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CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP
Chief Secretary
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
LONDON
SW1P 3AG

17 September 1986

Dear John,

PES 1986: SCOTTISH COURTS ADMINISTRATION

I wrote to you on ~~30~~ May to set out my PES proposals for inter alia manpower and Departmental running costs. I am now writing about bids arising from the consequences of our plans to introduce a community charge in place of local authority domestic rates.

The new bids are as follows:-

	1 April 1987	1 April 1988	1 April 1989	1 April 1990
Manpower	-	+17	+39	+39
		1987-88 £m	1988-89 £m	1989-90 £m
Departmental running cost limits		+0.2	+0.7	+0.6

These bids which it has only now been possible to finalise are required for one of my minor Departments, the Scottish Courts Administration. While the cost of administering a civil penalty system for failing to comply with certain requirements of the community charge legislation will fall on local authorities, the operation of appeal machinery will require new expenditure by central Government because of the associated expansion of the workload of the Sheriff Courts. These bids, which I regard as absolute minimum requirements, would permit the SCA to begin the necessary recruitment of staff by mid 1987-88 so that the courts would be in a position to deal with appeals in 1988/89.

We have not yet taken decisions on the final shape of the appeal procedures. I should make clear, however, that the bids are predicated upon there being no recourse to the sheriff to make application for time to pay in respect either of civil penalties imposed or arrears in payment of the Community Charge itself. If such applications to the sheriff are permitted then the resource consequences would be considerably more substantial.

I do not know at this stage, of course, the precise extent of resources within my block next year, nor the full extent of the claims of this totally new demand upon them. I cannot, therefore, yet judge whether I shall be able to accommodate them, but meantime I thought you ought to be aware of the minimum manpower and running costs implications.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nicholas Ridley, Nicholas Edwards and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

MALCOLM RIFKIND

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