

010

Prime Minister



afg

To see, especially paragraphs 6 - 8.

From: R T J Wilson
15 January 1988

P 02974

MR WICKS

I agree an early meeting of Ministers involved would be useful.

Agree to have one (probably on Wednesday)?

Sir Robin Butler
Mr Sorensen
Mr Monger

Yes no

INNER CITIES
N.C.U. 15.1

1. I promised to let you have a note about future work on the inner cities and how we should follow up the announcement of 18 December.

MECHANICS

2. It is clearly important that we minimise the scope for further disputes about Ministerial responsibilities and try to ensure that any signs of further trouble are picked up and dealt with at an early stage, if need be with your help.

3. I attach a draft which attempts to lay down sensible groundrules for the conduct of daily business without creating a bureaucracy. It is not yet in final form but has been well received at a senior level in the Departments of Environment, Trade and Industry and Employment. I hope in the next week to finalise the note and submit it to Sir Robin Butler for circulation on the Permanent Secretary network to all departments with inner city responsibilities.

4. One of the key functions of Mr Sorensen's Urban Policy Unit is going to be pulling together information about the inner cities and making sure that it is readily available. You will note that in addition to laying down arrangements for consultation, the note envisages that the Unit will prepare:

- a. a regular report of forthcoming Ministerial engagements in the inner cities;
- b. standard briefs and "bull points" on particular inner city areas;
- c. a standard brief on inner city matters for use in dealing with oral Parliamentary Questions.

URBAN POLICY UNIT

5. We propose to keep the Unit as small and compact as possible. Mr Sorensen is arranging to borrow two or three people at Grade 7 level from other Departments, with the emphasis on trying to get a good spread of departmental background. One of them will be from the Information Group, so that the Chancellor of the Duchy may look to the Unit for direct support on speeches and



similar presentational aspects of his job. Even so, we expect the total staff involved only to be around half a dozen including Mr Sorensen and Mr Lean.

FUTURE WORK

6. I think it would be helpful if the Prime Minister could have an early meeting with Mr Clarke and other key Ministers to make sure that the new arrangements get off to a good start and are on the right lines.. This could help reassure Mr Ridley, and any other Ministers who are anxious about the new arrangements, that the Prime Minister is still in the lead. It could also help support Mr Clarke in his new role: for instance, there are a number of announcements coming up in various Departments which are relevant to inner cities and we need to make sure that they are properly concerted (eg the Home Office's 'Safer Cities' campaign).

7. An early meeting might also provide the Prime Minister with an opportunity to agree with Mr Clarke and other Ministers what future work on inner cities should be trying to achieve. We may well find when the White Paper comes to be drafted, that discussion gets drawn into possible policy changes which are controversial (eg contract compliance to which Mr Ridley is opposed) or perhaps proposals which would entail greater public expenditure. It would therefore be helpful to establish from the start that the main purpose of the new arrangements is to follow up the themes which emerged from Ministerial discussion before Christmas: that is

a. better presentation. The Government is not getting credit for the massive resources and effort which it is putting into the inner cities. There is a major job to be done on communicating this to the public. Hence the need for roadshows, a White Paper, etc.

b. practical results. There needs to be a concerted effort by Departments to identify and support specific projects and areas where local enterprise is active, so that in two or three years' time there is a string of positive achievements which the Government can point to as the results of its inner cities effort.

8. Mr Sorensen has provided Mr Clarke with a draft which covers the next steps including:

a. a synopsis of a White Paper on Inner Cities;

b. a proposed timetable;

c. the immediate things which Mr Clarke will be concentrating on in his new role.

Assuming that Mr Clarke sends a minute covering this sort of ground I think it should be enough for an early meeting; but we can consider this when it arrives.



CONCLUSION

9. I would be grateful if you could confirm that you are content for us to proceed on the above lines.

R T J WILSON

URBAN POLICY UNIT
SUPPORT TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER

1. Following the announcement on 18 December 1987, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has responsibilities for the inner cities under two distinct headings.
2. First, there are his present departmental responsibilities. These remain unchanged. The Chancellor of the Duchy will continue to look to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for support on them in the same way as he has done hitherto.
3. Second, there is his new role, which is to take responsibility, under the Prime Minister, for the co-ordination of Government action on inner cities and for its presentation. In carrying out this new responsibility he will need to look to all Government Departments with inner city responsibilities for support and will be assisted by the Urban Policy Unit in the Cabinet Office in doing this.

CO-ORDINATION OF POLICY

4. There has been no change in the Departmental responsibilities of Ministers with programmes which are involved in inner city regeneration. These programmes will continue to be the responsibility of the Secretaries of State concerned and administered by Departments. Proposals for any new policy initiatives or changes in policy will be a matter for discussion in the appropriate Ministerial forum in the normal way. Departments anticipating changes in policy which affect inner cities should let the Urban Policy Unit know about this at an early stage and keep them in touch with progress.

*Bernard needs to be
content with this.*

CO-ORDINATION OF PRESENTATION

5. To assist with the co-ordination of presentation and publicity the head of the Urban Policy Unit will chair a group of information officers from departments responsible for Government action on inner cities which will meet regularly to review forthcoming engagements including visits, conferences and speeches.

6. As part of its co-ordinating role the Urban Policy Unit will be responsible for compiling and updating a central record of forthcoming Ministerial engagements in so far as they concern inner cities and will circulate it regularly to members of E(UP) for information and consideration. They will also advise the Chancellor of the Duchy on all invitations which he receives in his new capacity, in consultation with other Departments as necessary.

7. Private Offices of members of E(UP) should as a matter of routine provide the Urban Policy Unit with details of forthcoming engagements in, or relating to, inner cities and should consult the Unit if they need help or advice on any particular invitation. The Unit will aim to build up its information about particular areas and inner cities, and to assist Departments in putting together factual briefs for Ministerial visits.

8. The Urban Policy Unit will assist and advise the Chancellor of the Duchy in the preparation of his own speeches, including their clearance with other Departments as necessary. Private offices of other members of E(UP) should keep the Unit in touch with the details of any forthcoming speeches touching on inner city matters which their Ministers expect to make and should let the Unit have advance copies of the speeches in draft where possible.

CO-ORDINATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Letters

9. Where the Chancellor of the Duchy receives correspondence relating solely to DTI business he will continue to be advised by the DTI exactly as before.

10. Where correspondence touches on the responsibilities of other Ministers the following guidelines will be followed:

(a) if a letter falls fairly and squarely within the responsibilities of another Minister, without raising any issue of co-ordination, the normal course will be for the Chancellor of the Duchy's private office to transfer the letter to the private office of the responsible Minister who will then send the reply. A copy of that reply should be sent to the Chancellor of the Duchy's private office for information;

(b) if, exceptionally, in his role of supporting the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Duchy needs to send his own reply to a letter which falls within another Minister's responsibilities his private office should look to the other Minister's private office to supply a suitable draft reply. The reply should make it clear that the other Minister is formally responsible, probably inviting the correspondent to pursue any further points directly with the Minister; and a copy of the letter should be sent to the Minister's private office. If there is any disagreement about the draft or any proposal to alter it significantly, the matter should be discussed between the private offices who may look to the Urban Policy Unit to help sort out any difficulties if they arise;

(c) where a letter touches on the responsibilities of several departments, Mr Clarke's private office will ask the Urban Policy Unit in the Cabinet Office to co-ordinate the reply.

11. All correspondence on inner city matters addressed to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should be copied to the Urban Policy Unit as a matter of routine to keep them in touch with what is going on. The private offices of other Ministers with inner city responsibilities should similarly ensure that the Urban Policy Unit receives copies of any correspondence relevant to the co-ordination and presentation of Government action on the inner cities.

Parliamentary Questions

12. Parliamentary Questions which fall within DTI responsibilities for inner cities will continue to be dealt with by the DTI in the normal way.

13. Parliamentary Questions which fall within the departmental responsibilities of another Minister should be transferred to that other Minister, again in the normal way.

14. Parliamentary Questions which affect the Chancellor of the Duchy's responsibility for co-ordinating action and presentation in support of the Prime Minister will be handled by the Urban Policy Unit of the Cabinet Office, which will submit a co-ordinated reply which has been cleared with the departments concerned in the normal way. In the case of oral questions it may often be difficult to anticipate with any confidence what Supplementary Questions will be asked. The Urban Policy Unit will therefore as a matter of routine provide the Chancellor of the Duchy with a standard brief, updated monthly, which covers all the issues across Government which might come up, drawing on contributions provided by the relevant Departments.

15. To assist the Urban Policy Unit all Departments with inner city responsibilities should ensure that their Parliamentary Branches supply the Urban Policy Unit with copies of Parliamentary Questions on inner city matters, and the Answers given, as they arise and as a matter of routine.

January 1988

~~Local Gov~~

Reg 127



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ceBG

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

MR. WILSON

INNER CITIES

Thank you for your note of 15 January about future work on the inner cities and how we should follow up the announcement of 18 December.

BF7
First, let me say that the Prime Minister agrees that there should be an early meeting with Mr. Clarke and other key Ministers to make sure the new arrangements get off to a good start and are on the right lines. As you know, a meeting has been arranged for Wednesday.

As for the detailed administrative arrangements described in the attachment to your minute, I think these fit the bill admirably. I assume that once you are certain that these arrangements have the agreement of the principal Departments concerned, you will promulgate the guidance to Departments generally.

I am copying this minute to Sir Robin Butler, Mr. Sorensen (Department of the Environment) and Mr. Monger (Cabinet Office).

N.L.W.

N. L. Wicks

18 January 1988

OA

MR. WICKS

Para 5 was discussed with me by Richard Wilson after I had written to DTI suggesting their Director of Information should take over coordinating responsibility now that the coordinating Minister was in DTI. Sensitivities remain. So Cabinet Office has had to intervene to come up with the proposal in para 5.

I do not regard this proposal as ideal, because ideally the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster should have his own man working closely with him on the presentation of Inner Cities.

But the proposed solution is probably better than my continuing to do the job because it is proposed that the Urban Policy Unit will have a Principal Information Officer as an integral member working to Mr Clarke.

It was on this basis that I agreed to the head of the Urban Policy Unit chairing a meeting of Information Officers. Mr Wilson did not make No 10's continued association of the coordinating machinery a condition of the new arrangements but he expressed the strong hope that we would regularly attend presentation coordination meetings. I promised either I, Mr Perks or Mr Dugdale would do so.

On this basis I am content.

R. Ingham

pp BERNARD INGHAM
18 January 1988



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr Ingham,

To see, especially
§5 of the attached
to the minute.

Could we pl have a
word.

N. L. W.

15.1