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David Smith,

MEMBERS LOBBY, COUNTY HALL

*Educator*

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

28 April 1980

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 27 March to Mark Carlisle about the future of the ILEA. Mark and I share your concern about the importance of this issue.

The crucial point on timing is that any major change would need legislation. There is no prospect of squeezing another controversial Bill into the current Session and I very much doubt whether our heavy legislative programme will accommodate such a Bill in the 1980/81 Session. But this does give us time to try to get the best solution of the ILEA problem and to avoid the political consequences, which you very fairly acknowledge, of appearing to act so hastily as to prejudge issues which affect local government and education throughout the London area and thus need more thought and discussion.

I believe that the time has come for a direct involvement by the Government.

Following Kenneth Baker's report, I have therefore decided that the next step is for the Government to carry out its own study of all the issues (which of course go beyond the purely educational aspect and include local government) and all the possible options,

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so that we can then be in a position to bring forward proposals based on a more detailed and comprehensive examination. I hope this will not take too long. I will keep an eye on progress.

I regard this decision as a positive step which will show our supporters that we are determined to find the right solution. The decision will be announced this afternoon in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Smith.

Yours sincerely

Mt

Sir Horace Cutler, OBE