

15<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Lyons Inquiry  
Room 3/12  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ



Dear Sir Michael

### **Submission of the Association of Convenience Stores**

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) welcome the opportunity to submit its views to this consultation. We represent over 32,000 neighbourhood retailers operating at the heart of communities through the UK. Our members interact with local authorities as part of local partnerships, are customers of the services they provide and are important rate payers.

We welcome the Inquiry's decision to widen its scope to look at the role of local authorities and what we see as their role as a precursor to any conclusion on matters of funding. We would like to raise two issues for your consideration:

1. Recent policy developments have seen a greater push for retailers to take a greater role in how their communities are run. Initiatives such as Business Improvement Districts, Alcohol Disorder Zones and litter and waste management schemes bring cost burdens on retailers that are additional to the rates that they pay.

These initiatives are often appropriate and popular with retailers, the concern is not with individual cases but with the growing number of these kinds of initiatives. We believe that this leads to a blurring of responsibility between voluntary or supplemental services and the baseline service that business' should expect from their local authority. This should be at the heart of the Inquiry's wider review of the role of local authorities.

2. ACS opposes any move to localise business taxation. Our members believe that it is vital that there is consistency in how rates are calculated between local authority areas. Any localisation would open up the possibility to competitive disadvantages between competing businesses.

We are willing to provide any more information and assistance as appropriate and that we ask that we continue to be informed as the consultation progresses. Please direct any further communication to Shane Brennan on 01252 515001 or email [shane.brennan@acs.org.uk](mailto:shane.brennan@acs.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

David Rae  
Chief Executive