



*Govt Made*  
*BF 2 weeks for advice from*  
*Sir D Rayner if not*  
*received earlier.*

*MAK*  
*27/3*

PRIME MINISTER

THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 1981

I wrote to you on 8 January proposing a study of Executive Officer (Field) inspections as the Welsh Office contribution to the scrutiny programme for 1981. In the event, neither you nor Sir Derek Rayner were able to agree that it should be included in the programme.

I have considered other topics for study, and I now propose a scrutiny of the Welsh Office's internal procedures for processing compulsory purchase orders and other orders and appeals under various legislative provisions. The details of this proposal are annexed.

I believe this study would be a substantial one. Its main aims would be to achieve improved procedures, better use of staff and a speedier service. It will be of interest to other Departments as well as mine.

I am copying this minute to the Secretaries of State for the Environment, Scotland, Education and Science, and Transport and to Sir Derek Rayner.

*RNE.*

24 March 1981

RNE



PROPOSED WELSH OFFICE SCRUTINY 1981

- a) Subject: The Welsh Office's internal procedures for processing compulsory purchase orders and other orders and appeals under various legislative provisions. The Department's involvement with orders from other sources, such as local authorities and non-departmental public bodies, would be covered. Public local inquiry procedures would be included. Consultation with the DOE Planning Inspectorate would be required.
- b) Cost of carrying out the activity to be examined: Staff costs are the main item. These are spread amongst many grades, both administrative and professional. The biggest loading is on the executive and clerical grades, something of the order of the whole time equivalent of 40 officers between SEO and CO being engaged on the work. The equivalent of about 3 officers at Assistant Secretary or Principal level are engaged also. The work of the Legal Division runs as a common thread throughout the activity, some 7 or 8 staff (including 4 or 5 professionally qualified lawyers) being involved.
- c) Reasons for selecting the subject: The subject involves staff from many functional areas of the Department's field of responsibility, in particular, the Land Use Planning Group, Transport and Highways Group, Local Government Division, Housing Division, Industry Department and Education Department. The professional members of the Planning Services and Legal Divisions are also heavily involved. The scrutiny would be a substantial one. The procedures involved are lengthy and labour intensive. They have an effect outside the Department, on the workload of local government officers and staff of non-departmental public bodies such as the Land and Water Authorities. They have an impact also on the public; the time taken to complete the procedures in specific cases is sometimes the subject of complaint from outside. Rationalisation of procedures to increase efficiency and reduce delay is therefore seen as an important supplement to any reduction of work and staff savings which may be achieved.
- d) Terms of reference: To examine internal Welsh Office procedures for the processing of compulsory purchase orders from whatever source and of other orders and appeals under Town and Country Planning and other comparable legislative provisions; to assess the efficiency of such procedures with regard to both cost-effectiveness and the desirability of reducing delay in processing; and to make recommendations.
- e) Proposed starting and finishing dates: Say, 28 April - 28 August.
- f) Name of examining officer and reporting arrangements: An officer at Principal level, to be selected; probably, to report to the Secretary of State.