

Wtqwi



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1985

Dear Terry,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July in which you and your colleagues propose that new housing development "should be confined now to certain specific conurbations".

The Government is firmly committed to well established policies for the conservation of the countryside, the protection of good agricultural land and the maintenance of Green Belts. We are also committed to promoting economic growth, to removing unnecessary constraints on private enterprise, and to encouraging new house building for owner occupation. All these are essential to bringing down today's unacceptable level of unemployment and to meeting housing needs.

It is quite wrong to regard these two policy aims - conservation and growth - as irreconcilable. Of course, we want to see development taking place where the need for jobs is greatest; and of course there are parts of the country - not only in the South - where further large scale development would be quite inappropriate. But we would be deluding ourselves if we believed that the growth which we seek - and the jobs and houses that go with it - can be met solely by development in "certain specific conurbations".

We are already doing a great deal to bring back into use unused or under-used land in the older urban areas through our programme for derelict land reclamation, urban

development grants, the land registers, the urban development corporations and now the new Urban Housing Renewal Unit set up last month by Patrick Jenkin. Regional Development Grants and support from the European Regional Development Fund encourage development in the less prosperous areas of the country.

But it is no part of our policy to direct where people shall live or where firms set up or expand. If we try to discourage development and economic growth in large parts of the South of England in the hope that it will happen in large cities or in the North, we risk losing them altogether. Ministers have therefore said in the 1984 Circular "Land for Housing" that the planning system, including structure and local plans, "must continue to identify, bring forward and permit the development of sufficient new land for housing taking account of market demand and other housing requirements".

The needs of modern industry and of the expanding service sector, and the demand for home ownership, cannot be met wholly within the conurbations, nor can those requirements be redirected in ways that bear no relation to the demands of the market and a healthy competitive economy. To pretend otherwise is unrealistic and contrary to the interests of the country as a whole.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Patrick Jenkin and Ian Gow, who will of course, be pleased to discuss this very important subject with you and with those who signed your letter.

*Yours
Rangar*

Jerry Wiggin, Esq., T.D., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th July, 1985.

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10, Downing Street,
London SW1A 0AA.

Dear Prime Minister,

We wish to convey to you a widely held view of Conservative Members of Parliament in the Southern Counties of England.

We believe that the countryside and rural environment in our constituencies is being seriously threatened by excessive development. Future housing developments should be confined to certain specific conurbations where there is a demand for employment and where the existing infrastructure is already adequate. In particular we deplore housing developments in excess of existing structure plans. We are convinced that the pressure of population is increasingly becoming detrimental to the general quality of life.

There are steps which the Government can take to discourage excessive development in the South of England. We see such a strategy as being both good for the nation and encouraging to those areas which need most economic support and therefore universally popular.

Mindful of the political consequences of taking no action we press you to respond to this appeal.

Yours sincerely,

Jerry Wiggin
Nicholas Baker
Robert Adley
Jack Aspinwall
Virginia Bottomley
Michael Colvin
Robert Cranborne
Julian Critchley
Edward du Cann
George Gardiner
Alan Glyn
William van Straubenzee

Peter Horden
Andrew Hunter
Geoffrey Johnson-Smith
Andrew MacKay
Michael McNair-Wilson
Patrick McNair-Wilson
Michael Mates
Charles Morrison
Anthony Nelson
David Price
Michael Grylls

Andrew Rowe
Tim Smith
Jim Spicer
Keith Speed
Michael Stern
Gerry Vaughan
Dennis Walters
Charles Wardle
Kenneth Warren
Mark Wolfson
Tim Rathbone