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PREM 19/2240

Prime Minister's meeting with Professor Alice Coleman to discuss Housing Design; and subsequent action.

HOUSING

December 1987.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
10.2.88. 9.3.88.							
<p>PREM 19/2240</p>							



FILE
DA

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

9 March 1988

Thank you for your letter of 8 March about the appointment of Professor Alice Coleman. The Prime Minister has seen and noted this.

I am copying this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office), Chris de Grouchy (Department of Education and Science) and Peter Smith (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster).

(P.A. BEARPARK)

Miss Deborah Lamb,
Department of the Environment.

VC

CABG



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

P A Bearpark Esq
Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

8 March 1988

Prime Minister²

Dear Andy,

with PAB?

Thank you for your letter of 15 February about my Secretary of State's proposal to appoint Professor Alice Coleman to study design changes on council estates.

Mr Ridley entirely accepts the Prime Minister's point that we must avoid making it appear that we have doubts about Professor Coleman's views from the outset, and his proposal for independent assessors was intended merely to provide the usual safeguard for the several £millions of taxpayers' money that the Professor's project will involve. It is standard practice under the Financial Management Initiative to monitor all contracts of this sort. It does not appear to him, however, that we always have to follow the same standard pattern, so long as the safeguards are effective. He hopes, therefore, to come to some mutually acceptable arrangements with Professor Coleman to ensure that he is advised regularly on the progress of her work.

We are in touch with King's College on this basis.

I am copying this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office), Chris de Grouchy (Department of Education and Science), and Peter Smith (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster).

Yours,

Deborah

mt

DEBORAH LAMB
Private Secretary



Recycled Paper

I am not too happy about the spending aspect of this mission in this manner. as if you doubt me view from the outset.



Prime Minister!

Contact for the bid to employ Professor Coleman in this way?

You asked me for my views on Professor Coleman's ideas about the links between housing design and anti-social activity. William Waldegrave, Marion Roe and I met Professor Coleman on 1 February to discuss her work in this area and how her ideas might be pursued.

There is much common sense in Professor Coleman's main proposition that some design features of housing might foster anti-social behaviour. We were all impressed by Professor Coleman's drive and enthusiasm. We believe that we should, if you agree, offer her an opportunity to develop her ideas and approach in practice.

Professor Coleman is, rightly, jealous of her independence, and I think that the best way to preserve this would be for us to employ her as a consultant through her existing employers at Kings College. We would ask her to identify "guinea pig" estates of her choice, and to work up remedial packages with a reasonable budget with the local authorities who own them, so that the necessary capital works could be considered for Estate Action funding.

Professor Coleman is anxious to retain a continuing involvement in the implementation of her plans on the ground in her chosen estates, and the consultancy arrangement would cover that. It would also cover her work in writing it up. It seems to me that it would also be useful to provide for a couple of expert assessors, to help validate her results. I am thinking of people of stature in the building professions or housing field who are independent, rather than officials from my Department. In view of the close connection Professor Coleman expects to demonstrate between housing design and crime prevention, Douglas Hurd may want to suggest someone from the criminology field.

I am copying this letter to Douglas Hurd, Kenneth Baker and Kenneth Clarke.

[Handwritten signature]



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

28 January 1988

Dear Andy ^{29/1}
SLAP

The Home Secretary has seen a copy of your letter to Alan Ring of 19 January about the Prime Minister's meeting with Professor Alice Coleman.

As you say, both the Home Secretary and John Patten have met Professor Coleman. Subsequent to those meetings, Mr Patten took part in a conference in Tynemouth on Design Against Crime organised by the Northumbria Police last November, attended by Professor Coleman; there was general agreement over the critical importance of good design in the fight against crime. So they are both familiar with her ideas and value the contribution she has made to this subject. She is also in touch with Home Office officials.

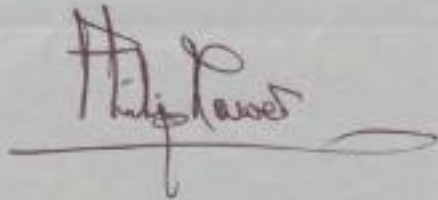
Her argument that housing design can affect crime is one which the Home Office entirely accepts and it is very much part of our crime prevention planning. Her point is important but narrow, for attempts to tackle crime on run down housing estates must involve more than re-designing the buildings and making (often extremely expensive) modifications to structures and layouts. These can be very useful and have been carried out successfully on many difficult estates, but better housing management, changed police procedures, the development of greater tenant responsibility and involvement through Neighbourhood Watch and community groups are the other side of the coin. Without this involvement, money spent on refurbishment can be wasted, and conditions rapidly revert to their previous, high crime state.

Money spent in other ways may sometimes be more cost-effective, for example the Home Office-funded project in Rochdale (in which a range of initiatives to tackle burglary have been introduced with success by a local multi-agency steering committee) and schemes where a porter and an entryphone are provided. This is something which Professor Porter finds difficult to accept, hence her insistence that her ideas must be carried through in their entirety, in isolation, and under her personal supervision.

The Home Secretary thinks that a proposal to fund Professor Coleman would need careful thought, but he would be very glad to provide an official or political adviser to join a group of the kind which the Prime Minister has suggested, as Professor Coleman's ideas are of undoubted importance.

I am copying this letter to Alan Ring (Department of the Environment), Alistair Morgan (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's office), Chris de Grouchy (Department of Education and Science) and Eric Sorenson (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P J C Mawer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

P J C MAWER

P A Bearpark, Esq.,

Rec. Pol. - Under Cebu P712



King's College London (KQC)
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

STRAND, LONDON WC2R 2LS TELEPHONE: 01-834 5454

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Professor A. Coleman

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,
10, Downing St.,
SW1.

20.1.1988.

Dear Prime Minister, ⁴

It was a great pleasure to meet you yesterday to discuss the implications of design disadvantage in housing. I am delighted that the issue is now in your capable hands.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Coleman

(Alice Coleman)



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

I hope I have understood
correctly what you wish to
say to Professor Coleman.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'AB' with a flourish.

Andy Bearpark

20 January 1988



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 January 1988

File
CF file
JA
ccDOE

Dear Professor Coleman,

I am most grateful to you for sparing the time to come in to see me the other day to explain your ideas with regard to the design of housing, and its effects on peoples' social behaviour.

I explained all of this to Nick Ridley, the Secretary of State for the Environment, this afternoon, and he is looking forward to meeting you to discuss ways in which you might be able to work within the DOE structure.

Could I now leave it to you to contact his office on 01-212-3434 to arrange an appointment to see how you can take this forward.

With very best wishes, - I so much enjoyed

our meeting.

Yours sincerely

Nayandhakar?

Professor Alice Coleman

ECU

SUBJECT CC MASTER



PHOTOCOPY
file

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

19 January 1988

From the Private Secretary

Dear Alan

The Prime Minister met Professor Alice Coleman of King's College London this morning to discuss Professor Coleman's work on inner cities. Hartley Booth of the Policy Unit was also present.

Enclosed with this letter is a note that Professor Coleman provided of the main points which she wished to discuss. Her assessment is that, as the first generation of flat dwellers grew up, a range of social problems emerged. This started with an increase in litter, shoplifting, arson in schools and football hooliganism. They then moved on to include crimes such as assault and rape, and theft from within employment. And as that generation grew up a whole range of social problems within the family such as wife-beating and child abuse occurred. The children of this generation were frequently conditioned to violence by the time they reached school at the age of five. The problem was that from the age of two onwards they were simply not learning the social skills and norms that the older style of environment provided.

In response to a question from the Prime Minister, Professor Coleman confirmed that her research had found a clear indication that such problems occurred far more frequently in tall blocks of flats than in traditional houses. This distinction was more important than the question of public v private housing estates. Her view was therefore that it was essential for families with young children to live either in houses, or in ground floor flats with only one flat above them.

Professor Coleman explained that while the ideal situation would be the construction of new estates based on her principles, there was a good deal that could be done by improvement of existing estates. She appreciated that this would require an allocation of funds, but claimed that there would be significant savings, firstly in the cost of maintenance, and then in a lower requirement for various social services. It was, however, important that her ideas be carried through in their entirety. There were examples of local authorities such as North Peckham which were spending

money on counter-productive measures, since, in solving one problem, they were merely creating more.

In response to questions from the Prime Minister as to why her ideas were not being more widely adopted, Professor Coleman gave two answers. One was the attitude of some left-wing local authorities, which were not really interested in solving their problems. The other was the attitude of officials in your department who she claimed to be unenthusiastic at best, and downright obstructive at worst.

Professor Coleman explained that she would be retiring from her post at King's College this Summer, and was anxious to continue her work. She wanted to be funded to supervise improvement work on a number of problem estates. But she stressed that she must exercise the supervision personally, as otherwise, potential gains would not be realised. She had not, however, been successful in obtaining any money from the SSRC, nor did she feel that she made any impression on the various Ministers which she had met. There was, I fear, some confusion at this point as originally she appeared to have met none, but, when questioned, agreed that she had had a chance to explain her ideas to John Patten when he was at DOE and to the Home Secretary. She did not, however, appear to have met with your Secretary of State or Mr. Waldegrave.

The Prime Minister was much taken by Professor Coleman's analysis and suggested improvements, and would like to consider the possibility of bringing together a group of people to whom Professor Coleman might explain her work. She is also minded to consider the possibility of whether there would be a role for Professor Coleman in the Inner City Unit following her retirement this year. But she would first like a note from your Secretary of State setting out his views on Professor Coleman's ideas, and I am sure she would welcome his suggestions as to how these might best be pursued.

I am copying this letter to Nick Sanderson (Home Office), Alistair Morgan (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Chris de Grouchy (Department of Education and Science) and Eric Sorensen (Cabinet Office) and should be grateful if your note could be co-ordinated with these Departments.

Your own

Andy

P. A. BEARPARK

Alan Ring, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

A Potentially More Powerful Contribution to Solving the Inner City Crisis

Professor Alice Coleman, King's College London.

- 1 Many forms of social breakdown vary in intensity according to local housing design, both in Britain and many other countries.
- 2 Specific bad designs produce anti-social behaviour by robbing pre-school children of the socialising mechanisms inherent in traditional housing. As the first large flat-bred generation has grown older, a sequence of problems has come to the forefront, e.g. litter in the 1950s and child abuse now. As more flats have been built and more children raised in them, these problems have increased in magnitude.
- 3 The effects of bad design are large reversible by design improvement. To date, 22 random piecemeal examples have proved able to reduce or eliminate litter, graffiti, vandalism, stress illness, hooliganism, racial harassment, etc.
- 4 We now need systematic and scientifically assessed trials of design improvement. It is believed that they will attack the cause of much of our national deterioration and therefore effect a cure rather than mere containment. For example, the security devices currently passing for design changes saw a 10% drop in London burglaries last year, but a 16% rise in street crime. With true design improvement, it is good behaviour that spills over, rather than bad.
- 5 Design improvement appears to be highly cost-effective, with substantial annual savings in estate maintenance thereafter. Further savings would result from easier law and order, fewer social workers, less demand upon the Health Service for stress illness, and lower school expenditure on offsetting crime, vandalism and arson.

CCB/UP

PRIME MINISTER

18 January 1988

ALICE COLEMAN - YOUR MEETING ON 19 JANUARY 1988 AT 11.30

You read and marked minutes concerning Alice Coleman on the 4 March 1987, 10 April 1987 and 24 June 1987. These are attached.

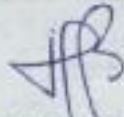
You will recall her thesis that the design of council estates affects the behaviour of their inhabitants. This was expounded in "Utopia on Trial" attached.

You should be aware that Department of Environment are sceptical because there has been a personality clash between some officials and Alice Coleman. They have not appreciated that she does not say that design is the 'only' factor - merely that it is one very important factor in determining anti-social behaviour.

Moreover, there is some criticism of her methods by Department of Environment. We, however, are convinced that Alice has some first rate points that should be properly tested.

Alice Coleman will propose that she be given a chance to try out her methods on some trial estates. She lists a few (Annex - her letter of 24 June). We support her contention. You could commend this to Nicholas Ridley or Kenneth Clarke. We believe it would be easiest to arrange tests in estates run by Housing Action Trusts as these will be central government bodies. We could also influence Warrington-Runcorn New Town to fund example number 3 in her letter.

You might like to know Alice Coleman is a member of your local Conservative Association in Dulwich!



HARTLEY BOOTH

PJS

PETER STREDDER

PRIME MINISTER

Alice Coleman has sent in a short note ready for the meeting tomorrow when she hopes to explain her thinking with regard to solving inner city problems. A background note by Hartley Booth is also attached. We have also put in the folder Professor Coleman's book 'Utopia on Trial' - but this is simply so that you are aware of its existence.

ANS

(P.A. BEARPARK)

18 January 1988



King's College London (KQC)
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

STRAND, LONDON WC2R 2LS TELEPHONE: 01-836 5454

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Professor A. Coleman

14.1.58

Dear Mr. Bearpark,

cf H/S
& back to me pm

Thank you for your ^{pm}
telephone message, and the letter,
received today.

I look forward to meeting the
Prime Minister at 11.30 am next
Tuesday, 19 January, and enclose
a résumé of the points I hope she
will want to discuss.

Thank you for arranging it.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Coleman

A Potentially More Powerful Contribution to Solving the Inner City Crisis

Professor Alice Coleman, King's College London.

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- 5 Design improvement appears to be highly cost-effective, with substantial annual savings in estate maintenance thereafter. Further savings would result from easier law and order, fewer social workers, less demand upon the Health Service for stress illness, and lower school expenditure on offsetting crime, vandalism and arson.



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

14 January 1988

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday morning I confirm that I have arranged for you to see the Prime Minister at 1130 on Tuesday 19 January.

I look forward to meeting you.

(P. A. BEARPARK)

Professor Alice Coleman.

PA

3. 91 F
PRIME MINISTER

We have arranged for Professor Alice Coleman to come and see you next Tuesday to explain her thoughts on inner cities. Would you like Kenneth Clarke to be present as well?

POS

No

ms

P.A. Bearpark

13 January 1988

Mr Bearpark



JEK

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

12 January 1988

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 18 December. I have left a message with King's College asking that you telephone me to discuss this. But I thought I would drop you a line to say that the Prime Minister would like to arrange a meeting if we can find a suitable time, and to propose 1130 next Tuesday 19 January, if this is convenient.

I hope we get a chance to talk on the telephone to see what we can fix.

P.A. BEARPARK

Professor Alice Coleman

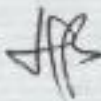
JEK

MR BEARPARK

21 December 1987

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR COLEMAN

As you recall, back in July, the Prime Minister suggested when we had a meeting with her that she would like to see Alice Coleman. Professor Coleman has now written in asking for a meeting in view of the fact that the Inner Cities Seminar has been put back to a date not yet fixed and concerning which there is still considerable doubt. Can I suggest you bring this matter up at the next diary meeting?



HARTLEY BOOTH



King's College London (KQC)
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

R.18/12

z/n
Vick + Ada

STRAND, LONDON WC2R 2LS TELEPHONE: 01-836 5454

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Professor A. Coleman

AMC/DP

18th December, 1987

The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1.

11.30
18/12

Dear Prime Minister,

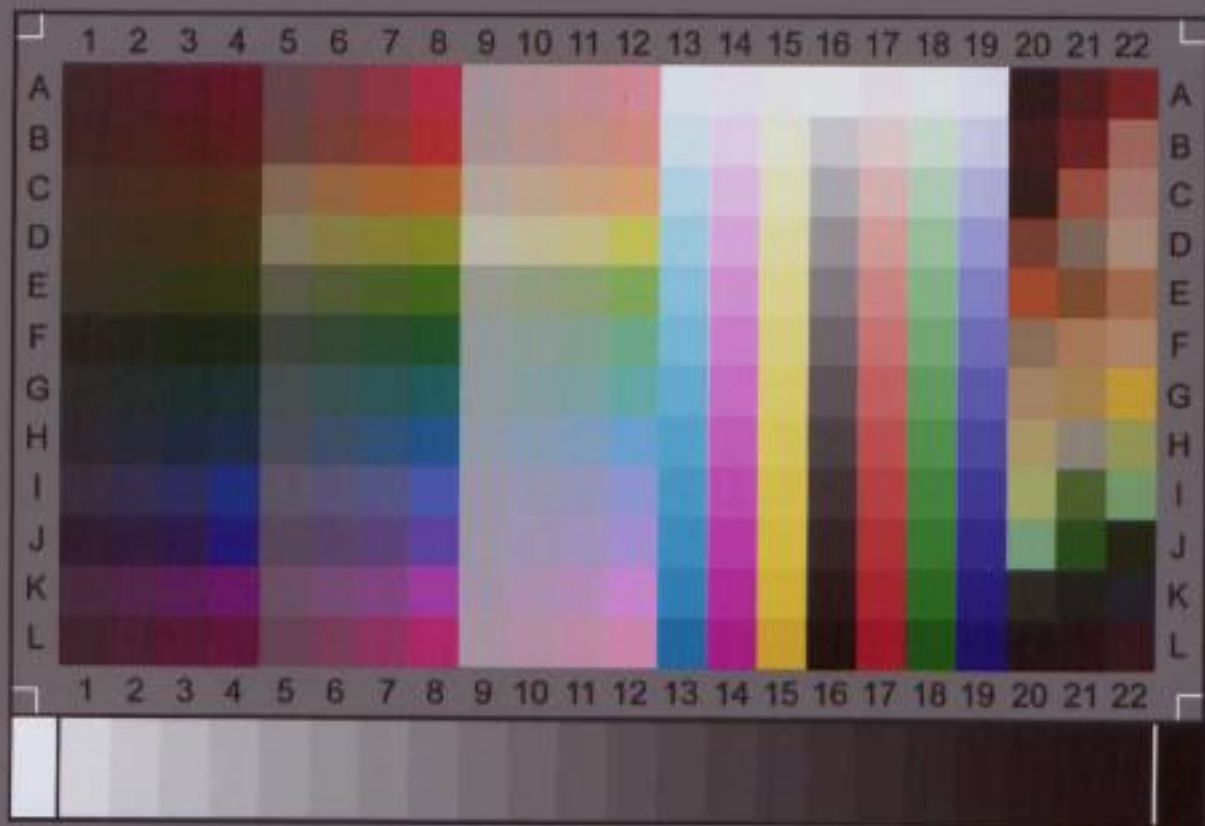
Hartley Booth has told me that you are interested in the field I have long been researching: how to make the design of Council Estates fit the needs of their residents, especially the children brought up there. I wonder if you would consider seeing me in the New Year, so that I could explain why British estates could and should be changed. I am most concerned that the unmet needs of young children are leading, as they grow older, to a high incidence of crime and various kinds of social breakdown, which should be tackled. I believe that I have some answers that government could use, to the advantage of everyone.

I realize that your diary is extremely full. However, as I have seen the Home Secretary and officials, I venture to hope that you might allow me to speak to you for a short time.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Coleman

Professor A. Coleman.



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