



Mr Sherbourne

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
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For information! (page 2)

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Int.
cc post office

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 3EB

3 October 1983

Pat Jenkin

CONTROL OVER AERIAL ADVERTISING BY CAPTIVE BALLOONS

— will request if required

Thank you for your letter proposing that we should allow this form of advertising and that the planning arrangements for it should be exercised on the basis of "express consent" and not "deemed consent" procedures. It seems to me that any form of "deemed consent" carries a risk of a proliferation of balloons that many would find offensive and would activate all the Civic Trust, and local heritage lobby. I therefore agree that the sensible course is to allow balloon advertising subject to the "express consent" procedure and to review the position as you suggest after a couple of years.

As you say, in parallel with the relaxation of controls over balloons I shall be amending the aerial advertising regulations to permit the towing of advertising banners behind aeroplanes. This would not, of course, be subject to planning controls but I believe the draft Code of Practice governing banner towing, drawn up by the General Aviation Manufacturers and Traders Association - and on which my officials and yours have been in touch - will do much to minimise concern about damage to the environment from noise and visual intrusiveness. In addition, I also intend to allow advertising to be carried on the bodies of airships.

There is one point on which I should welcome advice from colleagues and that concerns possible religious objections to advertising on Sundays on banners and airships. It seems to me advertisers are unlikely to use these media in ways which antagonise their target audience. I would, however, welcome comments on this point.

I agree that separate but simultaneous announcements are preferable. On past form, we can expect a Mr Bateson who is based in Blackpool to tow a banner over the Party Conference congratulating the Prime Minister in some way. It would be nice if we could legalise him this time and avoid embarrassment if we could announce our decisions before the Conference itself rather than waiting until after the Recess. The Orders themselves could then be laid as soon as the House returns.

Because environmental opposition is likely to be greatest in the case of balloons, I plan to introduce two separate instruments, one covering balloons and the other banners and airships. In this way a successful prayer against captive balloon advertising need not mean that everything is then lost. I hope you can agree to what I propose although I realise the timescale is a little tight.

I am copying this letter to Cecil Parkinson, Nicholas Edwards, George Younger and Jim Prior, and for information to the Prime Minister and Nigel Lawson.

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TOM KING