



From: MALCOLM THORNTON, M.P.

2016
29/4

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

8th April 1981

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister

My only regret concerning our recent very long conversation on the problems and needs of Merseyside is that those critics of the Government's supposed lack of concern for the area were unable to see you and hear what you had to say. It was quite clear to us all that not only do you understand the problems but also you care about solving them.

The fresh impetus that your intervention has achieved for the Enterprise Zone is much appreciated and I hope now that we can maintain the thrust and so satisfy those companies that are anxiously awaiting determination of the Zone's limits.

There are two further matters which are relevant to our talk and to which I should like to draw your attention. Firstly, it is vital that the Merseyside Development Corporation gets under way as soon as possible in order that tangible results will be evident by the time of the next General Election. Leslie Young, the Chairman, is extremely concerned at the delay arising from a degree of intransigence by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. This relates to the Albert Dock Development which is the show piece of the U.D.C. and for which the Dock Company has certain "indefined" proposals with a developer. Leslie Young feels - and I strongly support him - that the development of this key site should be undertaken by the U.D.C. I know he has spoken to Michael Heseltine and Tom King about this but it does seem to me that, as large sums of public money are going to the Dock Company, some pressure can be exerted to ensure some rapid decisions at least.

Secondly, the development of the Liverpool Airport is at a crucial stage and is, of course, linked closely with the Enterprise Zone. The enclosed letter from the Airport Director sets out fully the present position. From figures I have seen, I do not believe that the financial support to which he refers (for the apron area) amounts to a great deal. I believe it would be an incalculable stimulus to the private developers who are now showing such interest.

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I believe that a number of factors that will help Merseyside are about to come together. A little bit of help at this stage will do wonders.

Yours ever,

Malcolm.

Enc.