

LYONS INQUIRY NEWSLETTER – 6th DECEMBER 2006

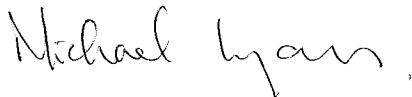
Dear Colleague,

I would like to begin by thanking you again for your continued interest in my Inquiry into local government. I felt that it was timely to produce a newsletter from my Inquiry following the Chancellor's announcement earlier today regarding the short extension to my Inquiry which will provide me with the opportunity to advise the government on the implications from three high profile reviews – Eddington on Transport, Leitch on skills and Barker on planning - for local government (further details are provided below).

Since the last time I wrote I have also concluded my wide ranging programme of research and stakeholder engagement (further details of which are provided below) and have been finalising my final report which I am pleased to tell you, will be published around the time of the Budget, providing real potential to influence the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

I would like to take this opportunity to send you season's greetings from myself and the Inquiry team, and look forward to continuing to work with you in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,



LATEST NEWS – INQUIRY PUBLICATION

The Chancellor today announced that he and Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, have asked me to provide government with a view on the implications for local government of the Eddington report on transport, the Barker report on planning and the Leitch review on skills in my final report from my Inquiry.

Whilst this will mean a short extension to my Inquiry, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the recommendations contained within the Eddington, Leitch and Barker Reviews all of which have made recommendations that have implications for local government. Taken together these three reviews represent a significant cluster of thinking and recommendations on improving economic performance at a sub-national level. Economic prosperity is a central theme to my Inquiry and this extension puts me in a unique position to ensure that my final recommendations reflect the latest thinking in this field, and enable local government to make the most effective contribution to future economic prosperity and infrastructure. I was on course to complete my Inquiry in December, but look forward to the publication of my report around the time of the budget, which provides real potential to influence the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

I will also use this opportunity to provide further thoughts on the recent local government white paper and to further refine and polish my recommendations for my final report, which I will publish around the time of the Budget 2007.

NEXT STEPS

I will be publishing a short discussion document on **Monday 11 December 2006** seeking views on the key areas in which the recommendations of these three reviews have potential implications for local government. I will be asking for responses by **Friday 19th January 2007**. I must apologise for the short time this gives for you to collate your views, however I will require all responses by this date to consider them in producing my final report, and to ensure that all responses are able to feed into a series of expert round-table discussions I am planning for the New Year. I encourage you to respond if at all possible. Full details of this additional work will be available shortly on my Inquiry website.

OTHER NEWS

Since my last newsletter I have completed my wide-ranging programme of research and stakeholder engagement. I previously provided details of the events I held with councilors and businesses this Summer. More information on these events and the findings from the discussions have now been published on my website. I have also published the summary of the Lyons Inquiry Conference, which I hosted on Economic Development in September. The conference heard from senior figures across central, regional and local government as well as the voice of business and overseas perspectives. These included Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government – Rt. Hon Ruth Kelly, Chairman of the Local Government Association - Lord Bruce-Lockhart, Sir Digby Jones - former Director General of the CBI, Financial Secretary to the Treasury – John Healey MP and David Frost - Director General of the British Chamber of Commerce. Over 300 delegates attended.

I have also held a series of expert seminars on specific services to explore in more detail some of the issues raised both in submissions to me and in my work with the nine case study councils. They examined the cleaner greener environment; adult social care; health and well being; children's services and community safety. I also hosted a seminar to discuss issues related to driving efficiency in local government. Contributions and debate from these seminars have fed into my final report, and slides from each event can be found on my website.

Finally, on 20 November I held a seminar focused on public engagement co-hosted with the IDEA and LGA. Around 60 participants explored the importance of local authorities engaging effectively with their citizens. At the event, I published the results of work carried out by the Office for Public Management on behalf of my Inquiry which explores in-depth the views of a selection of the public from my nine case study areas on the role, function and funding of local government. This report is available on my website. Hard copies are also available from Rob Robinson, Lyons Inquiry team on 020 7270 5215.

For further information please see my website <http://www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk/> or email me at sirmichaellyons@lyonsinquiry.org. If you would like to provide any feedback on these Newsletters or would like to be removed from the circulation list please also email me at the above address.