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29/11

**Minister for Local Government**

Prime Minister

LIVERPOOL

As you have no doubt heard, Liverpool City Council gave a Press Conference yesterday morning at which they effectively began a similar process to last year's of opposition to the Government's financial constraints upon them. In particular they have:-

- a. Reiterated their commitment to defending jobs and services, and their refusal to set the rate necessary to meet their proposed spending.
- b. Demanded the return of what they call "stolen" money - in RSG, education, and housing.
- c. Accused Patrick Jenkin of going back on an alleged "promise", during last summer's negotiations, of a capital allocation for next year of £130m.
- d. Demanded a meeting with Patrick.

I was able to appear on the "Nine O'Clock News" on Tuesday and since then I have given other TV and radio interviews. My firm line has been that it is for Liverpool City Council to put their own house in order; that they were warned this summer but are taking no notice; that their allegation about Patrick's "promise" is a lie because no such commitment was given; and that they should remember the enormous sums of Government money in aggregate (over £1,000m last year) going into Merseyside. I have made absolutely clear that there will be no extra money for Liverpool, this year or next, as a result of highwayman tactics.

I attach a copy of a Press Notice I issued which sets out this line at greater length.

It is crucial to our presentation of our case on Liverpool that colleagues should hold firm to the strong line I have taken, and make clear that Liverpool's salvation lies in their own hands.

I should add that we hope soon to be putting forward a paper for MISC 109 on the handling of Liverpool, taking account of these developments. There are also issues to discuss in that forum on the rate limitation front.

I am copying this minute to members of MISC 109 and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KS.

KENNETH BAKER

29 November 1984



BY FAX

Pg 1 of 2

4688

PS | G-06-S - Rm N16/05

cc. Mr Bailey

PS | Mr Baker Room N15/05

NW 249/84

28 November 1984

STATEMENT BY KENNETH BAKER: 28 NOVEMBER 1984.

At the beginning of this month, Patrick Jenkin warned Liverpool City Council that they had to take urgent action to put their finances in order. Today, we have seen their reaction and it confirms our worst suspicions. The City Council have completely ignored the breathing space offered by the settlement of this year's budget in the Summer. They have done nothing to prevent a deficit building up. Instead, they are once again threatening to plunge their City into chaos by making a budget and rate for 1985/86 which do not balance. It is clearer than ever that responsibility is not a word which the Militant Tendency understand.

The Council are once again claiming that a strategy of high spending with no rent or rate increases is the only way to save jobs and maintain services. They were wrong about this in the summer. They are wrong now. It is a cruel deception. The consequences for Liverpool will be far worse if the Council fail to make a proper rate than if they accept their statutory responsibilities. In those circumstances, who will provide the services on which so many depend? Who will pay the Council's staff? Even if, as last year, the Council eventually see the folly of their threats, the people of Liverpool will have suffered further months of needless anxiety and the reputation of the City will have suffered a further knock just when the success of the International Garden Festival had provided so much to build on.



The Council have also today made a new and totally false claim. They say that the Secretary of State promised them a £130M capital allocation for 1985/86. No such promise has ever been made. Indeed, no council's allocation for next year has yet been settled. The figure mentioned by Liverpool - three times this year's allocation - belongs in any case in cloudcuckooland. No responsible Council could possibly base its plans on such a wild assumption. Capital allocations for next year have to be fixed in the light of the Government's overall public expenditure plans, and resources must be distributed equitably between authorities.

No one denies the gravity of Liverpool's problems. We have said that we want to help the city deal with them as best we can. But the present attitudes of the City Council are making this nearly impossible. In his letter of 29 June to the Leader of the Council, Patrick Jenkin outlined the basis on which we still hope we can go forward.

We have repeatedly offered, not only in relation to housing but across the whole range of the problems facing the city, to work with the Council, in a spirit of partnership, on constructive proposals which would make the best use of the resources available to Liverpool, whether public, private or voluntary. The City spurns that partnership, seeks to spend money it has not got and rejects the contributions which the private and voluntary sectors could make. That is not the way to make progress.

The Council should have learnt that this Government does not yield to blackmail. They threaten chaos and hope we will respond with extra money. They gained nothing by their antics in the Summer and they will gain nothing by a repeat performance. The Council should understand this now. They know what must be done to rein back spending, to reduce costs, and to improve the efficiency of their services. They must do it, and do it on their own.

Press enquiries: Eileen Jones or Philip Aylett  
Telephone 01-832-9111 Exts: 358 or 365



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister ②

To note that Liverpool  
Council have launched  
themselves on a bankruptcy  
budget. The terms of their  
resolution (page 3) make  
unpleasant reading,

Mr Baker has responded  
forcefully - see press cuttings

AT

28/11



cc M. Turnbull No 10

BY FAX

Mr Ballard  
PS/Sof S Rm N15/06

PS/Secretary of State

cc PS/Mr Baker  
PS/Mr Gow  
PS/Sir George Moseley  
PS/Sir Peter Harrop  
Mr Heiser  
Mr Delafons  
Mr McIndoe  
Mr McDonald  
Mr Owen  
Mr Hobson  
Mr Ramsay  
Mrs Jones (COI Manchester)LIVERPOOL: EVENTS OF 28 NOVEMBER

1. I should briefly summarise today's events.
2. At 10.30 a.m. we (myself, Roy Bunce and Eileen Jones) attended the special meeting of the City's Performance Review and Financial Control Sub-Committee. All the documents (annexed) were handed round at the meeting. Despite opposition protests at such serious matters being steamrollered through, Councillor Byrne secured the passage of his resolution, with the addition of an amendment by Councillor Hatton calling for meetings throughout the city to explain the situation to trade unionists and others. Both the resolution and the debate included considerable personal criticism of the Secretary of State.
3. The City followed with a news conference at which they repeated their case. We released Mr Baker's statement and gave further non-attributable briefing to the press. We stressed various points from Mr Baker's statement, especially the City's failure to accept their responsibilities, the facts behind the "£130M promise" claim and the Government's refusal to contemplate any meetings with the City.
4. The Echo first edition (attached) leads on Paul McCartney's freedom of the city, but has a good piece from our point of view. This is based on earlier briefing of Peter Phelps by MTF (the deadline for this edition is 10.30 a.m.). Local lunchtime radio news bulletins carried extensive interviews with Councillor Byrne and other councillors, and even with Paul McCartney (who did not support the city's method, though sympathising with their concerns). Extracts from Mr Baker's statement were used, but our case rather lacked impact without the down-the-line interviews we had hoped Mr Baker might have been able to give. (Due to pressure of other mainline events)
5. I will fax any new material from later editions of the Echo.

D.C. RENSHAW  
Merseyside Task Force

28th November 1984



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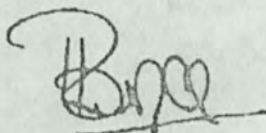
PS/Mr Baker

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND FINANCIAL CONTROL SUB COMMITTEE 28 NOVEMBER 1984

Attached is the Resolution the Chairman of the Sub Committee has put forward and the Report of the City Treasurer which was handed to members at the start of the meeting.

The essential points in the Treasurer's Report is that he is forecasting a standstill budget for 1985/86 of £265.4M to which should be added £13M if the DLO is to maintain its present level, giving a possible budget of £278.4M. The forecast deficit for 1984/85 could be as high as £96.1M if decisions about the capitalisation of repairs and other of funds were reversed. At this rate of expenditure there would be no rate support grant to the City and the increase in rate to cover the budget would be over 220%.



R BUNCE  
Merseyside Task Force  
28 November 1984

cc PS/Secretary of State  
PS/Mr Gow  
PS/Sir George Moseley  
PS/Sir Peter Harrop  
Mr Heiser  
Mr Delafons  
Mr McIndoe  
Mr Owen  
Mr McDonald  
Mr Hobson  
Mr Ramsay



PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND FINANCIAL  
CONTROL SUB-COMMITTEE

28TH NOVEMBER, 1984

Motion by the Chairman -

1. That this Sub-Committee is appalled by -

- (a) the Secretary of State for the Environment breaking the financial agreement upon which the 1984/85 budget was based;
- (b) the Secretary of State informing the Council of the breaking of the agreement via a letter from the Merseyside Task Force; and
- (c) using officials of the Department of the Environment to mask his (the Secretary of States) deliberate and calculated lies;

2. (i) That this Sub-Committee re-endorses the policies upon which the people of Liverpool elected the Labour Party to power, viz:

- (a) to defend existing City Council jobs and services;
- (b) to create additional jobs and improve services;
- (c) to build houses for rent;
- (d) to end the threat of privatisation of City Council services;
- (e) to refuse to impose increases in Rates, Rents and Charges to compensate for Government cuts in Grants;

(ii) this Sub-Committee continues to demand the return of the resources stolen by the Tory Government, viz:-

- (a) £170m in Rate Support Grant
- (b) £18m from Further Education
- (c) £69m in Housing Subsidy
- (d) £59m in the Housing Investment Programme

3. This Sub-Committee demands an immediate meeting with the Secretary of State with a view to securing the removal of meaningless arbitrary and deliberately punitive targets of levels of expenditure, the withdrawal of the threat of penalties, a realistic level of Rate Support Grant and a level of Housing and Environmental Capital allocations commensurate with the needs of Liverpool.



4 of 7

4. That this Sub-Committee agrees that this meeting be now adjourned and that Mr. Sorenson, who was the DOE Official leading the Merseyside Task Force at the time of the agreement being made with the Secretary of State and who was present at the meeting in question be requested to attend the resumed meeting.



The Budget 1984/85 and 1985/86

Report of the City Treasurer

CT/174/84

In the light of the letter received from the Task Force concerning the discussions on the HIP allocation for 1985/86, the Chairman of the Sub Committee has asked the City Treasurer to report upon the implications for the 1984/85 and 1985/86 budgets of

- (a) the various decisions taken at the time the 1984/85 budget was made,
- (b) various possibilities that may have to be taken into account when formulating the budget for 1985/86,
- (c) the effect of reversing decisions on the capitalisation of expenditure on repair and maintenance and on the utilisation of funds.

The Budget for 1984/85

The first budget presented in March 1984, which was used as a basis for the joint report by officials of DOE and the City Council, had identified a number of areas of possible or likely expenditure for which provision was then made. These covered areas such as the reinstatement of unallocated reductions, provision for payroll numbers not included within printed budgets, for the continued employment of CP scheme staff and against a shortfall in the order books of Direct Labour Organisations. These provisions amounted to £19.3 million. There was also a provision for inflation of £8 million.

These provisions were not specifically repeated in the budget of July which included a provision of £12 million to cover additional expenditure, including inflation, during the year, an amount fixed in the light of the continuing discussions with DOE.

It was clear at the time of the budget, and indeed had been spelled out in the joint report and accepted by the Secretary of State, that a number of the actions then taken served only to postpone the impact of the inherent problems, or depended for their realisation upon the outcome of the continuing discussions with central government and subsequent decisions favourable to the City.

One of the options discussed in the joint report was the capitalisation of certain repair and maintenance expenditure. In the event £5 million of such expenditure was capitalised in 1983/84 and the non-provision of a revenue sum to cover the possible DLO order book shortfall of up to £1.6 million implied such capitalisation again in 1984/85 - a combined total of up to £13.6 million.

The July budget also made assumptions about urban programme support for schemes involving redeployment of £5 million of existing resources, giving a benefit both in terms of grant and exemption from penalty, and made use of all available funds to the extent of £4 million in 1983/84 and £7.8 million in 1984/85.



6 OF 7

2.

A Provisional Budget Forecast for 1985/86

Budgetted net expenditure for 1984/85 was, before any contingency provision, £211.1 million at November 1983 prices. This figure was arrived at after incorporating unallocated reductions of £4.3 million, the use of funds and other one-off reductions in net expenditure amounting to £10.5 million, and crediting £3.8 million urban programme grant against the redeployment of existing resources. There was also a level of existing staffing (now identified as equivalent to £2 million per annum) not specifically provided for in the base budget. Adding back these items the underlying level of net expenditure was at a rate of £231.7 million (at November 1983 prices). This is equivalent to £243.5 million at November 1984 prices.

The presently committed growth for 1985/86 in respect of both the continuing capital and partnership programmes and of other schemes amount respectively to £3.9 million and £2.6 million. Present policies of the City Council in relation to the continuation of MSC funded schemes and the retention of individual employees on those schemes at the end of their 12 month service period would add a further £4.6 million to this expenditure (and a further £0.6 million in 1984/85).

Finally, there will be a reduction in housing subsidy of £2 million for an assumed increase in local contribution, this to come either from an average rent increase of 60p per week of an additional rate fund contribution of £2 million.

In all this could give expenditure in 1985/86 of £256.6 million (at November 1984 prices) or £265.4 million (at estimated 1985/86 outturn prices).

The Effect of Various Courses of Action

If decisions, both explicit and implicit, about the capitalisation of repairs and maintenance work and about the use of funds were reversed, the effects would be:

- (a) for 1983/84 to add £5 million to net expenditure in respect of repair and maintenance and £4 million for the non-use of funds which, together with the RSG penalty, would increase the deficit for the year by £19.8 million;
- (b) for 1984/85 to increase expenditure beyond the level forecast in the last financial review by a further £7 million in respect of the remaining DLO order book shortfall, and by £7.8 million for the non-utilisation of funds. These, together with penalty, would increase the 1984/85 deficit by £45.9 million.

If the assumed additional urban programme grant was not received and if the present policies on MSC schemes were continued, there would be additional net expenditure of £4.4 million in 1984/85 which, together with penalty, would add £16.2 million to the deficit.

Adding all these possibilities to the deficit of £14.2 million forecast in the most recent financial review would give a deficit in 1984/85 of £96.1 million.

If the principle concerning repair and maintenance work was carried through to 1985/86 and the present shortfall in DLO order books was to fall wholly on revenue account, this could amount to some £13 million if DLO's are maintained at present levels.



7. OF 7

3.

Implications for the Rate Level in 1985/86

The items considered in this report could, at the maximum, lead to net expenditure of £278.4 million in 1985/86 with a deficit of £96.1 million on the operation of the current year.

At this level of expenditure in 1985/86, all entitlement to Rate Support Grant would be wiped out by the penalty provisions, and the increase in the rate for city services would be something over 220%.

However, there are factors which could reduce this burden, apart from any action which the City Council itself might take.

It was argued in the joint report that an appropriate level of target for Liverpool in 1984/85 - having regard to the performance and targets of all comparable authorities over the ten years from 1974/75 - was £243.8 million. The equivalent figure for 1985/86 would be £251 million. The provisional target is £222.1 million. The difference in targets could be worth up to £60.7 million in rate support grants.

For 1984/85 and previous years potential disregards were identified in the joint report. These would have exempted expenditure from the application of the RSG penalty provisions and could be worth up to £53.6 million in RSG.

If the urban programme support for redeployed expenditure, principally in housing management and in grants to voluntary organisations, were agreed as envisaged in the current years budget this could be worth, in additional grant and exemption from penalty, £28.8 million over the two years.

Finally, there remains the issue of the capitalisation of repair and maintenance expenditure. The argument against it, which was rehearsed in the joint report is that it does not reduce expenditure - merely postpones it. Furthermore, since the capitalisation counts against a restricted capital expenditure limit, it constrains the ability of the authority to incur expenditure on more substantial works of a capital nature. Whilst not minimising the former argument, an increased capital allocation means that a capitalisation decision does not prejudice needed capital expenditure of a more substantial nature. If such an increase in capital allocations enabled the authority to accept the deferred expenditure implications it could mean a reduction of £62 million in the 1985/86 rate call.

Performance Review & Financial Control Sub Committee

Wednesday, 28th November, 1984



# ECHO



Outlook:  
Bright spells  
and showers  
Noon: 48.7F (9.3C)  
Y'day: 52.5F (11.4C)



28, 1984

14p

## Makes up for Merseyside

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Gay—  
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age 10

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See tomorrow's Echo

### MUM'S COURAGE

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says everything  
—See Page 3

# 14p

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Twenty years ago ... another time, another show, but the same queues — this time for a Beatle concert at the Empire.

## Hatton branded as Dick Turpin

DEREK HATTON, was branded a highwayman today by a Government Minister.

The attack came as the city's Labour rulers announced plans for a new confrontation with the Government over demands for £300 million in cash aid. Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Minister for Local Government, said Councillor Hatton, Liverpool Council's Deputy Leader, was acting like a highwayman. "He is saying 'stand and deliver. Give me the money that I want.'"

Mr. Clarke made it clear that the Government have no intention of "delivering" any extra cash to Liverpool and that they were not prepared to be black-mailed. See Page 3.

# TERDAY

# WODE



...the operation Mrs. Dart from Lincoln could according to the hospital,

# Battle replay on cash aid

A MAJOR new battle with the Government opened today as Liverpool Labour chiefs demanded more than £300m cash aid.

On the eve of another budget crisis — which both Whitehall and Town Hall agree will be far more serious for the city than last year's — Labour claims the alternative would be a 240 per cent rates rise or 6,000 job losses.

But council leader Councillor John Hamilton declared: "I will not lead a party which allows jobs to be threatened or services to be cut."

Labour want £140m in rate support grant, lost to the city since the Tories took power, plus £130m for capital programmes like house building which they claim Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin "promised" to them earlier this year.

They are also demanding many millions more lost through other Government cuts.

## "Blackmail"

The reaction from Whitehall was swift and angry.

With Mr. Jenkin still recovering from a road accident Local Government Minister Kenneth Baker accused Labour

By Peter Phelps  
Local Government Editor

of blackmail. "No such promise has ever been made," he said.

"Indeed, no council's allocation for next year has yet been settled. The figure mentioned by Liverpool — three times this year's allocation — belongs in any case to cloud cuckoo land."

But Labour insist their record of a key meeting with Mr. Jenkin indicates that he agreed £130m would be forthcoming.

"We are heading for a budget crisis," said council finance chief Councillor Tony Byrne.

Deputy council leader Councillor Derek Hatton, who said there would be another city wide budget campaign to mobilise support at street level, added: "The future of the entire city depends on us winning this battle"

But today Mr. Baker warned there will be no special help for Liverpool next time round.

## Storms hit ferry services

WINDS approaching hurricane force caused problems with sea services in and out of Liverpool.

The B and I ferry Lancelot was three hours late berthing in Liverpool today, after being penned in Dublin by the weather. But she was expected to leave on schedule for the return trip tonight.

The Belfast service suffers delays but was back on time so was the service between and the Isle of Man.

Stormy seas are still keeping mull Laird-built gas soon rig trapped in the Mersey.

The rig is being towed to port of Brest for completion.

## Stock Market

BUSINESS opened on a reasonably firm note with most top industrials registering sizeable gains.

Much better than expected half-time earnings and a raised dividend hoisted Cable & Wireless 12p to 395p (after 398p).

Ahead of today's half-timer, building materials concern, B. P. B. Industrials, shot up 3p to 298p. Analysts are looking for profits in the range of £40m to £42m.

St. Helens glass-maker Pilkington pushed up a similar amount to 318p

At 11 a.m. the F.T. Index was up 5.4 at 930.7.



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Pg 1 of 2

BY FAX

PS | G-065 - Rm 116/05

cc. Mr Bailey

PS | Mr Baker Room N15/05

N  
29th

NW 249/84

28 November 1984

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