



**AGENDA ITEM : 10**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**5 DECEMBER 2006**

**ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

**RICHARD LONG,**

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To draw the Committee's attention to the establishment of the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England and a possible local forum.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The inaugural meeting of the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce) was recently held on 16 October 2006 as part of the Fringe Meeting for Independent Members at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees.
3. The organisation has been established to champion the role of independent members on Standards Committee, representing their needs and supporting their interests. Local ownership of the ethical standards agenda is placing greater emphasis on the importance of robust and effective standards committees and independent members play a pivotal role in this area. The new body will provide an opportunity for independent members to network with independent members from other committees and from the wider local government field, providing a platform through which independent members can fulfil their statutory roles and functions with support from other similar members.
4. The Association intends to hold three events per year: a fringe meeting at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees; the Annual General Meeting to be held House of Commons in June 2007, with a key note speaker, and arrange a conference or training event. The Association will also encourage and support regional forums or branches.
5. Independent Members from other areas include:

Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Birmingham, Cornwall, Durham, Derbyshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Manchester, Norfolk, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Warwickshire, Sussex, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.

6. A copy of the Association's constitution is attached at appendix 1.
7. In addition to the national body, Darlington Borough Council have been exploring the possibility establishing a local forum for independent members in the northern area. The purpose of the forum would be to become a local support organisation where members can exchange experiences of best practice and help to develop consistency of approach across authorities. I am awaiting further information on this and will report further at the meeting.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION**

8. For membership of the national association there is likely to be a small registration fee of £15.00 with an annual subscription of £10.00 per member. Anyone registering after 1 October will only be required to pay a £5.00 half yearly registration fee. The majority of current members have either had their fees reimbursed or their fees paid directly by the local authority concerned.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

9. Members views are requested.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[www.aimsce.gov.uk](http://www.aimsce.gov.uk)

Letter from Darlington Council Monitoring Officer

## **AUTHOR**

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