



NR/01

4 November 2015

News Release

Tonbridge & Malling Bor

re

reputation of the Borough Council into disrepute.

On Tuesday 3 November at a meeting of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Councillors considered the recommendations of a Hearing Panel of the Joint Standards Committee which met on 12 October 2015 to consider allegations about Councillor Mike Taylor, Ward Member for Borough Green & Long Mill.

The Hearing Panel of the Joint Standards Committee of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and all of the Parish Councils within the borough looked at the two allegations – one regarding bringing the Council into disrepute and the other of bullying.

The Hearing Panel found that Councillor Mike Taylor had breached paragraph 3(2)(f) of the Tonbridge and Malling Code of Conduct regarding the first allegation and that the reputation of the Council was at severe risk through Councillor Taylor's use of inappropriate language and unproven allegations which were distributed to a wide audience through emails and the internet on numerous occasions. His comments were also potentially damaging to the Planning Department and senior officers on a personal and professional level, as they were without any proven justification, and thus by implication potentially damaging to the Council.

The Hearing Panel's view on the allegation of bullying was that Cllr Taylor had not "crossed the line" as none of the Officers in question felt bullied. If his comments had been directed at junior Officers, the Panel indicated that it may have come to a different conclusion. Officers expect robust challenge but Cllr Taylor's conduct went beyond that and amounted to personal abuse. Nonetheless the officers did not feel bullied by him *but his behaviour could have been regarded as bullying had it been directed at more junior staff. (deletion requested)*

The recommendations to Council from the Hearing Panel included the issue of a formal censure by motion (i.e. the issue of an unfavourable opinion or judgement or reprimand) to Councillor Taylor and that Councillor Taylor be removed from Area 2 Planning Committee until the end of April 2017.

Cllr Janet Sergison, Chairman of the Standards Hearing Panel of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, said:

"The Panel took great pains to ensure a fair hearing and, given the decision reached, felt compelled to recommend these sanctions to Council. The reputation of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council has been upheld and I would like to thank my fellow Panel members and Council staff for the time and attention to detail they have devoted to this issue."

Ends

Note to Editors:

Further information is available on line:

<https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk//ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=2324&Ver=4>

For more information please contact: Janet Saunders, Media & Communications Manager
Tel: 01732 876008 or email janet.saunders@tmbc.gov.uk