AWERB Tasks

Generally, the AWERB should:

- provide a forum for discussion and development of ethical advice to the establishment licence holder on all matters relating to animal welfare, care and use at the establishment;
- promote awareness of animal welfare and the 3Rs;
- support the 'named people', and other staff dealing with animals, on animal welfare and ethical issues; and
- help to promote a 'Culture of Care'

More specific tasks are to:

- provide advice to staff on welfare of animals relating to their acquisition, care and use;
- advise on the application of the 3Rs;
- advise the establishment licence holder whether to support project proposals primarily from a local perspective, bringing local knowledge and expertise to bear on the harms and benefits and practical, scientific and ethical issues;
- establish and review management and operational processes for monitoring, reporting and follow up in relation to animal welfare;
- follow the development and outcome (retrospective review) of projects and assist with the retrospective assessment of relevant projects required by law;
- advise on rehoming laboratory animals;
- respond to enquiries and consider advice from the Animals in Science Committee

Points to consider:

- Do your AWERB's Terms of Reference adequately address all these tasks?

- Does the AWERB set clear objectives for each task, for example annually? Does it regularly assess whether and how effectively these are achieved?

- Can your AWERB access all the expertise and perspectives it needs to fulfil all functions?

Resources to help with the above:

RSPCA/LASA Guiding Principles on Good Practice for AWERBs has a stand-alone section on each task

European Commission Working Document on Animal Welfare Bodies - although the Animal Welfare Body has a reduced membership and tasks compared with the AWERB, this includes very useful material

Home Office Guidance on the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 - section 10

For more resources like this, see the AWERB Directory from the RSPCA Animals in Science Department