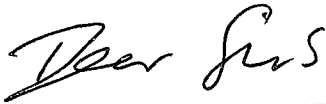


Lyons Inquiry into Local Government  
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION  
Room 3/12  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ

15 December 2006



**Ref. Implications of Leitch Report for Local Government**

The Leitch report says: "**12 million adults in this country struggle with everyday reading and writing skills**". Reorganisation of local government must take this into account if it is to succeed.

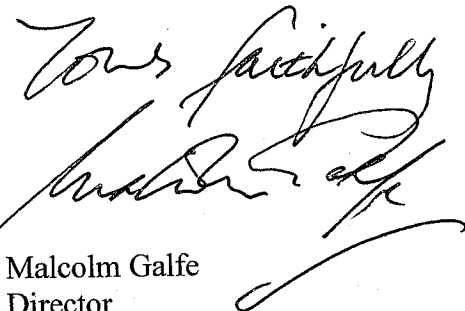
The need to engage the public is stated many times in your report, yet there is little mention of action to engage the 12 million less educationally advantaged citizens. Unless more effort is made to communicate effectively with this group, they will become increasingly cynical and detached from local government. They may see reform simply as a device allowing an educated elite to re-distribute power and money to suit itself.

To help solve the problem, Optimum has developed a research-based tool to make local government information easier for everyone to understand (see [www.optimum-uk.com](http://www.optimum-uk.com)). This tool can be made immediately available to all local government departments, with minimum effort and cost, via the Web.

So far, no local government organisation has been willing to consider the new technique for two reasons.

1. Nobody is specifically responsible for quality of communication with citizens
2. They do not acknowledge any obligation to consider new solutions originating in the commercial sector

If these issues are not dealt with, even the most carefully formulated new policy on local government will deliver no extra benefit to much of the population. It would be tragic if the opportunity to make local government and services more inclusive were lost through lack of anyone to look at the fundamentals of engaging the public.



Malcolm Galfe  
Director