

*The Special Interest Group
of Municipal Authorities (Outside London)
Within the LGA*

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Contact:	Councillor Houghton	Date :	15 th September 2006
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Sir Michael Lyons
Room 3/12
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Dear

**Real People in Real Places!
Further evidence for the Lyons Inquiry from SIGOMA**

Further to my previous letters and discussions with your office, please find enclosed copies of a report from SIGOMA entitled *Real People in Real Places: the future of local government in our urban areas*.

This report sets out the principles that we think local government reform needs to address for the benefit of local communities in urban areas. In our report we define these points as clearly as we can and provide 12 local case studies to demonstrate what each means in practice. We feel that it is important to identify and promote the kind of good practice that is already taking place in local government, to demonstrate how large urban authorities are delivering real improvements in areas that are important to the Government and local people. Fairer resources and more freedoms will help to spread this practice.

Your Inquiry and the Government's White Paper on local government are a real opportunity to define a new and much more constructive role for local authorities in our urban areas. Although it will be very difficult to define every detail of this role, I am confident that we can at least ensure we get the broad direction of change correct as well as build a much more constructive and trusting relationship between local and central government. With this in mind, the final section of our report sets out the 'direction for the future' that we would like to see in the short term.

As you know, SIGOMA local authorities and our MPs Group are very supportive of the work that you and your team are carrying out. I hope that this evidence is helpful and can be used to inform your final report. Please do contact me if you feel that we can provide further information on any of the points it contains.

Yours Sincerely

Cllr Stephen Houghton
Chair

Enclosed – 6 copies of *Real People in Real Places*