We have sought to engage local government at every step we have taken in the development of this strategy. We believe that local government has a critical role to play in delivering our vision for an Information Age Government. We need to work in an ever more close partnership with one another - the local government IT community is being widely involved in work on how we use technology to enable and empower people to manage their own lives in the Information Age.

As I have said, technology is a key enabler and not a goal in itself. We need to continue to focus on the end goal of delivering high quality services fit for the Information Age. By measuring performance we get an idea of how well central and local services are meeting the challenge of delivering high quality services fit for the Information Age.

Beacon Council status.

£45m is available for projects in 2000-2001.

And looking at it that way round, there are a lot of things, which don't make much sense. I was going to say, which do not seem to be working; but I am not sure I will dare to say that. You might be more tactful and say, which are not yet working. But the fact is that in many areas, we have not been able to translate our ambitions into action.

Surely we have to see an end to the silly situation where people on benefit have to line up and fill in forms for an interview; and then have to do it all over again if they move house. Surely we have to see an end to the crazy idea that children should have to visit the Social Security office to claim benefits, because the form can be filled in only by a parent.

It will mean freedom and opportunity for the housebound to work from home and to be able to look after their family; and for families to be able to work together, managing their lives from home, with different agencies being able to work together and to build up a personal profile of a family or an individual.

The e-commerce Bill will help to make Britain a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

IT is not an end in itself, but a means to providing much more responsive and dynamic and to reform our election procedures to introduce rolling electoral registers. The local government IT community is being widely involved in work on how we can use technology to help people to manage their own lives. We need to listen to, learn from and understand people's perceptions about our public services.

For instance, what do people think the public sector can do for them? How can the public sector help people to look for work and be matched to jobs; help people access to local services, businesses and the voluntary sector. There should be one standard way of doing things, not six different ways in different areas. And if we do it really well, people will be able to go to the Internet and be able to answer complex customer queries.

It is a programme which opens up new opportunities for millions of people - and it is also about making government work better.