

**Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Management Liaison Panel
30 January 2007**

**ML
07/003**

**STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES - THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER**

Further to Minute CB 06/130, the report of the Chief Executive presented a summary of and commentary on the Local Government White Paper's proposals. An indication was given of whether each item was mandatory and further legislation or guidance necessary for its implementation. An assessment by the Management Team of each proposal's implications for Tonbridge and Malling was set out together with a suggested response. The report also referred to a recommended new key priority for adoption by the Council which was designed to identify opportunities and benefits from the White Paper's proposals for the residents of the Borough.

Members welcomed the analysis of the White Paper and commented on a number of the provisions which required clarification. Concern was expressed about the reserve powers of the Secretary of State to impose unitary status which, it was considered, should not be used without the benefit of a referendum.

The Leader and Chief Executive updated the Panel on the series of discussions between the Leaders of the Kent Authorities to agree a way forward on improved two-tier working. This had culminated in the unanimous agreement of a submission to the Government, a copy of which was set out in Annex 2 to the report. Members were advised that the statement was capable of different interpretations according to the variety of views held by the Kent Authorities. It was therefore suggested that a set of key principles be established against which any alternative proposals might be tested in order to guide the Leader and officers at the various inter-authority forums. The Chief Executive undertook to prepare a paper for consideration at the next Cabinet meeting. Reference was also made to developments between certain Kent District Councils seeking to create alliances for improved back office working. The Panel wished to be advised of and to take a view on any approaches from other authorities before a commitment was made in relation to proposals for amalgamation of functions.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the comments and actions set out in Annex 1 to the report be endorsed;
- (2) no commitment be made to approaches from other local authorities

concerning amalgamation of functions before the matter has been reported to the Management Liaison Panel; and

(3) a set of key principles to underpin the statement of intent on improved two-tier working be presented for initial consideration at the Cabinet meeting.