

<i>COMMITTEE</i>	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
<i>DATE</i>	WEDNESDAY 20 JULY 2005
<i>TITLE OF REPORT</i>	UPDATES ON STANDARDS ISSUES
<i>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</i>	Mark Bowen, assistant director, legal and contract services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on developments relating to the work of the committee.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the committee notes the oral report by the chair of the committee on the Kent and Medway Independent Members of Standards Committees Group

2.2 That the committee agrees that the report on the council's money laundering procedures is brought to the next available meeting of this committee.

2.3 That members agree to the production of an annual report of standards activity for council.

2.4 That members comment on the proposed work schedule of the committee for the remainder of this council year.

2.5 That members agree the training option set out in the exempt appendix.

3 DECISION ISSUES

3.1 The constitution gives the Standards Committee a key role in ensuring good practice across the authority.

4 KENT AND MEDWAY INDEPENDMENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES GROUP

4.1 As has previously been discussed, the chair of this committee is the secretary to the above group. The chair will update the committee on issues arising at recent meetings of this group at the meeting on 20 July.

5 GENERAL WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 In addition to dealing with issues around the code of conduct, the committee has taken on board a wider role. For example, at this meeting it will be

undertaking its second review of the council's performance under the CIPFA/SOLACE Code of Governance. The committee has also reviewed the council's whistleblowing procedures.

- 5.2 One area the committee could usefully add value is around the area of money laundering. Provisions to counter crime require local authorities to formalise its procedures and processes. The committee could usefully review the council's compliance with these provisions at a forthcoming meeting.
- 5.3 In the absence of complaints being referred for determination, some members of the committee have expressed concerns over the role of the committee. Linked to this there is a national expectation that the Standards Committee should link to a greater extent with the overall work of the council. The committee has already agreed to invite group leaders along to meetings of the committee to discuss standards issues. In addition, it may be useful if the committee also presents a report on its activities to council on an annual basis.

6 TRAINING

- 6.1 This is the last meeting of the committee scheduled before the 4th Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in Birmingham. If there are any issues that the committee wishes its delegates to raise at that meeting then this meeting will be the last opportunity to raise them.
- 6.2 There is also a growth in training for the conduct of hearings and investigations particularly by firms who specialise in investigations without having a particular legal qualification. These are proving more cost effective than courses previously on the market. Details of a training options will be circulated at the meeting. Subject to funding being available then members may wish to reserve the November meeting date for a training session into investigations and hearings.

7 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The legal implications are set out in the report. External training costs would need to be met from the member's training budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.