

PRIME MINISTER

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEMINAR

Mr Jenkin will want to ensure that, in the time available, there is discussion on items B, A and E: and he may like to take them in this order. Other items are less urgent and any not reached can be left to a separate meeting.

Item B. He is anxious to announce a new review of local authority finance to the Party Conference. He is likely to argue that such a review can lead somewhere where others have failed by retaining ministerial control (he is impressed with Mr Fowler's technique) by taking longer over it and by allowing longer for implementation so he can bring in possible solutions which earlier reviews have had to omit.

Item D merely needs to ensure that DHSS keep the connection between housing benefit and local democracy in mind in other reviews.

I was surprised that the "London Dimension" was omitted from the notes on Abolition - see the Economist article. I understand, however, that Mr Baker did not want to put anything on paper. He does not deny that thought will need to be given to how best to counter the pressure for some kind of London Body. This can be done if full discussion on Abolition is held over for a further meeting.

There are three background papers:-

(i) A forward look by DOE - Flag H. This has a rather defeatist tone, though I understand its' purpose was not to

be a hand-wringing piece but to indicate that matters could not be allowed to drift on. Though it would be helpful to read it before the meeting it does not need to be discussed.

(ii) Notes by Lord Bellwin - Flag I. Interesting but can be left to the weekend.

(iii) The Goodson-Wicks report. To be aware of its existence only as the points it makes are embodied in Paper E.

AT

Andrew Turnbull

25 September 1984

The GLC

By any other name

Deep fissures are appearing in the government's once-implacable determination to butcher the Greater London Council. The legislation, due to be published in November, is already causing

administrative bedlam, as GLC and Whitehall officials struggle to define who will be responsible for what. Now the environment secretary, Mr Patrick Jenkin, is running into political opposition from within his own party.

He already faced a crescendo of criticism from all opposition parties, from the voluntary sector (which the GLC has been careful recently to shower with ratepayers' funds) and from public opinion in London, where antagonism to

abolition has risen from 54% to 66% in Mori polls. Tory opposition, which comes from most Tory GLC councillors and some MPs, has not reached the point where it threatens Mr Jenkin's bill in the commons, but might delay it, perhaps even fatally, in the lords.

The result has been much flying of kites, all suggesting new ways to give the capital some new umbrella organisation after the GLC has vanished; largely as a sop to bruised Tory egos, but also be-

cause many ministers (including some in the cabinet) fear the government will suffer for throwing out the democratic baby with the bureaucratic bathwater. The kites thus range from the GLC-in-another-guise to the purely cosmetic:

- The government suggests a "grand committee" of the 84 London MPs. Like the similar Scottish committee, it would vet relevant legislation and act as a deliberative forum for London affairs. It would have no powers. And no point.

- Alternatively, or in addition, there could be a statutory incorporation of the London Boroughs Association (LBA) as the "forum" for London. With members drawn from borough councils, it could deliberate on London-wide matters and perhaps even act as the super-authority for those metropolitan services (such as fire and ambulance) for which ad hoc joint boards are now proposed. But the LBA is Tory; the Labour boroughs be-

long to the rival Association of London Authorities. And a forum of the boroughs might eventually blossom into another GLC, not even directly elected.

- All possible powers could be delegated down to the borough level. Those left, both administrative and planning, would be handled by a small unit of officials at County Hall working in (so-called) **partnership** with the London directorate at the environment department. Stripped of political supervision, County Hall would operate as an outpost of Whitehall.

- More radical is a proposal, put forward by a group of GLC Tories, to re-establish London-wide elections for, say, a dozen councillors with extremely limited responsibilities. Their rate precepting powers would be subject to Whitehall and their role would be largely consultative and representational. This could be allied to the partnership scheme above.

None of these schemes need drastically

undermine the government's abolition proposals. Whether Mr Jenkin will swallow an apparent concession to his internal and external critics is still open to doubt. But he may have to do so before one is forced down his throat.

One of the few beneficiaries of ratecapping.



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inopium atque eius susaes, viinsi matiam, sive ero quod
est mag verisi ille. Quod tantus adi tempteous sulle;
oceanii tantosque impetus ventorum sustineri ac tant
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Vlis opon satis commode posse arbit tunr, erantius
altitudinem aliquanto vosnost rar extruso.

Camius pro his navibus que nostrae ciattim iquat,
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pulso remorum navi pro loci natura, pro venius depomi
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Neque enim hi nostrae, peraccedeibat omnes insief
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Rostro nocere poterant tanta ineis ab firmento
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adiciebatur, et oceanii mani accomadat eadem.

De case minus pro ad, hoc commode copulis
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Coeprnisset se vento ai dedissent, aeteus navi pro loci
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humius nodum factaes saxam aequae ab erant; carinae
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Erant eius modi fere situs oppidorum, ut posita
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Ratecapping makes no sense.

How Whitehall decides whether local councils are on target.



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Are the critics of ratecapping left-wing extremists?



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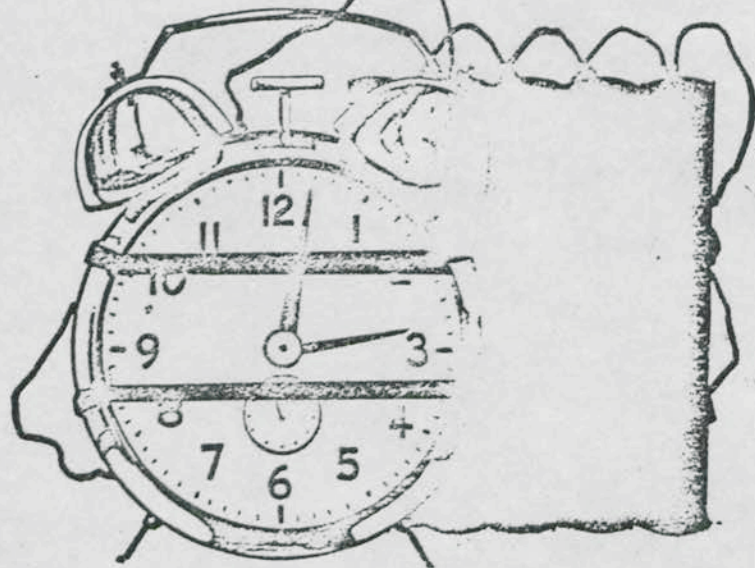
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What ratecapping means to the local businessman.



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Whitehall has decided the poorest borough in the country needs less money.

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GOVERNMENT LEAGUE TABLE OF THE MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

1. Hackney	Ratecapped
2. Newham	—
3. Tower Hamlets	—
4. Lambeth	Ratecapped
5. Hammersmith	—
6. Haringey	Ratecapped
7. Islington	Ratecapped
8. Brent	—
9. Wandsworth	—
10. Southwark	Ratecapped

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Whitehall's novel way of managing local finance.

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Ratecapping
cuts where
it hurts.



Ratecapping makes no sense.

AKS

→ cc JR

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

24 September 1984

Dear Andrew

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES

My Secretary of State has seen John Gieve's letter of 19 September to you and David Morris's letter of 21 September also to you.

It will no doubt already have become clear from the papers circulated with my letter of 21 September that my Secretary of State envisages a review of local authority finance that would be announced on 10 October at the Conservative Party Conference. Why there should be a review now and why its existence should be made public is also explained in that paper.

I confirm that my Secretary of State is to meet the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord President and the two Chief Whips on 4 October to discuss the handling of the Abolition Bill. This is however only one aspect of the wider question of the implementation of the abolition policy, as may perhaps have become clear from the notes for agenda item F circulated with my second letter of 21 September. The meeting on 4 October should not therefore be seen as a substitute for the wider discussion that will be needed.

I am copying this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), David Peretz (Chancellor's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office) Elizabeth Hodgkinson (Department of Education and Science), Steve Godber (DHSS), David Morris (Lord Privy Seal's Office), John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office), Paul Thomas (Lord Gowrie's Office), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Jones (Welsh Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office), Mike Bailey (Kenneth Baker's Office, DOE), and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely**John Ballard*

JOHN BALLARD
Private Secretary

Andrew Turnbull Esq