

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 February 2008

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 January 2008 to interview candidates for appointment as Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee. Present were Councillors Peter Homewood (in the Chair), Brian Luker and Mark Rhodes. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Liz Simpson and Sarah Spence.
- 1.1.2 The term of office of the newly-appointed Independent Members will expire on 30 June 2011. There were two vacancies for independent members. However, the Panel, after long deliberation, decided to recommend to Council that the number of independent members be increased from four to five. Four is the minimum number required by law, and increasing the number to five would ensure that there will be greater resilience to cope with any future vacancies, enables the Council to appoint members with a range of skills which would assist the work of the committee and will reduce the burden on the independent members of the number of meetings, should that prove to be a problem under the new régime.
- 1.1.3 On the assumption that Council will agree its recommendation to increase the number of members, the Panel recommends the appointment of three candidates who have skills in three important areas of the committee's work - investigation, adjudication and mediation - in addition to being generally suitable in 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 recommends the appointment of the following candidates (in alphabetical order), none of whom have any political affiliations:

David Sambrook Ashton

Mr Ashton is a barrister and arbitrator of many years standing. In 1984 he became independent chairman of the Disciplinary Committee of the Kennel Club, in 1985 a Deputy Master of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court (a part-time judge) and in 1997 became a panel member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Mr Ashton still practices as an arbitrator. The Panel considered that his particular expertise in adjudications would be of benefit to the committee.

John Mark Gledhill

Mr Gledhill completed a 30 year career with Kent Police, rising to the rank of Inspector with special responsibilities for the management of critical incidents and the investigation of road traffic incidents, although he has considerable experience of investigations generally. He is now a civilian police training officer and has a wide range of interests in the local community. The Panel considered that his particular expertise in investigations would be of benefit to the committee.

Matthew David Penfold

Mr Penfold has been employed in central government since 1985 and currently works for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) as an Employment Relations Advisor and Collective Conciliator. He has considerable experience as a conciliator and mediator and as a trainer in mediation and workplace issues. The Panel considered that his particular expertise in mediation and conciliation would be of benefit to the committee.

- 1.1.5 The Panel unanimously **recommends** that:
- 1.1.6 Subject to the concurrence of the Monitoring Officer, the number of independent members of the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils Standards Sub-Committee be increased from four to five;
- 1.1.7 That Messrs Ashton, Gledhill and Penfold be appointed as Independent Members of the Standards Committee and the Town and Parish Councils Standards Sub-Committee for an initial term expiring on 30 June 2011;
- 1.1.8 That all five candidates be thanked for volunteering their services and for the time and trouble taken to submit their applications and attend the interviews.

Councillor Peter Homewood
Chairman