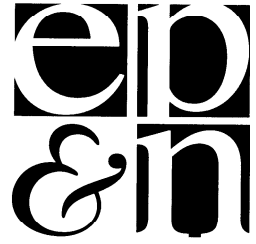


1287/06



**ELLESMERE PORT
AND NESTON**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

27 July 2006

Dear Sir Michael,

I much appreciated the opportunity to meet you and members of your team in Liverpool on Tuesday.

Unfortunately, on reflection, I feel that I did not make best use of that opportunity and that I, and some of my colleagues did not directly address the questions you posed.

I have been a councillor continuously since 1949, initially as a member of an Urban District Council and, since 1974, deputy leader and then leader of a District Council. {Incidentally, we are a fourth option council, without a cabinet}. I felt therefore that I ought to have contributed more meaningfully than I did to such an important occasion. I hope therefore you will not mind if I try to set out more coherently my answers to a composite question, "How can public interest and trust in local government be increased and electoral turnout be improved?"

1. Abolish two tier local government which creates confusion and frustration amongst electors and councillors.
2. Ensure that the resulting new authorities are large enough to be effective and economical whilst being small enough to be locally meaningful. (In general, the larger the authority area the poorer the turnout.)
3. Make Council Tax – or its successor – more closely related to ability to pay. (If Council Tax is retained, more and narrower bands would help).
4. Ensure that the local government finance system produces precept demands which reflect

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

either cost of living indices or demonstrable change in service provision.

5. Increase rather than diminish services, such as housing provision and management, which are undertaken by directly elected members. Local elections are certain to be less meaningful to tenants if their landlord is no longer their elected local council.

I realise how busy you and your team must be and I therefore hesitated before writing to you. However I hope that my present notes may at least be more useful than those I provided at our meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leif Blomquist', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leader of the Council