

CONFIDENTIAL



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG M Walker at a
01-233 3000

*Agree with 5/7/50 days.
Agree with 10/10/50 days.*

Prime Minister

1

The Chancellor suggests Mr Howell should be a member of NEDC; also Mr Heseltine and possibly later stage. I think Mr Heseltine should be a member now in view of his construction interests and responsibility for planning etc. Agree Mr Howell and Mr Heseltine?

PRIME MINISTER

Before the next meeting of the NEDC on 4th July I think it would be sensible to reach an understanding on the pattern of Ministerial membership.

TZ
19/6

2. At the last meeting (which I think we all found useful, not least because it demonstrates an urgent appreciation of the need to press ahead with joint action on the many weaknesses on the supply side) our team consisted simply of those Ministers most immediately and obviously involved - the Secretaries of State for Industry, Employment and Trade, as well as myself. It would, however, be possible to add one or two to the team if we wished. The TUC and CBI have six each and the Government can have at least as many without seeming to over-weight the Council.

3. There is, of course, no virtue in numbers as such, especially since I expect that from time to time other Ministers, not necessarily those with direct economic responsibilities, will attend the Council in order to discuss the industrial implications of their Departments' policies, as has been the practice in the past. And we should not wish to tie up too much administrative time in this work. But I think that this point can be met if we are fairly ready - subject to keeping a decent quorum - to give colleagues "leave of absence" on suitable occasions.

4. The Labour Government had seven regular members, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Chairman, though usually

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



not more than six attended at one time. They included, in addition to the basic four mentioned above, the Secretaries of State for Energy and for Prices and Consumer Protection, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (who of course no longer has economic responsibilities).

Agreed | 5. I think it would be right now to invite the Secretary of State for Energy to be a regular member of the Council because of the prominence of energy questions in the economic scene and in view of his responsibility for important nationalised industries.

| 6. It could also be helpful to have the Secretary of State for the Environment because of his responsibilities for the construction industry and the significance of many of his activities from an industrial point of view. The Minister of Agriculture is also a possibility. But we could perhaps retain flexibility by not at the moment filling more than one seat - beyond the basic four.

Agreed

G.H.

(GEOFFREY HOWE)

19 June, 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



RA
Economic
Policy

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 June 1979

The Prime Minister has considered the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 19 June about Ministerial membership of the NEDC. She agrees that the Secretary of State for Energy should become a regular member of the Council; she would prefer to keep open for the moment the possibility of further Ministerial members.

ra

A.M.W Battishill, Esq.,
HM Treasury.

CONFIDENTIAL

9.B