

Ancram Tj

Box

Prime Minister

- 1. This is not satisfactory.
- 2. I am going to see Malcolm Rifkind to talk about this.

mf

22nd September, 1981

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22/9/1981

Sale of Council houses and flats -
Glasgow District Council

Thank you very much for your letter of 10th September, with which you enclosed a copy of a letter dated 3rd September, which had been sent by Malcolm Rifkind to the Conservative Leader on the Glasgow District Council.

I have read this with great interest, and have shown it to the Prime Minister.

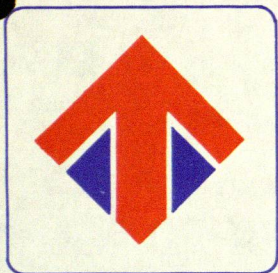
I know that Malcolm is a most enthusiastic supporter of the policy of selling Council houses and flats, and I am going to have a talk with him about this.

I look forward to hearing about the result of your tour of the Scottish Constituencies.

With best wishes.

IAN GOW

Michael Ancram, Esq. M.A., M.P.
Chairman,
Scottish Conservative Party,
11 Atholl Crescent,
Edinburgh, EH3 8HG



Chairman: Michael Ancram MA LL.B MP

Director: Graham Macmillan

Deputy Chairman: Dr Alistair Smith

Scottish Conservative Party

Headquarters: 11 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 8HG. Telephone: 031-229 1342

10th September, 1981

Ian Gow, Esq., M.P.
10 Downing Street,
London S.W.1.

Dear Ian,

Following our conversation in Inverness the other night I thought you should see the reply Malcolm Rifkind has sent to the Tory leader on Glasgow District Council. I will continue to press the Edinburgh end.

Yours sincerely
Michael

Deputy Directors: Miss Jenny M McBride; Robert M Balfour



SCOTTISH OFFICE
NEW ST. ANDREW'S HOUSE
ST. JAMES CENTRE
EDINBURGH EH1 3SX

Baillie William Aitken
City of Glasgow District Council
City Chambers
GLASGOW
G2 1DU

3 September 1981

Thank you for your letter of 25 August about the processing by Glasgow District Council of applications to purchase under the Tenants' Rights Act.

Since we last met to discuss this issue, my officials have had a series of intensive discussions with the officials in Glasgow responsible for the Council's sales administration unit and we have kept their processing performance under the closest possible review. Glasgow were left in no doubt whatsoever of the inevitability of direct formal action by the Secretary of State in the absence of a swift, sustained and significant improvement in their sales performance. I am confident that the pressure which the Department has been exerting has now produced encouraging results and I hope you will agree, in light of the information that follows, that I have good grounds for believing that we are about to see a quite dramatic improvement in the Glasgow position.

The position on the processing of applications, as at 28 August, is as follows. The Council have now received 3,003 applications to purchase. By 28 August, Glasgow had issued 322 offers and in 38 cases had concluded missives of sale. The main constraint on the timeous issue of offers since the resolution of the dispute with NALGO has been the rate of valuations. I understand that the only exception to the unrestricted delegation of authority to officials to process applications is the Council's decision that all valuations should be carried out by their own Estates Department unless the tenant insists (as is his right under the Act) that the valuation of his home be carried out by the District Valuer. It has been agreed within the last 2 weeks that a substantial amount of additional staff time should be devoted by the Estates Department to this work and a target rate of around 140 valuations per week is now close to being achieved. We have been assured that matching output from the Council's Legal Department can be expected due to the standardisation of offers by house type which Glasgow have achieved. The 3 solicitors now allocated to the preparation of offers have the capacity to make at least 200 offers per week for the foreseeable future. The other factor affecting the Council's rate of processing is of course the number of tenants opting for the District Valuer. We have seen a copy of the letter about valuation procedure which the Council have already sent to over 900 applicants and we are satisfied that it fairly reflects the statutory provisions. It has been agreed with Glasgow officials that this standard letter should be sent as soon as possible to all applicants with the double aim of reassuring them that action on their applications is in hand and of enabling those who opt for the District Valuer to receive valuations more rapidly than if they were dealt with in strict sequence. By the end of this week, every applicant in Glasgow should have received this letter and you and your colleagues on the Council could perform a key service by encouraging as many tenants as possible to choose the District Valuer - thereby relieving pressure on the Council's own Estates staff and facilitating the more rapid issue of offers to sell.

The net effect of the more streamlined processing procedure which is now in operation is that we can be reasonably confident that the backlog of overdue offers should be completely cleared by the end of November at the latest.

Quite apart from the acceleration in processing which has been achieved through informal contacts with Glasgow officials, the recent issue of offers to sell by the Lands Tribunal to tenants in Glasgow has I think had a salutary effect on the Council's attitude towards their own processing of applications. The Tribunal have now made over 50 offers to sell to tenants in Glasgow on behalf of the Council and a further 100 offers are prepared and awaiting confirmation of details from tenants. The Tribunal are now in a position to prepare and issue an offer to sell within 14 weeks of a tenant's first approach to them and by the beginning of October they expect to have made an offer to sell to every tenant who referred his case to them prior to July. I think this should reassure tenants in Glasgow that an effective remedy is available against any further delay by the District Council. It must also now be obvious to the Council that the Tribunal have the capacity to produce offers in increasing numbers and to sell houses to tenants on terms which may not be entirely favourable to the local authority.

I will of course be watching closely the progress that Glasgow make over the next few weeks and I hope and expect that we will be able to share more encouraging news on the processing of applications very shortly. If, on the other hand, you continue to get discouraging news, please let me know.

MALCOLM RIFKIND

22nd September, 1981

Sale of Council houses and flats
in Scotland

Michael Ancram has sent on to me a copy of your letter dated 3rd September addressed to the Conservative Leader on the Glasgow District Council.

I have shown your letter to the Prime Minister.

I know that there is no more enthusiastic supporter of the Tenants Rights Act than you are, and how skillfully you piloted the Bill through our House.

As you know, the Prime Minister takes the keenest interest in the rate of sales under the Act. May I please come and see you at your Office in London, so that you can bring me up to date with the position in Scotland, and the obstacles which you are meeting?

With best wishes.

IAN GOW

Malcolm Rickind, Esq. M.P.
Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment,
Scottish Office,
New St. Andrew's House,
St. James's Centre,
Edinburgh EH1 3SX
Scotland

c.c. The Right Honourable George Younger, T.D., M.P.