

STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2ND NOVEMBER 2006

**ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES
IN ENGLAND (AIMSC)**

Report of the: Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee

Status: For Information

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Loney

Head of Service Monitoring Officer – Christine Nuttall

Recommendation: That the report be noted.

Introduction

- 1 Would Members please find attached a report kindly compiled by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Peter Hobbs, on the implementation of a draft constitution for the establishment of an Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce).

Key Implications

Financial

- 2 This report does not have any financial implications apart from any AIMSce fees that may be payable.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

- 3 This report does not have any legal or human rights implications.

Sources of Information: A letter explaining the AIMSce from the Secretary of the Kent & Medway Independent Standards Committee Members Liaison Group – Mr. R. Bruce Claxton

Contact Officer(s): Lauren Wallis (01732) 227241

RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

There is no risk envisaged by the contents of this report.

**Association of Independent Members of
Standards Committees in England (AIMSC)**

A draft constitution for establishment of AIMSC will be put to a fringe meeting of independent members attending the Annual conference of the Standards Board for England (SBE) in Oct.

According to the draft constitution, the leading object of AIMSC is: "To be a professional organisation for Independent Members of Standards Committees; to provide support for them and champion their interests and to empower them in their role and function."

This paper is designed to provide information on this initiative.

From the paperwork available, the initiative to establish AIMSC emanates from a decision in March by the Independent Members' Forum Co-ordinating Committee (IMFCC). The group deputed by the IMFCC to draft a constitution has been led by Bruce Claxton, Chairman of the South of England Independent Member' Forum, Chairman of the Standards Committee of the Isle of Wight and an enthusiast in all standards' matters. SDC is represented on the IMFCC via Mike Coulson, Chairman of the Kent & Medway Independent Standards Liaison Group (K&MISLG), on which SDC is represented.

The draft constitution was discussed by the K&MISLG at its meeting in July and subsequently among some independent members of SDC. Comments vary from positive to negative with notes of concern. One view suggests the proposed AIMSC is unnecessary: that independent members are just that, bringing a commonsense and independent view. The danger, on this view, is that an Association set up policies and guidance for members and create barriers to entry by new members. Another view suggests that it is premature to think of setting up an Association as the strategic direction of SBE is changing and the role of local standards committees is being enhanced. On this view consideration of the establishment of an Association should be deferred. The general view, however, of the July meeting was one of general support for an Association. Concerns were expressed whether it will be independent of SBE and whether lobbying of government departments by independent members will be reduced to the lowest common factor. Also, there can be no guarantee that central government will consult independent members when they can consult AIMSC.

Many independent members are concerned that debate will be held before the draft constitution is put to the vote. Independent members who attend the annual conference are encouraged to attend the fringe meeting at which establishment of AIMSC is considered; and those present from SDC will be encouraged to make oral reports of developments at the Standards Committee meeting on 2 November.

Peter Hobbs

4 September 2006