

<i>COMMITTEE</i>	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
<i>DATE</i>	TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2003
<i>TITLE OF REPORT</i>	GENERAL UPDATE
<i>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</i>	Mark Bowen, assistant director, legal and contract services

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report follows up on two issues which were raised at the last meeting of this committee.

2 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

- 2.1 At the committee meeting of 21 January it was agreed to send the following nominees to the Standards Board Conference in Birmingham on 9 and 10 June 2003.

- The Monitoring Officer
- A Medway Council member of the Standards Committee
- An independent member – Laura Wren was nominated
- Depending on the content of the programme, a parish member

- 2.2 The Standards Board has now published the programme for the conference and there is no obvious parish council element. The key note speaker will be The right Honourable Nick Rainsford, MP, supported by Charles Lesley, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. A copy of the indicative programme will be circulated at the meeting.

- 2.3 Whereas last year's conference was free, the Standards Board has indicated this year there will be a charge of £310 plus VAT per delegate. This would involve a total cost of approximately £1200 including travel and subsistence at the level of attendance proposed at the last meeting.

3 CASE REPORTING - STANDARDS BOARD WEBSITE

- 3.1 At the previous meeting, members of the committee expressed concern at the level of detail given to identify members on the Board's website, particularly where complaints against them were dismissed. As a consequence the Chair wrote to the Standards Board and a copy of the letter and reply is attached. From that it can be seen that whilst the Board are taking steps to anonymise complainants, they are not inclined to do for people complained of, even where there is not a finding that the Code has been breached.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The committee is recommended to:

4.1.1 Confirm its views on attendance at the Standards Board Conference.

4.1.2 Note the response of the Standards Board as set out in the Appendix to this report.

5 LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The legal implications are set out in the body of the report. Approximately £1200 will need to be found from the relevant training, travel and subsistence budgets to enable attendance at conference.