

CONFIDENTIAL

CCNO



PRIME MINISTER

ABOLITION OF THE GLC AND MCCs  
DRAFT WHITE PAPER

I enclose the draft White Paper on abolition, provisionally titled "Streamlining the Cities", which I hope to publish on 6 October. Subject to the points mentioned below it incorporates the decisions of MISC 95 that I reported in my minute of 20 September and has been seen in draft by colleagues on MISC 95 and others directly concerned.

Chapter 1

In circulating the previous draft to colleagues on MISC 95 I said that I was looking again at Chapter 1 to try to improve the presentation. I know Tom King shared my concern to get a more forceful argument. The draft here has been substantially recast with that aim in mind and also to link these proposals with our general concerns to improve efficiency in government.

Control of joint boards

We are due to meet on 3 October to discuss the nature of control over joint boards; I will prepare a note on the various options for that meeting together with appropriate alternative drafts for the relevant paragraphs (6.5 and 6.6) in the White Paper. For the moment the draft reflects the majority view of MISC 95 in favour of precept control.



### Savings generally

Tom King has asked that we include in Chapter 6 an estimate of savings. I do not think this would be right at this stage. The six MCCs are already mounting a campaign to have the exercise costed and are employing consultants for that purpose. Neither we nor they have the material to make detailed estimates. Our line must, for the time being, be that it is inappropriate to try to do this given the many decisions on the organisation of services that will be taken by the successor authorities. Our approach must be to ensure that there are adequate pressures for economy in the abolition process rather than set up arbitrary targets, whose attainment we cannot directly control. At a later stage, we will be able to set firm targets and the pressures will be there to see they are met.

### Elections in May 1985

Paragraph 7.5 of the White Paper now proposes the deferral of these elections as you preferred. However, I hope that we may also discuss this on 3 October. A majority of MISC 95 felt that the chance of major disruption would be less if the existing GLC and Metropolitan County Councils went when their term expired. Our supporters in London will be dismayed if we seem to give Ken Livingstone an extra year of office.

### Other drafting points

I have incorporated a number of other drafting points put to me by colleagues. There is however one point made by Arthur Cockfield which I should mention here. In paragraph 4.4 he suggests that we should not revive memories of the ending of the Crombie Code. But in fact the Code is still operating for some transfers and our proposals might be misunderstood if we did not make the clear distinction between the Crombie Code and general day to day terms.



Publication

*DoE aware you will not see  
this by 30 Sept.*

I would be grateful if you and colleagues can agree to this text by 30 September so that printing can be put in hand on 3 October for publication on 6 October. This will mean dealing with the outcome of our discussion on control (paragraph 3 above) at proof stage.

I am copying this to other members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*PJ*

PJ

28 September 1983