

19 July 1982

Policy UnitPRIME MINISTERRENEWING THE VALUES OF SOCIETY: YOUR 20 JULY MEETING

Our paper is intended to inspire discussion and general endorsement, rather than specific policy decisions at this stage; it may be helpful if I suggest the conclusions which we hope you can reach.

The case for a major effort by the Government to renew the values of society is set out in the introduction to the paper. From my own discussions with colleagues, I think the case is already accepted: the difficulty lies in putting it into effect.

It would be much better if each responsible Secretary of State were asked to endorse the principle, and then proposed his own initiatives, instead of us and the CPRS having to try to impose particular ideas on them. We must not allow this effort to founder on the rocks of departmental resistance to outside interference, nor to be lost forever in a fog of descriptions of what departments are already doing.

It is important to get the organisational aspects right. There are two problems. First, the Home Secretary is likely to argue that Sir Brian Cubbon's group already ranges widely over the crime field, so that there is no need for the special CPRS unit proposed in Sir Robert Armstrong's note of 13 July. Second, that note reflects (in paragraph 3) John Sparrow's wish to have the CPRS involved in the follow-up to our paper, not just to the crime and public disorder issue raised in Gordon Wasserman's earlier paper.

We think there should be a special unit, but only for the crime and public disorder issues, which are themselves substantial. The wider - and at present less concrete - issues should be developed by us here (we are filling the two empty posts in the Policy Unit, partly with this in mind). We hope the Home Secretary will agree that it will be useful to him to have some support centrally for his departmental effort.*

Prime Minister: surely a more economical and just as effective way of assuring a CPRS input would be to invite the Home Secretary to associate the CPRS with Sir Brian Cubbon's group. Otherwise, there will be a danger that the good work done by the group will simply be duplicated.

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Suggested conclusions

So I suggest you may want to reach conclusions as follows:

1. Agreement in principle that the Government should take a series of initiatives designed to promote parental responsibility and achieve a renewed understanding of the values of society, as suggested in the introduction to the Policy Unit's paper; and that this should be publicly launched by you in the Party Conference speech.
2. An invitation to each of those present to propose such initiatives within their areas of responsibility, drawing on but not confined to the proposals in the paper.
3. An invitation to the Policy Unit to work closely with the responsible Secretaries of State and their departments in pursuit of this remit.
4. The establishment of a CPRS team to co-ordinate the work on the crime and public disorder aspects of this programme (but not on the wider aspects, as proposed by Sir Robert Armstrong) in close consultation with the Policy Unit.
5. Agreement that the same group of Ministers should meet again before the end of October to review the specific policy initiatives proposed, and to take decisions on them. I suggest we might call it the Family Policy Group to give a down-to-earth name to what we want to be a down-to-earth initiative.

FM

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