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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon Peter Rees QC MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
LONDON
SW1P 3AG

19 July 1985

Dear Chief Secretary

BIRMINGHAM CONVENTION CENTRE

I have seen your letter to Patrick Jenkin of 16 July and also the previous correspondence including the letter from Norman Tebbit. I would just like to stress how very important politically the decision on the Convention Centre will be regarded in the West Midlands. As you know, the region has faced many very severe problems over the last few years and as I explained at Chequers unemployment in Birmingham is now at a disturbingly high figure.

I very much hope that we will be able to give Birmingham the support which is necessary to ensure a European Regional Development Fund grant. I believe that the few proposals that have come forward on the financing of the Convention Centre meet many of the previous objections that were raised. In particular, the scheme will be operated by the National Exhibition Centre, a private company, which is already making sufficient profits to meet the expected Convention Centre operating deficits.

But time is now short. I believe that this issue should be decided in the coming week. I hope that if it cannot be decided in discussion between you and Patrick that we can have a more general discussion of the issues.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Patrick Jenkin, Norman Tebbit, Tom King, David Young, Peter Walker and Grey Gowrie.

Yours sincerely
NF

for NORMAN FOWLER

(Dictated by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence)

