

Many public sector organisations have demonstrated that Open Source products can represent value for money for the taxpayer, for instance in web hosting services systems within the NHS infrastructure and as components in critical systems such as Directgov.

It is important to recognise that accountability for delivering value for money lies with individual Accounting Officers within public sector organisations. The adoption and implementation of open source and the use of open standards to underpin new solutions is one element of the value for money evaluation that all new procurements must now undertake as part of their business case for funding.

Thank you also for highlighting your constituent's concerns regarding attitudes to public sector expenditure within the civil service. The Cabinet Office has never advised or suggested that high spending is desirable. Indeed, a priority of my officials is to drive the achievement of the best value for money for the taxpayer across the public sector.

The Government takes value for money extremely seriously and the recently published Government ICT Strategy outlines our approach to delivering savings of £3.2 billion per annum by 2014 from public sector ICT. My officials work closely with Chief Information Officers across the public sector to maximise the value from ICT in supporting delivery of better public services, greater access to services by citizens and businesses and more efficient services. They will continue to strive to deliver better value from ICT as we move ahead with the implementation of the ICT Strategy.

*Yas*

*Asda*

**ANGELA SMITH MP**