

PRIME MINISTER

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This is primarily for
Mr Heseltine:

SCOTTISH OFFICE

WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

but you should be aware
of it for your conversations
on Wednesday.



Prime Minister

CONTROLS OVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(below)

4 When I minuted to you on 6 June I undertook to identify controls which the Scottish Office exercises over local government and which might usefully be removed. There are two major differences from the situation south of the Border. We had a substantial "bonfire of controls" implementing the new local government pattern in 1975; and the local authority body in Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has not produced a list of disposable controls similar to that produced for England and Wales. This second point has a bearing on how I proceed: I return to this below.

Ministers exercising various controls over local government in England and Wales have already suggested a wide variety of relaxations which might usefully be made. There are a number of cases in which these relaxations are not relevant to Scotland, either because there have never been similar controls, or because such controls have already been relaxed. However, where these controls are appropriate to Scotland, I propose to make substantially similar relaxations. There are also one or two cases - local planning controls are an example - where I intend to go further: I will let the interested Ministers know of the few cases where I intend a different approach.

As regards most of the changes I propose to inform COSLA of the changes which I intend to make. On the remainder I propose to consult the Convention and to ask them for their views on any other relaxations which they feel might usefully be made. This approach is essential because, as I have noted, the Convention has not presented a list of controls which they would wish to see relaxed.

I am copying this minute to Cabinet colleagues, the Minister of Transport and Sir John Hunt.

Cy.

5 JULY 1979

1-5 JUL 1979

