

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2013

Present: **Councillor Mrs Hinder (Chairman) and
Councillors Black, Chittenden, Mrs Gibson, McKay and
D Mortimer**

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Stockell.

15. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Gibson was substituting for Councillor Mrs Stockell.

16. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

17. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

18. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

19. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

21. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

The Group considered the report of the Head of Legal Services concerning the appointment of an Independent Person to assist in dealing with complaints of Member misconduct. It was noted that:-

- Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council was required to appoint an Independent Person who had to be consulted

before any decision was taken on an investigated complaint of misconduct by a Borough or Parish Councillor. The Independent Person could be consulted on other ethical standards issues and by a Member who was the subject of a complaint.

- The position was advertised on the Council's website with a closing date of 21 June 2013. One application was received in response to the advertisement.
- No-one who had been a Member or a Co-opted Member of Maidstone Borough Council's Standards Committee within the past 5 years could be appointed as the Independent Person. The term of office of Mrs Dorothy Phillips, the previous Independent Person, had come to an end. She was not permitted to fill the position again until July 2017, due to her past membership of the Borough Council's Standards Committee.
- The meeting had been convened to enable the Group to consider the application received, interview the candidate and make a recommendation to the Council as to the appointment of an Independent Person. The recommendation of the Group had to be agreed by a majority of the Council in order for the appointment to be made.
- An allowance of £700 a year would be paid to the Independent Person together with reasonable travel and subsistence expenses. The cost of these payments could be met from within existing budgets.

The Group, wishing to consider the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Head of Legal Services (the application form and a reference) and a further reference which had been received, interview the candidate and formulate a recommendation to the Council in private:-

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test:-

**Head of Schedule 12A
and Brief Description**

Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Head of Legal Services	1 - Individual
Interview for the Appointment of Independent Person	1 - Individual

Having considered the information contained in the application form and references, and interviewed the candidate, the Group:-

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the COUNCIL: That Mrs Barbara Varney be appointed as the Independent Person until 31 July 2017.

22. DURATION OF MEETING

10.00 a.m. to 10.50 a.m.