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Mark Worrall
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January 12, 2008

Dear Mark Worrall

Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement

Thank you for your letter of January 7th 2008. The content of the enclosed document does indeed give cause for concern, as do the comments made by the KCC in their recent issue of 'Around Kent'.

Opinions differ as to the degree to which government of the UK should be centralised or local-led. Unfortunately the decisions taken at Westminster by any government may present problems of implementation and or funding at local level. In the end, the taxpayer is required to fund any programme in some way.

Kent, including Tonbridge & Malling, is being required to allow a substantial increase in housing development which is putting severe pressure on the infrastructure. Kent has other specific needs relating to geography (e.g. asylum seekers, age profile, weather patterns) most aspects of which are not under local or central government control.

I hope that the Council will be able, with other local governments' cooperation, to negotiate a more equitable settlement, given that it is policy to keep overall spending within reasonable limits. Such a settlement would have to take into account various 'vital statistics' based on the actual situation in each area.

With respect to travel concessions – these are an environmental and personal benefit to residents. However, the deregulation of bus services has led to lack of control over the fare structures of the service providers, with the exception of the few KCC subsidised services. The construction of the new hospital at Pembury will introduce another pressure in this respect.

I welcome the TMBC initiative represented by the letter to the Minister for Local Government and look forward to reading his response.

Yours sincerely

Jane Heydecker

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