

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 JUNE 2012

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report Prepared by Debbie Snook

1. APPOINTMENT OF NEW NON-STATUTORY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 1.1 It is anticipated that the Government will introduce the new ethical standards regime on 1 July 2012. It is necessary therefore for the Council to have in place a new non-statutory Standards Committee, the main purpose of which will be to provide a pool from which Members will be drawn for the Sub-Committees which will deal with complaints of misconduct.
- 1.2 The Council has decided already that the new Committee should comprise a maximum of three Members from each political group of the Council (a political group being two or more Members who have asked to be treated as a political group) nominated, as usual, by the Group Leaders and appointed by the full Council. This means that the Council will have to agree, with no Member voting against, to appoint a Committee which is not politically balanced.
- 1.3 Given that there is no guidance as to the political impartiality of the new Standards Committee, it is proposed to retain the current arrangement whereby the Council appoints three Substitute Members (one from each political group) to the Committee, but that they substitute for Members of their group only.
- 1.4 It is considered that there is advantage to be gained from having a Parish Councillor representative on the Sub-Committees when they hold hearings into allegations of misconduct by Parish Councillors and, in this connection, the Council has decided already that two Parish Councillor representatives be appointed as non-voting Members of the new Committee on the nomination of the Kent Association of Local Councils. The Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils has nominated Councillors Paul Butcher and Eileen Riden to serve on the new Committee for an initial period until November 2012.
- 1.5 **RECOMMENDED:**
 - 1.5.1 **That as from the commencement date, the allocation of seats on the new (not politically balanced) Standards Committee be as follows:-**

Conservative	3 seats
Liberal Democrat	3 seats
Independent	3 seats

- 1.2.2 That three Substitute Members (one from each political group) be appointed to the new Standards Committee, but that they substitute for Members of their group only.**
- 1.2.3 That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the appointment of Members to serve on the new Standards Committee (and Substitutes) be accepted.**
- 1.2.4 That Councillors Paul Butcher and Eileen Riden be appointed to serve as non-voting Parish Councillor representatives on the new Standards Committee for an initial period until November 2012.**
- 1.2.5 That the existing arrangements be maintained until the commencement date.**

Background Documents

Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 25 April 2012