

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COUNCIL

25 September 2007

### Report of the Interview Panel for Appointing Independent Members of the Standards Committee

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters For Decision

- 1.1.1 The Interview Panel for Appointing Independent Members of the Standards Committee convened on 31 July 2007 to interview candidates for appointment as Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee. Present were Councillors Peter Homewood (in the Chair), Brian Luker, Mark Rhodes and Mrs Elizabeth Simpson. An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ms Sarah Spence.
- 1.1.2 The term of office of the existing Independent Members expired on 30 June 2007. At its meeting on 24 April 2007 the Council adopted the recommendation of the Standards Committee that, subject to their being willing to continue to serve, the two existing members be invited to continue in office until 30 June 2011. The Monitoring Officer reported to us that Mrs Nicola Samels had indicated her willingness to remain in office, but at that time she was not able to commit to serve beyond 30 June 2009. Mr Michael Rowe MBE JP was not continuing in office. As a result, there were three vacancies to fill.
- 1.1.3 At the interview, in addition to enquiring into the general suitability of the candidates, the Panel particularly probed the following specific areas:
- the background, experience and interests of the candidates
  - whether the candidates had any political affiliations and, if they did, whether they would be able to act impartially
  - to what extent the candidates understood the local government environment and the changes which are currently in progress
  - whether the candidates had knowledge of the workings of town and parish councils and what techniques they would use in dealing with voluntary councillors.

1.1.4 The Panel interviewed one candidate:

**Vincent Anthony Bishop**

Mr Tony Bishop is a solicitor, admitted on 1 July 1969, who has practiced in general practice for all of his career, including over 30 years in West Malling. Mr Bishop has very wide experience, including practice in all courts as well as non-contentious business. In addition, for the last 9 years he has been the legally-qualified independent chair of NHS disciplinary panels. Mr Bishop has experience of committee and voluntary work, including having served for 8 years on the General Purposes Committee of the Kent Law Society and as chair of Governors at Maplesden Noakes School, Maidstone, for 11 years. The interview panel considered him well qualified for appointment.

1.1.5 The Panel is anxious that further efforts should be made to recruit additional independent members so that we have the full quota in office.

1.1.6 The Panel unanimously **recommended** that:

1.1.7 **Mrs Nicola Samels'** offer to serve as an Independent Member of the Council's Standards Committee until 30 June 2009 be accepted;

1.1.8 **Mr Tony Bishop** be appointed an Independent Member of the Council's Standards Committee until 30 June 2011;

1.1.9 **Mrs Nicola Samels** be invited to become Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee; and

1.1.10 **Mr Michael Rowe** be thanked for his past service as an Independent Member of the Council's Standards Committee, for his work in establishing the new ethical framework within the Council and his leadership as Independent Chairman of the Council's Standards Committee from 2002 to 2007.

**Councillor Peter Homewood**  
Chairman