

NOTES OF THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS REGIONAL FORUM MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2006 AT WILTSHIRE COUNTY HALL

The meeting commenced at 11.00 hours on Friday 27th October 2006 in a large meeting room at Wiltshire County Hall Trowbridge following coffee at 10.30 hours.

The meeting was attended by approximately 28 people with representatives from most of the Council, Fire and Police Standards committees in Wiltshire and Independent Members and Monitoring Officers from a number of authorities in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

The meeting was chaired by Peter McGuigan the Chair of Wiltshire County Councils Standards Committee and Stephen Callender Policy Advisor for Standards from the Standards Board for England was present.

Apologies for absence were not read out but will be attached to the minutes.

The notes of the meeting held on 21st April 2006 at Bracknell Forest Council Officers were accepted as accurate and no matters arising were raised. (Copy of minutes were attached to the Swindon Standards Committee agenda held on 24th July 2006)

Bruce Caxton, Chair of the newly formed Independent Members Association and Chair of the Isle of Wight Standards Committee gave a presentation covering the following issues.

The membership of the Independent Members Association currently stands at 50 approx. and 3 members pump-primed the 9K start-up costs

The members receive a regular newsletter and access to committee meeting minutes which are also on the web but minutes and newsletter not available to non-members as would be a free service.

The Association is registered as a charity and sees itself as a pressure group with an agenda to lobby the Standards Board and relevant government departments e.g. White Paper consultation, Revised Code of Conduct issues.

Bruce advised that the Standards Board does not have a list of independent members details or numbers and make up to Standards Committees in England and they are to be asked if it is advisable to hold this information. (There may be Data Protection issues to prevent this happening).

Stephen Callender, Policy Advisor from the Standards Board for England gave a presentation which covered the following issues.

Details of Standards Board case handling – numbers attached. Additional point was that 38% of Adjudication Panel hearings highlighted shortfalls in local procedures.