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PRIME MINISTER

**INNER CITIES**

ATTACHED

1. Several colleagues have referred to education in commenting on the interim report circulated with E(UP)(87)3. I think it is important that education should feature strongly and positively in the final report. Since the first meeting of the Ministerial Group I have been considering practical measures which the education service could undertake as part of our new initiative. The interim report offers a valuable starting point: but I believe that it underestimates what education can contribute to our objectives.

2. There is serious under-achievement in inner city schools. As a result, many young people become disaffected adults with poor employment prospects. The problem is particularly acute within some of the ethnic minority groups. Our measures to improve the quality of education generally will help in time, but we need to target help soon and more effectively. City Technology Colleges will be an important element in our strategy by developing in employers and parents a new commitment to education for a technological society. In my plans for CTCs, I shall want to give priority to the areas most at risk. As you have recognised, encouraging parents and local communities to take advantage of our opt-out proposals for schools will also be a new and powerful stimulus.

3. In addition I have asked the Department to produce proposals on the following:

- to get more and better teachers into the worst inner city schools.

It is increasingly difficult to recruit good heads and other teachers to work in inner cities. Targetted



education authorities could be given extra funds to pay for a package of measures to ease their recruitment difficulties, and perhaps to encourage more teachers to live within the area served by the school. Selected training institutions could also be asked to produce plans for establishing teacher training units in inner city areas.

- to reduce truancy and increase community involvement.

Measures to raise standards and improve teaching will help, but extra education welfare officers are needed in selected schools to check up on absentees and try to produce a permanent improvement in attendance. We also need to encourage more schools in inner city areas to offer a focus for community activity and increased parental involvement.

- to raise standards in secondary schools.

Pilot projects in selected urban primary schools are already producing encouraging results. These inject into schools at risk small task groups to enable schools to increase pupil performance, raise parental involvement and reduce truancy.

- to provide additional careers guidance in schools and further education colleges, and through the youth service.

We need to enhance the services available, in particular to ensure that pupils in the 4th and 5th years receive work experience.

- to offer residential courses with outdoor activities for inner city children.

The experience of living away from home and taking



part in outdoor activities has been shown to be beneficial. Many education authorities provide some opportunities, but we could expand the provision for inner city children at relatively modest cost.

4. Apart from these measures aimed at schools, we also need to give attention to those who have left school and are at risk of delinquency and drug abuse. We can use the talents of local people, black and white, with the potential to help their communities, by offering them training leading to a professional qualification as youth leaders. Such schemes would help to motivate local young people and in the longer term would provide more effective youth work in the areas concerned. At the same time an increase in the number of trained youth workers in targetted areas would enable the youth service to do more in contacting young people at risk.

5. You have rightly placed emphasis on encouraging local initiative and enterprise by both business and individuals. The education service can help here too. In adult education:

- The new Regional Technology Centres are partnerships of colleges, universities and employers. They are jointly funded by the Education Departments, DTI and MSC. Seven are established so far: I plan at least 12. Their task is to encourage new enterprise and keep existing industry competitive: increasingly they will need to revitalise industry and commerce in the inner cities.
- Adult literacy and numeracy: Many of the long-term unemployed, especially those whose mother tongue is not English, need basic education before they can start more specific job-related training. At present some 100,000 people a year in England and Wales attend courses - against an estimated 5 million adults with literary or numeracy problems. We must exploit existing facilities (colleges, public libraries etc) and existing experience more intensively, reinforcing them by computer and audio-visual technology.



- REPLAN: a £4m DES programme which coordinates local activities with the aim of reintroducing the unemployed to education, rebuilding their confidence and encouraging their initiative. The programme is operating in all but 3 LEAs which are, or include, Urban Programme authorities. Its effectiveness is being assessed in order to inform a decision on its continuance beyond 1989, but evidence so far is of success in changing attitudes both of the education service and, so far as can be judged, of students.

6. I will be letting the Cabinet Secretary have further details of the range of measures to involve schools, teachers, further and adult education and the local community that I have outlined above. Some of these proposals will not need additional resources. But it would be unrealistic to expect that redirection of existing funding would suffice in all cases, even with all our efforts to involve the private sector. I shall be discussing the need for some additional resources with John Major in September. We also have in the Urban Programme a tailor-made vehicle for targetting resources, though it will probably need some shift of priorities in order to get the balance right, for example, to reflect some of the priorities which the Chief Secretary has suggested in his minute to you of 31 July.

7. I am copying this to colleagues on E(UP) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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Department of Education and Science

|| August 1987