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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 February 1984

Joint Circular on Sport and Recreation

The Prime Minister has taken note of the Chief Secretary's minute of 9 February commenting on the Secretary of State for the Environment's proposal to issue a circular on sport and recreation jointly with the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

You may by now have seen a copy of my letter of 10 February to John Ballard (copied to Margaret O'Mara) in which is recorded the Prime Minister's view that the timing is wrong for the issue of such a circular.

(David Barclay)

John Gieve, Esq.,
Chief Secretary's Office

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 February 1984

Joint DOE/DES Circular on "Sport and Recreation: Future Provision"

The Prime Minister has considered your Secretary of State's minute of 2 February, together with that from the Secretary of State for Education and Science of 6 February, about a possible joint circular on sport and recreation.

The Prime Minister considers that the timing is wrong for the issue of such a circular. She feels that the Government must concentrate on securing the passage of the rate-capping legislation.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Margaret O'Mara (HM Treasury) and to Jerry Bird (Department of Education and Science)

David Barclay

John Ballard, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY

DATE: 9 February 1984

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PRIME MINISTER

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Prime Minister (2)

To note Chancellor's news.
We have told DoE and
DES that you think the
timing is wrong for a
circular on this subject.

JOINT CIRCULAR ON SPORT AND RECREATION

I have seen copies of Patrick Jenkin's minute to you of 2 February, and Keith Joseph's of 6 February.

DMS
13/2

I recognise that the aim of Patrick's draft circular - endorsed by the Family Policy Group last year - is to secure fuller use of assets provided at public expense and thus to achieve better value for money. But it seems to me that its message is open to misinterpretation, and indeed deliberate distortion, in present circumstances. I fear that local authority interests would seek to exploit it as another example of Government exhorting authorities to pursue desirable policies but denying them the resources to carry these out. Patrick's text, of course, makes it clear that any increased expenditure on widening public access would have to be met by re-ordering priorities. But it is open to authorities to argue - not unreasonably in my view - that we should not urge them to spend more on one activity unless we are prepared to specify others on which we would be content to see them reduce their expenditure.

Since in addition there seem to be other difficulties over the content of this circular and there would be little point in issuing guidance which merely repeated advice we have given before, I share Keith's view that it would be best to take no action.

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I am copying this letter to Nigel Lawson, Keith Joseph and
Patrick Jenkin.



PETER REES

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Home Affairs - Values of Society

PT 3



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