

Mark Worrall
Leader of the Council
Tonbridge & Malling Borough
Council
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent



Annex 6

Tonbridge Civic Society
President: Mr David Kemp

From the Chairman
Mr Peter York MBE
64 Dry Hill Park Road
Tonbridge TN10 3BX

Tel. 01732 355695

11th January 2008

Many thanks for your letter of 7th January, which we were able to discuss at this week's executive committee meeting.

We were all genuinely surprised by the inadequacy of the Provisional Local Government Grant. This must be a considerable discouragement to both elected members and to staff, as it appears almost to penalise your achievements, which were so thoroughly and recently endorsed by the Audit Commission and CPA rating.

There have been many central government promises that *local* government needs to be strengthened and to be given more devolved powers to encourage local democracy. But it flies in the face of local accountability, if the Borough Council is to have foisted onto it financial responsibilities such as the Concessionary Travel Scheme, which it cannot control and for which it is not to be properly funded. It is difficult for a local electorate to evaluate the financial performance of its local council in these circumstances. Decisions made remotely, inexplicably and arbitrarily deny people meaningful participation, and will further discourage voting in local elections.

We very much hope that you will be able to restore some equity to this unfair distribution of funding as a consequence of your meeting with the minister. We look forward to being informed about the outcome of your justifiable protestation, so that we can inform our 500 members, who will certainly be dismayed if the present situation is not improved.

Peter York
Chairman