

Our ref: DB/ms

17 August 2006

Sir Michael Lyons  
HM Treasury  
Local Government Funding  
Room 3/12  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ

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### **Review of functions of local government: strategic housing role**

Please accept my thanks for speaking at the CIH annual conference in Harrogate in June.

I am writing regarding your comments on the need for the housing profession to contribute to your extended inquiry on the role and functions of local government and in particular to inform you of our work on developing and promoting the local authority strategic housing role.

With a significant number of our members working in local government we are keen to help to establish a strong strategic housing role for local authorities. Last year we published a report *Visionary Leadership in Housing* published jointly with the Local Government Association which sets out our vision for an expanded strategic housing role as well as making suggestions for changes to the framework for delivering it.

While awareness of the strategic housing role is now quite high amongst housing professionals there is still confusion about the scope and range of outcomes that would be expected through developing a stronger strategic role. In our experience this is most common amongst local authority Councillors and, as a consequence, this activity is not given the priority or funding required.

We met earlier in the year to discuss the Report's recommendations with Baroness Andrews and as a result we have set up a 'sounding board' of up to 100 individuals who have shown an interest in our work. We will be drawing on their thoughts and expertise as our work progresses – and hopefully bringing others along with us.

With the support of DCLG, the Housing Corporation and the Audit Commission, we are running some seminars in September aimed at raising the profile of the strategic

role and providing some time for discussion around key current issues to help to inform the forthcoming Local Government White Paper. We are also in discussions with IDeA about how CIH can work with them to build capacity and develop individuals with the right skills to carry out this more sophisticated strategic housing role. This is likely to include a set of short briefing papers over the next 18 months to 2 years that explore different aspects of the role.

I have enclosed a copy of our Report with this letter, and will keep you informed of any issues which may be relevant to your enquiry. In the meantime, please do contact me if you would like to hear more or if there are any specific ways in which we can feed into your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

**David Butler**  
**Chief Executive**

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