licensed use of veterinary medicines which are safe, both to animals and humans, and effective. This conclusion is supported by the responses of stakeholders and similar functions existing in European countries and for human medicinal products. The reduction in the number of issues referred is a reflection of a fall in the number of new products seeking to be licensed and market forces rather than a reflection of any reduction in VMD's need for advice. VMD has also introduced a log assessment of adverse reactions so that VPC time is concentrated on those of impact.

25. There have been occasions where the VMD has been required to make decisions on a product produced in an agency of Defra, or as a result of Defra funding. To avoid any conflicts of interest, it is important that the VMD is able to call on the independent advice from the VPC. Therefore, there is a continued need for the VPC to remain independent from VMD and Defra.

26. Committee members also feel the VPC needs to be impartial from VMD, Defra or wider Government. This is because there may be direct commercial impacts resulting from VMD decisions that may be made based on VPC advice. Additionally there may be occasions where VMD decisions could have implications for Ministerial policy outcomes, and impartial advice is important to the decision making process. The reviewer's consideration of the detailed restricted minutes of VPC meetings supports this assertion that VPC should be impartial.

Section 5: Alternative delivery models

27. The review considered alternative delivery models as set out in the Cabinet Office guidance. These models take full account of the views of the committee members, VMD Directors, stakeholders and interested parties, Defra's CSA and Customer Director, as well as how similar functions are delivered in other European countries, and for human medical products.

28. The VPC provides independent expert advice, and therefore models that had this function delivered by central government would not be appropriate. Detailed discussion of the options can be found in Annex E. The four delivery models identified as being the most able to deliver VPC functions are summarised below:

    a. Contract out either the functions of VPC to a single contractor, or contract out the administrative functions that the VMD provides to support the VPC. These were discounted primarily due to the current small running cost of VMD and that this model would not achieve any savings. This model has been discounted.

    b. Bring the functions in house through provision by an internal expert advisory committee. The VPC, as an NDPB, is able to distance advice from any commercial activity or perceived influence or gain and provides a clear line between the advice given and a potential policy impact elsewhere in Government. The highly contentious nature of the impact of some of the advice and outcomes of resulting VMD decisions negates this model as providing the independence and impartiality that the function requires. It has therefore been discounted.

    c. Merge with another similar body, such as the Commission of Human Medicines (CHM)[5][6]. It is evident that the nature of the products and issues being discussed are in fact very different, and so there would be little overlap in expertise required. Delivery of the full functions of a combined body would reduce efficiency and increase costs in comparison with the present arrangements Additionally the two

[5] Other bodies within Defra and across government were considered but only the CHM was considered relevant here.

[6] There are no other advisory or executive bodies within the Defra network that could accommodate the range of specialist expertise required to carry out VPC's functions. Therefore a merger with another Defra body was discounted.

separate bodies report to two different Ministers, the servicing of which again may reduce efficiency as both Ministers and Departments would need to be kept abreast of issues and advice. For these reasons this option has been discounted.

d. Deliver the current VPC functions by a new executive agency. The volume of the work carried out by VPC and the flexible way they conduct this work means there is little to gain from setting up a new agency. Executive Agencies are usually only considered viable options in cases where 100+ staff are employed. This option has therefore been discounted.

Section 6: Conclusions

29. The Review has determined that the functions of the Veterinary Medicines Committee remain important and should be carried out.

30. It has also concluded that there are no other viable alternative delivery models and that the VPC meets the requirements of the Government's three tests for its existence as an advisory NDPB. It provides the depth and breadth of expertise required by VMD. It provides advice that is independent of the decision makers, and the advice provided is impartial to commercial, policy or political interests. The current arrangement is cost effective and can be demonstrated to be flexible in matching the ongoing needs of VMD for expert advice.

31. The Review therefore concludes that the functions carried out by the VPC should continue to be delivered by this committee.

Section 7: Stage Two – Governance

32. Due to the VPC employing no staff, many of the generic governance requirements are met by the VMD on its behalf.

33. There is currently no formal process in place to consider the VPC's performance of its functions. It is the recommendation of this Review that a report is made to the VMD Executive, on an annual basis, as an agenda item at a regular meeting. This report should describe:

    a. The work done by VPC during the year;

b. The resulting actions that their advice has triggered;

c. How these have influenced VMD decision making.

34. A review of governance arrangements has showed they are appropriate to the size and functions of an advisory NDPB. A full assessment of the governance of VPC is provided in Annex F (against the code of good corporate governance for advisory NDPBs) but is highlighted below:

    a. Accountability: The VMD provides all the secretariat support for VPC. Committee members are appointed as per guidelines. As VPC works so closely with VMD there is no requirement for the Chair to meet directly with the minister.

    b. Roles and Responsibilities: There is regular dialogue between the VPC and VMD, with the VMD secretariat attending VPC meetings. Committee members are assessed annually by the chair and the Chair is assessed by a VMD Director.

    c. Role of the Chair and Committee Members: The VPC is led by a non-executive Chair who has been appointed as per the Code of Practise guidelines. VPC members are independent of Defra and have a diverse range of backgrounds including human surgical and medicine fields, pharmacological experts and farmers.

35. The review of governance arrangements has shown that the VPC currently has no formal arrangements in place for members on the acceptance of appointments after they leave the Committee. However VPC has operated effectively for a long period with no problems arising from conflicts of interest when members or former members take up new appointments. Committee members are in the main from regulated professions and additionally are subject to strict conflict of interest guidelines.

36. In response to this Review and to bring the VPC into line with best practice it will now ensure that members clear with the Senior Sponsor, in advance, any appointment or employment taken up within two years of leaving VPC where their official duties resulted in personal involvement with the company or other organisation making the offer, or access to commercially sensitive information.

What happens next?

37. The VPC will continue to carry out its functions and will report annually to the VMD Executive as described above. It will be subject to another Triennial Review in the future.

Cost of the Review

38. The Review was carried out by an existing Civil Servant within Defra. No additional costs were incurred as part of this Review

Section 8: Annexes

A. Veterinary Products Committee Members

B. Breakdown of costs of VPC and comparison of costs 2008-2012

C. VPC Stakeholders

D. Assessment of functions against the ‘3-tests’

E. Alternative delivery models considered

F. Assessment of governance

Annex A: Veterinary Products Committee Members

Name	Specialism
Prof Bill Reilly	VPC Chairman
Dr Tim Marrs	Toxicology
Prof Dave Cavanagh	Molecular Biologist/Geneticist
Mrs Nicola Ackerman	Veterinary nurse
Prof Jacqueline Matthews	Parasitologist
Mrs Margaret Chambers	Lay member
Prof Diana Anderson	Toxicologist
Mr Robert Morris	Pharmacist
Dr Christopher Collins	Food safety risk assessor
Mr Rory Bell	Small Animal Vet
Mr Declan O'Rourke	Risk analyst
Dr Edward Houghton	Residues Analyst
Prof Malcolm Bennett	Virologist
Prof Andrew Peters	Veterinary Immunology
Dr Robert Jefferson	Clinical Toxicology
Dr Susan Bews	Lay Member
Mr Andrew Praill	Vet (large animal)
Dr Steven Kayne	Pharmacist
Dr Tanya Bleiker	Dermatologist

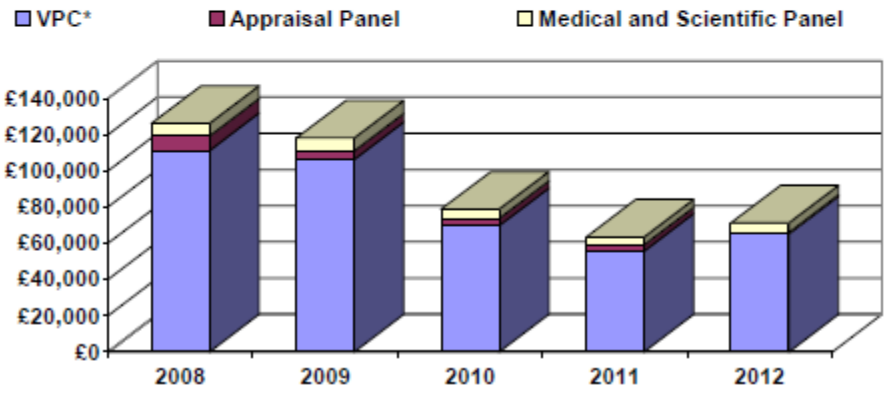
Prof Colin Robertson	Physician (A&E)
Dr Elizabeth Kubiak	Medical/clinical microbiologist
Dr Clare Bryant	Pharmacologist
Mr Peter Scott	Veterinary Surgeon (Fish)
Mr John Sherington	Statistician
Mr Keith Siddorn	Working Farmer
Prof Francis Burke	Hand Surgeon
Mr Peter Cargill	Vet (poultry)

Annex B: Breakdown of costs of VPC and comparison of costs 2008-2012

	Meetings held		Travel & subsistence		Preparation & attendance		Other costs		TOTAL	
	2011	2012	2011 £	2012 £	2011 £	2012 £	2011 £	2012 £	2011 £	2012 £
VPC*	5	6	26,085	34,550	23,039	26,322	6,554	4,438	55,677	65,310
Appraisal Panel	1	0	2,216	662	1,175	0	0	0	3,391	662
MSP	2	2	1,826	3,265	2,519	1,902	0	75	4,345	5,241
TOTAL	8	8	30,127	38,477	26,733	28,224	6,554	4,512	63,413	71,213

* including the cost of the open meeting.

Cost of the VPC and its sub-committees 2008 – 2012



* including the cost of the open meeting.

The Appraisal Panel mentioned in this illustration relates to the Appraisal Panel for Human Suspected Adverse Reactions to Veterinary Medicines, which was expanded at the end of 2011.

Annex C: VPC Stakeholders

Organisation	Contact
Animal Health Distributors Association	Ian Scott
Animal Medicines Training Regulation Authority	Stephen Dawson
British Veterinary Association	Rachael Gledhill
Department of Health	Dr Simon Dyer
Environment Agency	Paul Whitehouse
Food Standards Agency	David Parker
Health Protection England	Dr Tim Marczylo
Health and Safety Executive	David Coackley
National Office of Animal Health	Phil Sketchley
Norbrook	Norbrook Laboratories (GB) Ltd
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons	Anthony Roberts
Veterinary Residues Committee	Mrs Dorothy Craig MBE
Scottish Government	Jesus Gallego
Welsh Government	Arjen Brouwer
DARDNI	Collette Connor
DHSSPSNI	Michael Mawhinney

Annex D: Assessment of functions against the “3 Tests”

	Functions		
	Provision of specific scientific advice in relation to MAs, EMAs & ATCs.	**Consider reports of adverse reactions**	**Consider appeals on suspension/refusal of MA/ATC application**
Scientific & technical expertise	Broad range and depth of expertise required to fully discharge function.	Broad range and depth of expertise required to fully discharge function.	Broad range and depth of expertise required to fully discharge function.
Independence	Required for products produced by Defra agencies or with Defra funding	Required for products produced by Defra agencies or with Defra funding	Required for products produced by Defra agencies or with Defra funding
Impartiality	Required to ensure clear separation from commercial impact or government policy	Required to ensure clear separation from commercial impact of government policy	Required to ensure clear separation from commercial impact or government policy

Annex E: Alternative delivery models considered

These delivery model options are:

a. Abolish

This option has been discounted. There remains a continued need for the provision of scientific expertise. This was unanimously recognised by all questionnaire respondents. Other EU countries also have the provision of this expertise in some form or other, as does human medicines control in the UK. Additionally the current Veterinary Medicines legislation requires this function to be in place.

b. Move out of central government

Consideration has been given to contracting out the function of technical expertise provision to VMD. To be effective this model would need to be able to provide the depth and breadth of expertise available in the current model, avoiding conflicts of interest so that advice given was independent and impartial. It was also considered if there were administrative advantages in this way of provision.

There are 2 ways in which moving the function out of central government could be achieved:

i) By contracting the function out to a single contractor. At present there are no Defra procured contractors who are able to provide the multi-disciplinary yet specific knowledge and breadth of expertise that is needed to give VMD advice of value. The annual cost of VPC is less than the minimum threshold for the relevant contract framework, and it is highly unlikely that the function could be delivered this way for lower cost. Whilst this would remove the function even further from Government it may result in less transparency regarding expert appointments and conflicts of interest. This option has been discounted.

By contracting out the provision of the administration and secretariat function that is at present done by VMD, such that the contractor therefore manages the committee members as contingent labour. The relatively small level of this support required means this option would not be cost effective and as such it has been discounted. It cannot be done by local government as this is a UK function, considering products to be licensed for a UK market. To have local

decision making would not appropriate, nor would it be cost effective or efficient. It would also be inappropriate to have this function delivered by the voluntary sector. There are no existing groups that bring together the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience required. It might also be difficult to manage any conflicts of interest.

c. Bring in-house

This option could be considered in 2 ways: by disbanding the committee and relying on VMD to source expertise at the time each individual issue arises; by administering the committee as an internal advisory committee of Defra.

i) VMD sourcing expertise as and when required has been discounted as an option. Independence and impartiality is a key part of the current VPC set up. It distances advice from any commercial activity or perceived influence or gain. Being distinctly separate from VMD enables a clear line of sight between advice given that may have policy impact elsewhere in Government e.g. Bovine Tuberculosis cattle vaccine developed by AHVLA. Additionally the breadth and depth of expertise that is available in the current model would be difficult to provide and maintain in house as highlighted both by VMD and the NOAH questionnaire response.

ii) Provision of advice by an internal expert advisory committee is a common model of seeking expertise used in government. It was supported by one questionnaire respondent. The highly contentious nature of the impact of some of the advice and outcomes of resulting VMD decisions, both in commercial, policy and perhaps political terms negates this model as providing the independence and impartiality that the function requires. On account of this, this option is discounted.

d. Merge with another body

The only body identified with any synergies with VPC functions is the Commission of Human Medicines (CHM). Initially this appears an attractive model due to similarities of function and the ability to deliver efficiencies. Through consultation with the parent organisation of CHM, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), it became evident that the nature of the products and issues being discussed are in fact very different, many of the human medicinal issues are clinical, and so there would be very little overlap in the detail of the work. To have one organisation consider the regulatory aspects of both human and veterinary medicines would be likely to

be need as many different experts in the single body as the 2 separate ones. This would reduce efficiency and increase costs.

Additionally the two separate bodies report to two different Ministers, the CHM to the Minister for Health, and the VPC to the Minister for Agriculture. It is not foreseen that this would cause conflict but again may reduce efficiency as both Ministers and Departments were kept abreast, as appropriate, of issues and advice. For these reasons this option has been discounted.

e. Delivery via a new Executive Agency

This option is discounted. The volume of work carried out by VPC, and the flexible way in which they discharge their functions does not justify the setting up of a new agency.. Executive Agencies are usually only considered viable options in cases where 100+ staff are employed.

Annex F: Assessment of Governance of VPC

		Assessment of NDPB
Accountability	**Principle: The minister is ultimately accountable to Parliament and the public for the overall performance, and continued existence, of the advisory NDPB.**	
Supporting provisions	The minister and sponsoring department should exercise appropriate scrutiny and oversight of the advisory NDPB. This includes oversight of any public monies spent by, or on behalf of, the body.	VMD provides Secretariat for the VPC and this includes managing its budget and costs, and being closely involved in submitting issues to VPC and managing and tracking their responses.
	Appointments to the advisory NDPB should be made in line with any statutory requirements and, where appropriate, with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.	All appointments to the VPC, including the Chair are made within the requirements of the OCPA Code of Practice.
	The minister will normally appoint the chair and all board members of the advisory NDPB and be able to	Interviews of prospective members are carried out by VPC Chair, a VMD Director and an independent panel member. The recommendation is submitted to the minister for agreement. The

	remove individuals whose performance or conduct is unsatisfactory.	Minister of State for farming, food and marine environment is fully involved in the appointment of the Chair
	The minister should meet the chair on a regular basis.	Because the VPC is small and specialised, and works very closely with VMD, regular direct Ministerial meetings are not necessary.
	There should be a requirement to inform Parliament and the public of the work of the advisory NDPB in an annual report (or equivalent publication) proportionate to its role.	This requirement is met. VPC publishes an annual report, the latest of which can be read here: http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/reports.aspx
	The advisory NDPB must be compliant with Data Protection legislation.	The VMD is responsible for ensuring this is met
	The advisory NDPB should be subject to the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.	The VMD is responsible for ensuring this is met
Roles and Responsibilities	**Principle: The departmental board ensures that there are appropriate governance arrangements in place with the advisory NDPB.** **Principle: There is a sponsor team within the department that provides appropriate oversight and scrutiny of, and support and assistance to, the advisory NDPB.**	
Supporting	Depending on the risks to the	

provisions	department's wider objectives and/or the size of the advisory body, the following arrangements may need to be put in place: • The departmental board's agenda should include scrutiny of the performance of the advisory NDPB proportionate to its size and role. • There should be a document in place which sets out clearly the terms of reference of the advisory NDPB. It should be accessible and understood by the sponsoring department and by the chair and members of the advisory NDPB. It should be regularly reviewed and updated. • There should be a dedicated	• The work of the VPC is too small and specialised to be considered by the Defra Supervisory Board, though the performance of its parent agency VMD is subject to regular review. • The VMD's Executive Management Board (EMB) does not have a regular VPC item as the VPC meets only 2-3 times a year. However, VMD Directors attend VPC and can directly escalate any concerns re VPC performance at EMB • This is freely available on the VPC website. www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/about.aspx

	sponsor team within the parent department. The role of the sponsor team should be clearly defined. • There should be regular and ongoing dialogue between the sponsoring department and the advisory NDPB. • There should be an annual evaluation of the performance of the advisory NDPB and any supporting committees – and of the Chair and individual members.	• A team is in place lead by 2 Directors of VMD. Its role is to provide secretariat support to the Committee. • This occurs on a frequent basis. VMD provides Secretariat to VPC and attends VPC meetings • Members are assessed annually by the Chair and the Chair is assessed by a VMD Director.
Role of the Chair	**Principle: The chair is responsible for leadership of the advisory NDPB and for ensuring its overall effectiveness.**	
<u>Supporting provisions</u>	The advisory NDPB should be led by a non-executive chair.	Yes this is complied with. The Chair has previous working expert knowledge and experience of public health issues in relation to animal disease, and Government's role in managing these. The Chair has no connection with any veterinary pharmaceutical companies or related industry.

	There should be a formal, rigorous and transparent process for the appointment of the chair. This should be compliant with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The chair should have a clearly defined role in the appointment of non-executive board members.	The appointment of the current Chair was compliant with the Code of Practice.
	The duties, role and responsibilities, terms of office and remuneration (if only expenses) of the chair should be set out clearly and formally defined in writing. Terms and conditions must be in line with Cabinet Office guidance and with any statutory requirements. The responsibilities of the chair will normally include: • representing the advisory NDPB in any discussions with ministers;	The responsibilities of the Chair are given in the Members Guidance Document available on in the VPC website http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/MembersGuidance.pdf and in the Code of Practice http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/COP.pdf [All of the relevant points are included.]

	• advising the sponsoring department and ministers about member appointments and the performance of members ; • ensuring that the members have a proper knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. The chair should ensure that new members undergo a proper induction process and is normally responsible for undertaking an annual assessment of non-executive board members' performance; • ensuring that the advisory NDPB, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of guidance provided by the sponsoring department or ministers; • ensuring that the advisory NDPB carries out its business efficiently and effectively; and	

	• representing the views of the advisory NDPB to the general public, when required.	
Role of other members	**Principle: the members should provide independent, expert advice.**	
Supporting provisions	There should be a formal, rigorous and transparent process for the appointment of members to the advisory NDPB. This should be compliant with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.	Appointments are made in line with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.
	Members should be properly independent of the Department and of any vested interest (unless serving in an ex-officio or representative capacity).	Members and the Chair must observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide, following the Seven Principles of Public Life as set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Additionally they must comply with the Code for Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/COP.pdf .

	Members should be drawn from a wide range of diverse backgrounds, but should have knowledge and expertise in the field within which the body has been set up to advise ministers. The advisory NDPBs as a whole should have an appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge.	VPC provides a very wide breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise. Members come from human surgical and medicine field, veterinary profession and nurses, pharmacological experts and farmers.
	The duties, role and responsibilities, terms of office and remuneration of members should be set out clearly and formally defined in writing. Terms and conditions must be in line with Cabinet Office guidance and with any statutory requirements.	Roles and Responsibilities are set out in the Members Guidance document. http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/MembersGuidance.pdf
	All members must allocate sufficient time to the advisory NDPBs to discharge their responsibilities effectively.	Through assessment of VPC members by the Chair, and of the Chair by VMD Director; and through close working of VPC and VMD it is clear that members spend appropriate time on VPC business.
	There should be a proper induction process for new members. This should be led by the chair. There should be regular reviews by the chair of individual members' training	Members of the Committee are appointed for their professional expertise. On appointment they receive induction training covering their role, the role of the Committee, the role of the VMD and the authorisation process.

	and development needs.	
	All members should ensure that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times. This should include ensuring that the advisory NDPB operates in an open, accountable and responsive way.	Members and the Chair must observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide, following the Seven Principles of Public Life as set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Additionally they must comply with the Code for Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees.
Communications	**Principle: The advisory NDPB should be open, transparent, accountable and responsive.**	
Supporting provisions	The advisory NDPB should operate in line with the statutory requirements and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.	The VMD is responsible for ensuring this is met.
	The advisory NDPB should make an explicit commitment to openness in all its activities. Where appropriate, it should establish clear and effective channels of communication with key stakeholders. It should engage and consult with the public on issues of real public interest or concern. This might include holding open meetings or annual public meetings. The results of reviews or inquiries should be published.	VPC hosts an annual open meeting which provides an opportunity for interested parties to discuss with the Committee the advice it has given to the VMD over the preceding year and publication of minutes. http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/meetings/open.aspx
	The advisory NDPB should	Minutes of meetings are published on the VPC website

	proactively publish agendas and minutes of its meetings.	http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/meetings/open.aspx
	There should be robust and effective systems in place to ensure that the advisory NDPB is not, and is not perceived to be, engaging in political lobbying. There should also be restrictions on members attending Party Conferences in a professional capacity.	This requirement is met. All members are regularly reminded of the restrictions placed on them, including on attendance at Party Conferences
Conduct and Behaviour	**Members should work to the highest personal and professional standards. They should promote the values of the advisory NDPB and of good governance through their conduct and behaviour.**	
Supporting provisions	A Code of Conduct must be in place setting out the standards of personal and professional behaviour expected of all members. This should follow the Cabinet Office Code. All members should be aware of the Code. The Code should form part of the terms and conditions of appointment.	The Code of Practice and the Members Guidance document sets out the standards for personal and professional behaviours expected of Committee members. http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/COP.pdf http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/MembersGuidance.pdf
	There are clear rules and procedures in place for managing conflicts of interest. There is a publicly available Register of	Members of the VPC and its sub-committees are required to follow a Code of Practice with regard to their relations with the pharmaceutical industry and every member has to declare any such interest. The VPC Chair is not permitted to have any

	Interests for members. This is regularly updated.	commercial interests in the pharmaceutical industry. A Register of Interests is updated annually and published on the VPC website and in its Annual Report. Members also declare any interests before individual agenda items are discussed at the meetings and there is clear guidance on a member's involvement in the discussion of an item when an interest has been declared. http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/COP.pdf
	There must be clear rules in place governing the claiming of expenses. These should be published. Effective systems should be in place to ensure compliance with these rules.	Travel and subsistence is payable within Defra guidelines which are set out in the Members Guidance Document. http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vpc/pdf/MembersGuidance.pdf
	There are clear rules and guidelines in place on political activity for members and that there are effective systems in place to ensure compliance with any restrictions.	Candidates for committee membership are required to declare any significant political activity (which includes holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election) which they have undertaken in the last five years. Details of committee members with declared political activity are published by Defra when the appointments are publicised.
	There are rules in place for members on the acceptance of appointments or employment after resignation or retirement. These are enforced effectively.	The Committee meets on three days per year. Members of the Committee are appointed for their professional expertise. There is a strict tiered conflict of interest approach taken with regards to each issue the Committee discusses. However, in response to this Review, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that appointees to the Committee have clear guidance on employments taken up within two years of leaving VPC where the

		official duties resulted in personal involvement with the company or other organisation making the offer, or to access commercially sensitive information of this company or other organisation

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