

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP

13 JULY 2009

REFERENCE FROM STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1.1. The Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 22 May 2009, considered a report by the Monitoring Officer setting out suggested criteria against which applicants to be Independent Members of the Standards Committee would be assessed. A copy of the report is attached as an Appendix to this reference.

1.2. It was noted that:-

By law, applicants would not be eligible for appointment if:-

- They had been a Member or Officer of the Council within a period of five years immediately preceding the date of the appointment; or
- They were a relative or close friend of a Member or Officer of the Council; or
- They were a Member or Officer of another Authority which had a Standards Committee.

A Selection Panel (being a Sub-Group of the General Purposes Group) consisting of three Borough Councillors and an Independent Member of the Standards Committee was responsible for making recommendations to the Council regarding the appointment of Independent Members to serve on the Standards Committee having short listed, if appropriate, and interviewed the applicants.

1.3. The Committee made a number of amendments to the suggested criteria. The Committee also requested that consideration be given to the production of a job description for the position of Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

1.4. RECOMMENDED:

1.4.1. That the following criteria be adopted as selection criteria against which applicants to be Independent Members of the Standards Committee will be assessed:-

Applicants must:-

- Be prepared to give up time for training and meetings
- Have local connections and either reside in the Borough or carry out the main part of their work in the Borough
- Agree to abide by the provisions of the Code of Conduct
- Not hold significant office in a political party
- Not have given financial support, other than membership fees, to a political party within five years of the date of appointment
- Not have been convicted of an imprisonable offence
- Not have been adjudged bankrupt
- Not have a history of vexatious and/or frivolous complaints against Maidstone Borough Council or Members of the Borough or Parish Councils

Applicants should be able to demonstrate from their life experience and interview:-

- **Mature judgement:** the ability to withhold forming a final view until all available evidence has been obtained and considered
- **Common sense:** the ability to distinguish what matters from what does not
- **Strong ethical standards:** both an appreciation and demonstration of the importance of high ethical standards in corporate or public life
- **Communication skills:** the ability to listen and understand what is being said to them and to respond thoughtfully and articulately
- **An ability to chair meetings** as this would be an advantage