

1 RW Noyce - base

pa

2 RW Tyler

MR WICKS

INNER CITIES

RTA is mainly, We
can discuss further when his minute
arrives.

Attached are the papers on Inner Cities:

Annex 1 My letter to Ken Sorensen together with my redraft of his proposed chapter on presentation;

N.C.U

18-9

Annex 2 His letter to me to which was attached his first draft on presentation.

I think the papers speak for themselves. The only point I should add is that in my group the Department of Environment and DTI are absolutely at one and the Department of Environment is in the lead in advocating Kenneth Clarke as lead Minister for presentational purposes, with David Trippier (D/Environment) as his deputy.

I have suggested to David McDonald, Department of Environment, that Nicholas Ridley could solve the problem by suggesting that Kenneth Clarke should in fact take charge of the coordination of presentation with David Trippier's support.

Signature

BERNARD INGHAM
17 September 1987

ANNEX 1



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Press Secretary

17 September 1987

Dear Sir,

INNER CITIES FINAL REPORT

Thank you for letting me have a sight of the draft presentation chapter to the above report. I have discussed this with the Heads of Information Divisions concerned and my attached redraft results from our consideration. It has been cleared with them, though their unanimous view is that it falls short of what is required.

My main aim in redrafting the text has been to:

- i. analyse the problem in presentational terms, which is what Ministers will expect; and to
- ii. group proposals/recommendations in a logical order.

You said in your covering letter that the issue of a lead Minister for coordination and presentation is not a matter for you and that you do not propose to cover it in the report. My view - and this is unanimously supported by all Heads of Information - is that there is no point in writing a report which does not face up squarely to the problem. And any report which ignores the question of a Minister responsible for coordination and presentation, as distinct from a lead Department, in our view is deficient because it ducks a real question.

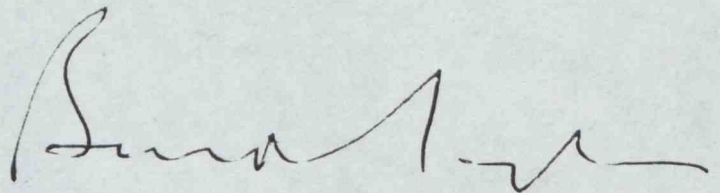
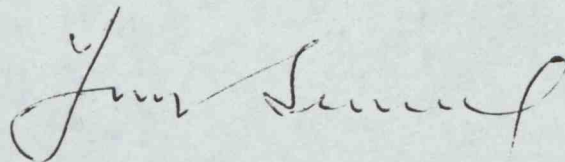
All Heads of Information would perforce be obliged to advise their Ministers of this deficiency in the report's final form if the problem - and opportunity - is not covered.

2.

I have sought to find a compromise, which I hope you would accept, by identifying the issue in a somewhat muted way without prescribing a solution. That seems to me to be the minimum any serious approach to presentation can do.

I am, I think, aware of your difficulty and you may care to discuss the attached with me. I would, of course, prepare any redraft which should incorporate a final paragraph summarising recommendations on presentation.

I am copying to Heads of Information attending MIO(IC).



BERNARD INGHAM

K E C Sorensen Esq

BACKGROUND

1. "Inner Cities" has become the generic term for urban areas with problems. It is often applied to areas which are neither in cities nor in their inner core. It covers a multitude of problems - eg environmental decay, rundown housing estates, industrial decline, very high localised rates of unemployment, social and racial deprivation, drugs and crime. Moreover, the public focus can change, sometimes very quickly as, for example, when there are "riots" and the media seek to identify the "underlying causes". The term "inner cities" has however taken such firm root in the panoply of journalistic cliches that we are probably stuck with it.

THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE

2. In tackling the problem of the "inner cities" the Government are seen to be seeking to regenerate our towns and cities - to improve the conditions and opportunities for those living there.

THE PRESENTATIONAL PROBLEM

3. But while the Government's purpose - an important part of the message - is clear, the measures by which that purpose will be fulfilled are many, varied and interrelated. There is no single route to the achievement of a better social and economic environment in our "inner cities", though the close involvement of the existing community and the private sector are invariably common to all the programmes; their relevance needs to be stressed. There is also such a plethora of agencies (and acronyms) through which the Government is working that some confusion over the Government effort is inherent in present circumstances.

4. This means that there is no "inner cities Department" as such, though the circumstances of a particular area may mean that, for a time at least, one Department predominates. There is thus no lead Department. Nor is there a lead Cabinet Minister who could take a co-ordinating and presentational lead.

5. Moreover, a timetable cannot be set for results to show. Some measures will bring improvements relatively quickly while others will take years. Jobs will take time to materialise and are likely to be generated at different rates. It is as presentationally important to avoid excessive expectations as it is to avoid the charge that the "inner cities" problem arises from earlier Government neglect.

6. The new attack on "inner city" problems arises partly because the Government are not receiving sufficient credit for what has been achieved or for the many initiatives underway. It follows that presentation needs to be improved.

7. Against the complex background set out above, the prime requirements are:

- i) a policy statement which brings policy and action together as a coherent programme;
- ii) better co-ordination at all levels.

POLICY STATEMENT

8. There has been no rounded statement of Government urban policy since the Inner Cities White paper of 1977. There is no Government document which sets out the range of Government policies, their particular emphases and substantial achievements since 1979. This omission should be remedied. Ministers will wish to consider whether such a statement should take the form of a White paper; whether such an authoritative document should be presented in glossy, illustrated form; and whether a simplified "popular" version should be made available.

BRIEFING NOTES

9. The Government needs increasingly to present themselves in "inner cities" as working to an overall plan. The diffused nature of responsibilities militates against this. Given no lead Department, or Minister, individual Ministers and Departments should take particular care to relate their policies and measures to the Government's objectives and how their contribution fits into the broader context. A briefing note, with a covering set of bull points, which is regularly revised to take account of developments, is required. This might be prepared and circulated by the Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary, in consultation with Departments.

LOGO

10. Too often the credit for initiatives and improvements is taken by, for example, the local authority, even when Government support has been crucial. Progress is being made with publicising schemes receiving Urban Programme and Urban Development grant support. More can, and should, be done to secure credit for the Government through other schemes and projects. It would be easier

to do so, if Ministers agreed that all Departments, in issuing press notices connected with the "inner cities", made use of a logo, possibly that designed for the "Action for Cities" booklet prepared by the Departments of Employment and Environment. Ministers may also wish to instruct officials to make widespread use of the logo on signboards associated by Government-backed "inner city" initiatives.

CO-ORDINATION

11. Better co-ordination of Government presentation is crucial if the Government's attack on inner city problems is to achieve greater public recognition. This is needed at both Ministerial and official level.

MINISTERIAL LEVEL

12. There would be advantage if Ministers, in taking decisions on area-specific proposals - eg housing action trusts, simplified planning zones, City Technology Centres, mini-UDCs - which could consider the political (and presentational) advantage of different locations as well as the intrinsic merits of the projects themselves. Better value for money can be secured in some areas rather than others because of the mix of measures already in place. In other words, the aim should be to reinforce success, or the reasonable prospect of success.

Visits

13. Better co-ordination of visits to "inner cities" is required. There have been occasions recently when Ministers have been on inner city business in the same place at roughly the same time. Opportunities for putting over the Government's message have been missed through lack of co-ordinated preparation. To secure the more effective use of Ministers' time, we need a co-ordinated regional approach (see paras 16-18 below) as well as sharper briefing material as recommended in para 9 above.

OFFICIAL LEVEL

14. Official co-ordination of presentation is required at three levels:

- national
- regional
- local.

National

15. National coordination of presentation occurs only at official level. The Prime Minister's Chief Press Secretary chairs a group of Heads of Information drawn from the Departments concerned. This group was formed soon after the election and meets regularly to consider overall presentation strategy and to monitor its execution. The Group has contributed to this report and should continue to serve as the national official-level focus for co-ordinated advice on presentation to Ministers.

Regional

16. The regions are very important for two reasons:

- it is at this level that the Government's initiatives and achievements can be brought together most tellingly for the public; while those living in the inner cities will feel the benefit of improvements, the political value of those improvements will not be realised unless advantage is taken of the regional media, including television, to claim credit for the Government;
- it is only at regional level that effective co-ordination of Ministerial and other visits can be secured.

17. Accordingly, it is recommended that Ministers should identify a senior Government official in the regions to secure effective coordination of Departments involved in inner cities policies and measures. He should work closely with and involve the Regional Director, COI, in all meetings for this purpose. The Regional Director of the COI should then be responsible for coordinating the presentation of the full range of policies and measures and relating them to the Government's overall purpose, as defined above. The COI is represented on the Chief Press Secretary's group. The function of the regional machinery should be to identify opportunities for positive publicity and communicate these to Departments and the Chief Press Secretary. The senior regional official charged with policy coordination could, subject to Ministerial approval, regularly bring the media up-to-date on progress.

18. Ministers will, however, wish to note the political dimension to regional and local presentation. Frequently, local or regional criticism of the Government's programme is couched in

party political terms to which only a politician can make an effective reply. Ministers may wish to nominate and brief political spokesmen - eg MPs - to respond in such circumstances.

Local

19. The establishment of City Action Teams has helped to improve the flow of information between Departments about urban programmes and initiatives. These and other agencies for Government action can do much to secure good local publicity. But they should be encouraged to feed their ideas for publicity, especially involving Ministers through the regional Directors to Departments and to the Chief Press Secretary's Group. Without this information the Government will achieve less national and regional impact.

CONFIDENTIAL



11 September 1987

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-270

Bernard Ingham Esq
No 10 Press Office

Dear Bernard,
INNER CITIES FINAL REPORT

I attach a part of the present draft.

The section begins "Targetting Specific Areas", seeking Ministers' views on whether we should concentrate initiatives in certain areas in order to make more impact. It seems to me that this has some bearing on the presentation issue.

Then follows a section on measurement and evaluation - how do Ministers wish to be judged.

The final section is "Presenting the Policy". At present it is not much more than a catalogue of useful things Ministers and officials could do in order to help get the policy across but perhaps we might start by agreeing that the list is about right.

What I have not covered, and will not, is the lead Minister issue. That is not a matter for me.

You may feel that there should be more specific reference to the GIS and the services that COI can provide and I would be happy to try and reflect this in a further draft.

Yours ever
K E C Sorensen

K E C SORENSEN

PRESENTING THE POLICY

"Inner cities" is an all-embracing label used by journalists to describe very different areas and problems. The leading issue changes, sometimes very quickly. If there are riots the issues become crime and disorder and there is public speculation on "underlying causes". At other times the focus is decline of traditional industries and the effect on old manufacturing towns; at times it is on rundown council estates and the very high rates of localised unemployment.

Just as there is no single problem, so there is no single message, except at the most general level, that the Government can use to encapsulate its urban policy. Certainly motivation and self-help and the way these are encouraged by Government can be emphasised. But a place also has to be found in presenting the policy for the Government's achievements in fostering a single-minded attack on physically rundown areas, to improve urban local government and to tackle basic problems in housing and education provision, and to deal with crime and disorder. There is not, therefore, a single message which can express in specific ways the positive things the Government are doing. Inevitably the message has to be a series of points. It also has to distinguish between developments which will show results relatively quickly, and those where the aim is for longer term beneficial changes.

Unpublicised achievements

The Government are not receiving sufficient credit for the many initiatives already underway. This is partly because they are not regularly brought and presented together. Partly it is because the policies are changing all the time and continuing existing major initiatives can get overshadowed by new ones.

Practical steps

There are a number of steps which can be taken to improve presentation. Some are addressed to Ministers, some to officials.

Context for Ministerial announcements

Given the multi-faceted nature of urban policy and the many Departments involved in its delivery a more deliberate effort might be made to put individual initiatives, where appropriate, in their broader context. There might, for example, be a brief reference to the urban policy themes and the way a particular proposal flowed from one or more of those themes might be emphasised.

Similarly, the emphasis might be on the Government's urban policy and the contribution that individual Departments made to it, rather than presenting initiatives in isolation.

Ministerial briefing

It would be helpful if Ministers had available a short and succinct summary of the bull points on the Government's urban policy, supported by key facts. This not only would help to put individual Departments' contribution in context but would provide an efficient means to help Ministers get across the interlocking themes and make them meaningful to people.

Visits

Some steps have now been taken to co-ordinate the timing of visits. There have been occasions recently when several Ministers have visited the same place at more or less the same time. Opportunities for hammering home a number of agreed points have been missed through lack of co-ordinated preparation.

Decisions on Departmental urban initiatives

There is of course collective Ministerial discussion on

specific policy proposals which then lead to Departmental announcements. Particularly on area specific proposals - e.g. Housing Action Trusts, Simplified Planning Zones, City Technnology Colleges, mini-UDCs - there may be advantage in Ministers discussing and agreeing their location, as well as the merits of the proposals, because these projects can support each other. This relates back to the discussion on the area approach and the value of developing good links between projects at the local level.

Logo

Ministers have already drawn attention to the need for better publicity for the Government's contribution made to local projects. Too often the credit appears to go to others e.g. local authority, when the Government support has been essential. Some progress has been made to publicise schemes receiving Urban Programme and Urban Development Grant support. More can be done and different types of project can be included. A logo was designed for the "Action for Cities" booklet prepared by Departments of Employment and Environment. Ministers may now wish to formally endorse that logo design and the slogan "Action for Cities", and instruct officials to ensure as widespread use of it on signboards as possible.

City Action Teams

There is a powerful tendency for Departments to concentrate on their own business and not sufficiently take account of relevant developments in other Departments. The setting up of City Action Teams has greatly helped to improve the flow of information between Departments about programmes and initiatives relevant to the conduct of urban policy.

This helpful development should continue to be exploited with the City Action Teams preparing joint briefing documents which can be used to inform local journalists and also as inputs to Ministerial briefing. It is essential that the Regional Directors of COI are fully involved in the preparation of these.

Subject to clearance by Ministers Regional Directors could hold regular briefings with journalists to continually update them about Government initiatives at local level.

Authoritative statement

There has been no rounded statement of Government urban policy since the Inner Cities White Paper of 1977. There is no Government document which expresses the range of the policy, the Government's particular emphases and the

substantial achievements since 1979. It is suggested that this is an omission which should be put right. Ministers will need to decide what sort of document they wish to see. For example should it be authoritative but relatively low key as a traditional White Paper. Or, should it attempt to combine authority with presentability, including photographs and so on.