



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

11 November 1987

Dear Willie,

SAFER CITIES

Prime Minister!
Agree that the results
of discussions on this should
be reported to E (UP) before
final decisions are taken?

JWS
12/11

You will have seen my Private Secretary's letter to Mr Norgrove of 21 October following my letter of 6 August in which I drew the Prime Minister's attention to our early thinking on the "Safer Cities" programme. I am now writing to let you and other colleagues know how we see the programme developing during the next few months.

John Patten and I believe that "Safer Cities" can make a major contribution both to the Government's objective of getting crime and criminality under better control, and also to our overall position on the inner cities. Good progress has been made with crime prevention over the last five years, reinforced by the seminars held at 10 Downing Street in 1986; we now see a need to extend that work and give it a new edge, but without creating any impression of a separate inner city policy or an elaborate new bureaucracy.

Our "Safer Cities" initiative will draw together the experience we have so far gained in our efforts to prevent and reduce crime and will apply it more comprehensively. We want to focus particularly on those areas where crime rates are highest and the effects of crime on economic activity and social stability are most serious. The police, backed by the other criminal justice services, will, of course, continue to have a primary role in controlling crime, but we have consistently emphasised that the responsibility for preventing crime from happening, and the capacity to do so, extends to the whole community. The police themselves need a basis of public support and co-operation in order to do their own job successfully.

We now have experience of a large number of crime prevention projects, initiatives and activities. Some of them are well established; others are still developing. They need to be drawn closer together and integrated into a more visibly coherent programme, both at national and local level. At national level, this is a task for the Home Office, with the help of the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention, which John Patten chairs, but we also need an effective mechanism to galvanise the various agencies and interests at local level and to see that they work more effectively together - especially in those inner city areas where crime rates are highest and local co-operation, often because of difficulties with the local authority, is hardest to achieve. These will of course very often be the areas which we are also targeting for other aspects of our inner city and urban policies.

The "Safer Cities" programme will have important links with those policies and with the way in which they are applied on the ground. This is well understood between the various Departments concerned. I have had useful talks with most of the Ministers involved; links will be maintained through the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention; and there are good contacts between officials at working level. A reduction in crime is obviously a valuable prize in itself, and we are beginning to score some successes; but an increased emphasis on preventing crime and reducing the fear of crime can also help to remove what could otherwise be a serious obstacle to the economic and social regeneration of the areas with which we are particularly concerned. Some of the ingredients - improved management of local services, and the emphasis on enterprise, energy and personal responsibility - reflect themes which are common to all aspects of our policies. I am in no doubt that this crime prevention thrust at local level must be fully consistent with the overall thrust of Government policy as a whole, and in particular I shall certainly want to make sure that areas are chosen for the "Safer Cities" programme in such a way that our crime prevention work can complement the work of other Departments and be seen as part of a coherent whole.

The work to be done is broadly of three kinds:

- (i) reducing opportunities and temptations to commit crime through improved physical security and design, typically promoted at local level through Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
- (ii) introducing into the management of the relevant local services an awareness of the dangers of crime and of the means of reducing it; and
- (iii) forging a link with other developments designed to create opportunities for energy, enterprise and personal responsibility, so that today's young people do not become tomorrow's persistent criminals.

The programme will rely heavily on the police, the courts, the probation service and the voluntary organisations in the areas concerned. All these services have their own pressures and priorities and their own working arrangements and network of communications, which will need to be taken fully into account in constructing the programme; and they will also need short lines of communication to the Home Office. This is why we plan to appoint someone to co-ordinate their activities in each of the chosen areas. He or she will be a temporary Home Office civil servant working with a local steering committee comprising representatives of the services concerned as well as other local agencies and community groups. The steering committee will give local credibility to the project, help to set its internal priorities, facilitate communication and oversee the implementation of measures against crime and the problems associated with it. In doing so they will need to be fully aware of other initiatives in the area and ensure that all available advice is taken on which "crime" issues need to be tackled.

The tasks for the next few weeks are to decide on the areas in which the "Safer Cities" programme should operate, particularly during 1988/89; and also the way in which the programme is to fit in to other aspects of urban policy at local level. We would welcome discussion with colleagues on both points. I start from the position that wherever possible the areas chosen for "Safer Cities" should be those to which other Departments are to give special attention, so allowing the Government's collective energy and experience to be brought to bear on the same limited number of important areas, although there may be one or two instances where we will want to target an area with exceptionally high rates of crime which other Departments do not regard as having the same priority. Within the chosen areas we would want to fit in with whatever structures are decided upon for carrying forward other aspects of inner city policy - City Action Teams, Inner City Task Forces, or any new arrangements - and not to duplicate them.

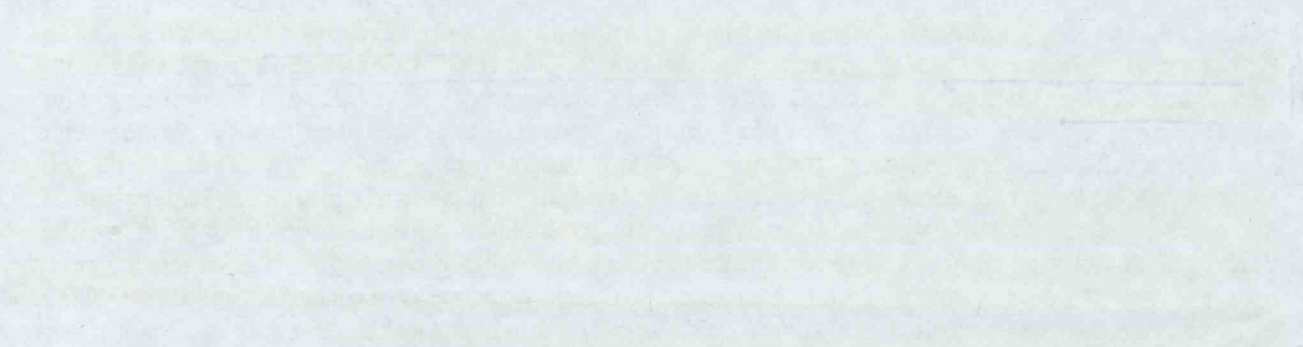
This is the broad framework of our plans. The next step is to work them up in a little more detail with colleagues in some other Departments. I propose that we should do this within meetings of the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention at junior Ministerial level, reporting to senior colleagues as necessary. I intend to ask John Patten to bring Ministers up-to-date on "Safer Cities" at the next meeting of the MGCP on 12 November.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of H Committee, the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and Energy, Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Sorenson (Cabinet Office)..

Yours,

Doyl.

REGIONAL POLICY: Inner Cities : Pt 11.





DAS

bc BG

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 November 1987

Dear Philip,

SAFER CITIES

The Prime Minister has seen the Home Secretary's minute to the Lord President of 11 November. She has noted that the Home Secretary's proposals are to be discussed with colleagues in Departments and she would be grateful if the results of those discussions could be reported to E(UP) before final decisions are taken.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, other members of H Committee, the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and Energy, Sir Robert Armstrong and to Mr Sorenson (Cabinet Office).

*Yours,
David*

D R NORSGROVE

Philip Mawer, Esq.
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ECL



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The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd MP
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1

My ref:

Your ref:

27 November 1987

Dear Douglas

NBRM

SAFER CITIES

I have seen copies of your letter of 11 November to Willie Whitelaw, and the note from the Prime Minister's office asking that the results of discussions with colleagues should be reported to E(UP) before final decisions are taken.

I am sure that it is right that the initiative, which I welcome, should be carefully matched to our broader policy initiatives in the inner cities. Crime, reflected in difficult and expensive insurance cover, is one of the major drawbacks to inner city location for many businesses. It is also of critical importance to tackle crime and vandalism if we are to attract increased private investment and promote choice in housing provision and deal with the problems of the worst estates.

I know that John Patten and Willie Waldegrave had already had a constructive discussion in the Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention, and there have been good contacts at official level. I look forward to seeing the detailed proposals and selection of areas when they come forward to E(UP) for decision.

I am copying this note to the Prime Minister, the Lord President and other members of E(UP), and to Sir Robert Armstrong and Eric Sorensen.

Nicholas Ridley
Nicholas

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

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