

**Principles to Guide Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's
Involvement in the Action Plan included in the Statement of
Intent from Kent's Local Government Leaders**

- 1. The Council's prime responsibility is to its electorate and the electorate's interests will therefore be the prime determinant of the Council's response to proposals developed from the Action Plan. Its relationship with its electorate means that the Council could not agree to the transfer to other bodies of any significant decision making.**
- 2. The Council retains a neutral position on the potential benefits of shared services but perceives significant risks for customers. It would therefore have to be convinced by a very persuasive business case before agreeing to the formal combination of any Tonbridge & Malling services with those of other councils.**
- 3. The Council believes services should be designed to meet customer demand. It could therefore not support changes that would have the effect of impairing or complicating service delivery through, for example, the introduction of additional layers of decision making.**
- 4. The Council is committed to working in successful partnerships where these add value to the provision of services. It believes this value is proportionate to the closeness of the partnership to the issues it is addressing. The Council could therefore not agree to the merging of partnerships across wider areas unless clear benefits could be demonstrated.**
- 5. The Council's priorities for improvement are captured in its Corporate Performance Plan. Proposals emanating from the Action Plan that do not correspond to these priorities will therefore require a very high level of demonstrable benefit to divert capacity to them away from the agreed priorities.**
- 6. The Council believes that much of its legitimacy and value derives from its closeness to and understanding of the communities and locations within the Borough. It would not therefore agree to any proposals which had the potential to compromise that closeness.**