

CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister

ABOLITION OF THE GLC AND MCCs

MS

Prime Minister (4)

Mr Jenkin will raise this with you next week. A counter offensive is overdue. I will ask Bernard and Policy Unit to comment

AT 6/6

1. We are at a crucial stage in the propaganda battle surrounding our abolition policy.

2. In the metropolitan counties, the public are sceptical of the MCCs' claim that they are indispensable. There is evidence that people of all parties support a return to unitary government - though views may be obscured by the MCCs' propaganda campaign and by party loyalties.

3. In London, it is widely stated that we have been worsted in the propaganda battle. I believe, on the contrary, that the GLC campaign may have reached its peak, and may now be becoming counter productive. However, the argument in London is seen in largely personal and emotional terms, and there is little interest in the details of abolition.

4. The Parliamentary progress of the paving Bill has been a helpful factor. In particular, the circumstances surrounding the final stages of the Bill in the Commons attracted wide attention. Although the emphasis was on the Parliamentary and party-political implications, I believe that the ineffective opposition to the Bill has significantly helped our cause. We are seen to have scored a win.

5. We now need to capitalise swiftly on the change in the public mood on this issue. This calls for action on two fronts.

6. First, we must press on with the detailed working out of our policies. Over recent months, we have made a number of statements about our intentions. But, with the exception of those about ILEA and the Arts, only the people most closely concerned with local government have taken much notice of them.

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7. To emphasise that the new structure is beginning to take shape I propose to issue, before the Summer Recess, a document setting out in detail the new arrangements for all existing GLC/MCC functions. This would scotch the impression, put about by the opposition, that all our proposals are still at the consultative stage. In addition to sending this document to all the local authorities, I could ensure that its issue received attention in Parliament and the press.

8. I propose also to take an initiative on planning for implementation of the policy. We need to get the boroughs and districts to begin working on this. My officials will shortly be circulating a paper to the Departments responsible for individual services.

9. As we move forward in this way, the local government world will begin to get the message that abolition is going to happen. This will, in time, affect the press - and the public. But we also need to tackle them direct; and this brings me to my second point.

10. We are, I believe, producing good, hard-hitting articles for the press (I enclose a copy of one that has recently been sent to all London local papers). But I believe that we need a renewed collective effort to emphasise the Government's commitment to the policy.

11. I know that there are problems on services for which some colleagues are responsible. But Cabinet has re-affirmed the overall strategy, and we must all pull together. You emphasised this in summing up the Cabinet discussion on 5 April; but colleagues seem to have found few opportunities to speak out in favour of the policy.

12. I should like, if you agree, to raise this in Cabinet. I hope that we can then agree a co-ordinated campaign of speeches

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by senior Ministers of the kind that we mounted before the Second Reading of the Rates Bill.

13. It would also be extremely helpful if you personally could make a statement - in a speech or in answer to a PQ (preferably both) - to emphasise the Government's commitment. I believe that this would immensely strengthen the efforts that are being made here to get the policy accepted.

14. I should be grateful if I might have a word before raising this in Cabinet.

15. I am copying this to Willie Whitelaw.

PJ

P J

6 June 1984

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## ABOLISHING THE GLC - TIME FOR THE TRUTH

By

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP, Secretary of State for the Environment

If you've stood at the bus stop recently, the chances are you've seen a large poster with a threatening message.

"This is the last time you'll be asked if you want a say in who runs London", it says in bold capitals. The small print tells you that "next year's London elections will be cancelled without your say so". It invites you to sign a petition, and says menacingly "sign it if you want to retain the right to have a say in London's future".

This is GLC propaganda 1984-style, masterminded by Ken Livingstone and his expensive PR men. It's downright nonsense; but then what would you expect from Mr Livingstone? Only in 1979 he was saying that the GLC should be abolished because he thought it would be a major saving and would release massive resources which could be put into far more productive use. Just what game is he playing with Londoners and the £3 million of their money which he is spending on propaganda?

Let's have a few basic facts:

Fact 1: The GLC does not run London. Most of the local services which are essential to our everyday life are not provided by the GLC. The GLC is not responsible for education for most of London; for personal social services; the police; hospitals or the ambulance service; refuse collection; street cleansing and environmental health; water and sewerage; libraries; cemeteries and crematoria or even swimming baths! All these services are run by bodies other than the GLC.

Fact 2: the main providers of local services are the borough councils - smaller, closer to the people and run from the local town hall.

Fact 3: the only elections that are being abolished are elections to the GLC. Existing GLC councillors will complete their normal term of office next year and it makes no sense to

go through the upheaval and expense of elections to a body which has only a few months life left.

Fact 4: elections to the boroughs will continue on exactly the same basis as at present - the next elections will take place as planned in 1986 - and these are the councils that really count in London. And for the first time we are also introducing direct elections to the Inner London Education Authority. So it's just baloney to say that Londoners will have no say in who runs their local affairs.

#### Services

I do not belittle for a moment the importance of the few services the GLC does provide, but they simply do not add up to a package of responsibilities which justifies the attention of 92 councillors, 35 committees and sub-committees, and the 22,000 staff which try to keep the whole show on the road at a cost of £936 million this year alone.

The abolition of the GLC will do away with this unnecessary and burdensome structure. But there is no threat to the services which can be provided perfectly well without it.

Most of the GLC's functions will be devolved to the borough councils, so ending the present duplication, conflict and delay which result from having Big Brother GLC breathing down the boroughs' necks.

The fire service will be run on a London-wide basis by a joint board consisting of councillors from the boroughs. This will be the only statutory joint board for London. Mr Livingstone's extraordinary allegation that more Londoners will die in fires as a result of our proposals is without foundation and is no more than a callous exploitation of people's fears.

London Transport - as recommended by an all-party committee of the House of Commons - will be run by a new body with strategic control over buses and underground services in London. London Transport will no longer be the political football it has been under the GLC, and the new body will provide services which are attractive, reliable and offer better value for money. This is good news for Londoners.

One of the most offensive claims that the GLC has been making is that elderly people will suffer once the GLC goes - for example, that retired London tenants will lose the opportunity to move to seaside and country homes. This is nonsense. The Government has given a firm guarantee that the lion's share of seaside and country homes will continue to be available for London's elderly people.

The GLC has also spread scare stories about concessionary fares for elderly and disabled people. More nonsense. Concessionary fares will continue to be available.

#### Voluntary bodies

Leaving aside some well-publicised lunacies, the GLC has been funding a large number of voluntary organisations - for example in the field of housing, ethnic minorities and the elderly and disabled - which are doing a first-class job. They deserve to continue.

But true to form, the GLC has been busy spreading scare stories about how these bodies will come to a sticky end after abolition. This is rubbish. There will be a special scheme for collective funding by the boroughs of the voluntary sector. This will do much to secure the future of the many worthwhile organisations serving a wider area.

#### The Arts

I cannot stress too strongly that abolishing the GLC and metropolitan counties does not mean abolishing the funds for the arts which those councils are currently responsible for distributing. The Government will give an extra £34 million to the arts in England in 1986/87 and a similar sum in future years. Of this £16 million will be made available to the Arts Council to look after the needs of major performing arts and other bodies receiving grants from the GLC and the metropolitan counties. £17 million will be provided to meet the costs of the major museums and art galleries.

There will have to be discussions about the allocation of funds to other organisations and institutions involving the Arts Council, and the Museums and Galleries Commission as appropriate, together with the various parties concerned. These

arrangements should ensure that the many worthwhile cultural organisations, institutions and activities in our great cities will continue.

#### Conclusion

We are now firmly on course for cheaper, simpler and more effective local government in London.

A vast bureaucracy with not enough to do but no shortage of ratepayers' money to squander on the whims and fancies of its eccentric politicians will be swept away.

The cumbersome two-tier system of local government hasn't worked and has caused only delay and obstruction. The boroughs will in future become the focal point for decision-making in London and people will have a proper voice in local government as it affects their local area.

It's worth noting what another politician said less than two years ago.

"I believe that we should on principle have a system in which government is done at the lowest possible level, the level closest to people..... to be really effective that means that we have to have unitary local government in this country and clearly people would be better served if it was provided by the borough councils in the metropolitan areas. I have always at heart been committed to the borough council rather than to regional government."

The politician who said that? None other than Ken Livingstone. What price his commitment to the GLC?

File  
MR TURNBULL

You asked for advice on the Secretary of State for the Environment's paper of June 6 on the abolition of the GLC and MCCs.

I have been privy to a number of discussions leading up to the paper. I broadly agree with its proposals.

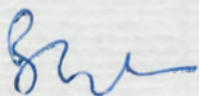
You should also see my paper (Annex I) which has been considered at official level in Department of the Environment. This suggests a three-stage approach - immediate, medium term and longer term.

Mr Jenkin's paper essentially deals only with the immediate situation - and is limited to the publication of a document before the Summer Recess setting out the new arrangements for GLC/MCC functions.

What it does not do precisely is link a renewed effort to that publication. But my strongly held view is that, the Lords' passage of the Paving Bill permitting, we ought as a Government to give a formidable publicity broadside during July to send off the Parliamentary troops in good heart and to implant in the public's mind that the Government's local government policies are going ahead.

I am to have a meeting with Department of Environment officials in the last week of June to plan such a campaign. I agree for it to be effective the resources of the Cabinet should be employed - the D/Environment's publicity effort does need reinforcing - and that the Prime Minister <sup>should</sup> ideally take the lead.

I am putting a paper to the Prime Minister next week on media to the Recess and intend to incorporate local government in that.



BERNARD INGHAM  
15 June 1984



LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM - MEDIA CAMPAIGN

This note sets out my views on the next steps in the effort to preserve the Government's local government policies positively and effectively.

Background

I have continually been struck during my attendance at D/Environment campaign meetings how little I, as a relative outsider, have been affected by public campaigning, even though I live in a London Borough - Croydon.

But for my privileged position, and awareness of the tremendous effort being made within Government, I would but dimly perceive the ebb and flow of the battle.

Separating, as best I can, my perceptions from my inside knowledge, I have the following impressions:

1. Some considerable disarray in Government, with perhaps worse to come in the Lords, because of internal but public and Parliamentary, disagreement over the policy.
2. Increasing regard for Ken Livingstone as a political figure and publicist.
3. Growing restiveness among supporters at the Government's failure to beat Livingstone at his own game.
4. Next to no impression of how the argument is going in the Metropolitan Counties.

In other words, the Government's problems arise for broadly two reasons:

- i. disagreements within its own ranks; we have failed to neutralise the dissidents; and
- ii. Livingstone's success as a publicist, which is not perhaps surprising with a budget £3m more than is properly available to the Government for paid publicity.

But, there has latterly been one demonstration that the GLC's position is as insecure as a pack of cards: the effect of the Talgarth Road right turn on its reputation for sensitive administration.

The feeling nonetheless in Government is that we are losing out with the public; that the devil has all the best tunes; and that we badly need to come up with a fresh and preferably electrifying presentation.

Problem

As I see it, the presentational problem has three distinct aspects:

- i. Immediate: how do we turn the tide now?
- ii. Medium Term: How do we secure and retain the initiative during the Recess? and
- iii. Longer Term: How do we persuade the public over the next 12 months or so that the Government's policy is not merely going ahead but is necessary and will bring benefits to ratepayers?

Immediate

How do we turn the tide?

This is easier said than done if only because June is so fiendishly busy: Botha, Reagan visits; Economic Summit in London: Euro-Elections; Euro-Council - all in quick succession. Moreover, we need to be sensitive to the needs and performance of the Lords re Rates and Paving Bills.

Yet what we need is a dramatic demonstration of Government purpose which is arresting both in terms of power and language.

I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that we should, if we can, bide our time until July and use June to plan a publicity strike early in July.

In an ideal world, what we need is:

- i. a speech by the Prime Minister, followed by her appearance on eg the Jimmy Young Show, Nationwide or Thames TV Eye, or a combination, the following day, which puts the Opposition on the defensive;
- ii. Cabinet Ministers, armed with the same remit, to hammer the message home in London and the six Metropolitan areas over the following two days, backed up by radio, television and local newspaper interviews and articles;
- iii. Mobilisation of articulate and impressive supporters from local government to:
  - a. advertise their support in local regional newspapers at the same time - can the Government raise by other means the money to pay for this?
  - b. carry the message through the local media for the rest of July.
- iv. Mobilisation of MP support to assist and underline the efforts of local government supporters during July.

The keys, however, to the success of the exercise are:

- i. surprise;
- ii. lead from the top with fresh language;
- iii. continued effort to demonstrate Government power and commitment;
- iv. follow through, as indicated; and if possible, the identification of prominent individuals from many walks of life who will weigh in as required to back the Government's policy.

Substance

As always, the credibility of any Government effort of the kind advocated will depend to some extent on the current degree of dissidence in the Government's ranks. The objective must be to crush that out of sight: to use such heavy armour that the opposition, for a period at least, is obliterated.

In my view, the main elements of the appeal should be:-

- i. Manifesto commitment;
- ii. Local Government always derived bulk of its money as well as its existence and authority from central government which therefore cannot ignore local spending;
- iii. wide measure of autonomy at local level within overall framework and ceilings; need more rather than less imagination, creativity and management expertise at local level, acting in interests of ratepayers within established and familiar limits;
- iv. but don't need a tier which has proved it has a very limited role that can be properly exercised by lower tiers, where necessary acting together;
- v. inevitably savings will arise from elimination of unnecessary tier - and Government is determined that the inevitable happens;
- vi. (for London) don't intend to put up with hypocritical nonsense from a Palace revolutionary about ending of elections when there are good precedents and administrative efficiency arguments in favour;
- vii. London has no need of GLC representation when the Lord Mayor of London has not looked back since Dick Whittington; nothing can replace the prestige of the Lord Mayor of London;

viii. the administration of London under Livingstone and Labour has everything not to commend it, especially the real interests of workers whose firms are being driven elsewhere by high rates and profligate expenditure;

ix. the Government meanwhile will play the game by arguing its case persuasively without cost to the taxpayer while the GLC and MCCs spend ratepayers' money without authority.

I believe that we need a new speech written by someone - eg me - who is not too close to it all, which takes on frontally all the arguments, both substantive and political, with the objective of powering the Government to the ascendancy.

But if we are to overcome the expenditure of £3m plus by the GLC and MCCs we need to mobilise the full weight of Government and its supporters.


Medium to Longer Term

Any campaigns over the medium and longer term - ie recess and next 12 months - can be considered realistically only in the light of immediate plans.

I suggest we concentrate our thinking on how to make an immediate impact, and then commission work on how to carry with us public opinion after that.

A powerful strike in July which carries the argument and puts the opposition on the defensive will win a lot of time. That should be used to prepare a White Paper, of whatever size or substance, to carry the case forward to actual abolition.

I hope this is helpful.



BERNARD INGHAM

# London Amenity and Transport Association

Tress House  
3 - 7 Stamford Street  
London, S.E.1

June 12th 1984

The Private Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen,  
Buckingham Palace,  
S.W.1.

Dear Sir,

May we request that Her Majesty's attention be directed to our Association's grave concern over the Government's proposals to abolish the GLC and the Metropolitan Authorities, without first instituting an independent inquiry or a Royal Commission.

We are equally worried about the 'Paving Bill' (Local Government Interim Provisions Bill) which is at present progressing through the Lords and which seeks to remove from Londoners their right to vote for a citywide authority.

We have contacted most Universities in England and Wales with departments concerned with local government and/or transport (our special concern) and find a large measure of support for an independent inquiry. In fact we recently published the enclosed letter to the Guardian which is signed by professors and academics from different academic institutions.

When the GLC was created a Royal Commission studied the subject and its independent recommendations were largely implemented. We would like to draw Her Majesty's attention to the fact that she will shortly be asked to give the Royal Assent to a Bill which overthrows the findings of a Royal Commission.

We are writing to ask the Queen what action she may be able to take to preserve and protect the democratic rights of her subjects. May we respectfully suggest to the Queen that she should refuse to sign a bill (The 'Paving Bill') which so clearly runs contrary to British Democracy and seeks to change an elected, citywide authority to a non-elected mixture of joint-boards and quangos which themselves have been appointed by a Government of a different political persuasion.

We are a non-political association with a membership of 70 London amenity

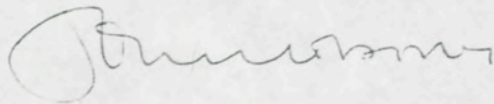


Telephone: 01-928 1440

and residents groups and a further 70 individual members, plus academics and transport professionals all interested in promoting transport policies which are consistent with an improved environment for Londoners.

We are appalled at the Government's misuse of parliamentary power and ask the Queen to intervene on behalf of all Londoners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Roberts', written in a cursive style.

John Roberts, Chairman.

# London Amenity and Transport Association

Tress House

3 - 7 Stamford Street

London, S.E.1

COPY

Dear Sir,

We are writing to express our serious concern over the Government's proposals for a new structure for London and metropolitan government described in the White Paper 'Streamlining the Cities' (Cmnd. 9063).

Whilst there may be functions, at present administered by the London and metropolitan counties which can be devolved to the boroughs, it seems to us that nothing but harm can come from establishing separate agencies or joint boards to manage strategic planning, roads and public transport, the Arts, fire, waste disposal and sewerage.

The White Paper does nothing to allay our fears and, indeed, leaves so many questions unanswered that it gives the impression (together with its accompanying papers) of having been put together with insufficient time and thought.

With such important issues at stake and with a constitutional change proposed which affects every member of the electorate in the London and metropolitan counties, we feel that the public have the right to the sort of impartial committee of inquiry which has always accompanied past changes in local administration. The Royal Commission (the Herbert Committee) which preceded the 1963 London Government Act, deliberated for three years; it seems unlikely that the present proposals have been considered for as many months.

Yours faithfully

(List of signatories over...)



Telephone: 01-928 1440



# London Amenity and Transport Association

Press House  
3 - 7 Stamford Street  
London, S.E.1

## List of signatories

Stephen T Atkins, Lecturer in Transportation Planning, Southampton University  
Andrew Blowers, The Open University  
Michael Chisholm, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge  
Councillor D G Clelland, Secretary, The Association of Councillors  
David Hall, Director, Town and Country Planning Association  
Prof. P J Hills, Dept. Civil Engineering, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
Dr I Griffiths, Dept. of Geography, The University of Sussex  
Prof. K M Gwilliam, Director of Transport Economics, University of Leeds  
Prof. George Jones, London School of Economics  
Nick Lester, Chairman, London Transport Passengers Committee  
Prof. B Keith-Lucas  
Don Mathew, Friends of the Earth  
Alan Norton, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Local Government Studies,  
University of Birmingham  
Tim Pharoah, Polytechnic of the South Bank  
David Pike, Transport Advisor to the Association of London Authorities  
William Plowden, Director-General, Royal Institute of Public Administration  
Felicity Rea, Secretary, Pedestrians Association  
John Roberts, Chairman, London Amenity and Transport Association  
Prof. E A Rose, Aston University  
Prof. Hilary Rose, Bradford University  
Harley Sherlock, Chairman, Transport 2000  
Gavin Smith, Campaign to Improve London's Transport  
Keith Sonnet, National and Local Government Officers Association  
Dr A M Warnes, Department of Geography, King's College, Strand  
Prof. H P White, Research Professor, Dept of Geography, University of Salford  
Prof A G Wilson, School of Geography, University of Leeds  
Peter White, Transport Studies Group, Central London Polytechnic.  
Prof J B Goddard, Dept of Geography, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne



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22 JUN 1984