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cc BG

SUBJECT cc MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

21 January 1988

From the Private Secretary

Dear Peter,

INNER CITIES

The Prime Minister held a meeting yesterday to discuss co-ordination of inner cities policy. Those present were the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for Employment, Secretary of State for the Environment, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Secretary of State for Transport, Chief Secretary, Mr Richard Wilson and Mr Eric Sorensen (Cabinet Office) and Mr Hartley Booth (No.10 Policy Unit).

The Prime Minister said that future work should follow the main themes which had emerged from the Group's work before Christmas. The overall aim was to achieve a string of success stories in inner cities which the Government could point to in two to three years' time. The emphasis was to be on supporting local enterprise and initiative, with better co-ordination between departments and a greater effort in areas of promise, directed to producing results, but not more interventionist policies. Where possible, grants and organisation should be reduced and streamlined. There should be a major effort to present all that the Government was doing coherently and effectively.

The meeting then considered the Chancellor of the Duchy's minute to the Prime Minister of 18 January.

The discussion focussed on the arrangements for the preparation and publication of the Action for Cities document. The Chancellor of the Duchy explained that work on the draft was well advanced. Arrangements were also in hand for a series of "road shows" in the regions to follow publication of the document.

Summing up the discussion the Prime Minister said it was agreed that:-

- The Action for Cities document should be published as soon as practicable (I am writing separately about possible dates).

- It should not take the form of a White Paper. It was essential it should be an attractive publication with simple, clear presentation including photographs and no jargon.
- The launch of the document should involve a co-ordinated approach between Departments in order to ensure maximum impact. A good collection of announcements should be organised for the same day although the full details need not be contained in the document itself. In particular co-ordinated announcements should be made by the responsible Secretaries of State for the unified City Grant and the Safer Cities Campaign. Subject to financial arrangements being agreed with the Chief Secretary the aim should also be to make announcements on managed workshops, new road schemes and the completion of the programme of new UDCs. Although the Secretary of State for Employment would be publishing an adult training White Paper in mid-February he should reserve for the Action for Cities document announcements of particular relevance to inner cities policy. The document could also include material on the role in inner city regeneration of public authority land disposal, bus deregulation and new light railways. It would be important to tie in relevant education policy initiatives such as the schools-industry Compact.
- Further work was needed to clarify the appropriate mechanisms for encouraging enterprise in areas of high local unemployment before the material on this theme for the document could be prepared.
- It would not be appropriate to announce decisions on precise locations for Housing Action Trusts until shortly before implementation, in order to avoid those areas becoming blighted in the interim, but general material on HATs would be an important element in the Action for Cities document.
- A critical element of the presentation would be the importance of private sector initiatives in the inner cities. It would be desirable to arrange for co-ordinated announcement of some private sector moves shortly after publication of the Action for Cities document.
- The document launch should be at a suitable central London location, possibly The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, and take the form of an introduction by the Prime Minister followed by presentations by other Ministers. The subsequent "road shows" in the regions, to be jointly financed by DTI, DOE and Dm, might be better described in public as "breakfast meetings".
- The group should meet again to discuss a draft of the Action for Cities document in 2-3 weeks time.

I am sending copies of this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office), Nicholas Wilson (Department of Employment), Roger Bright (Department of the Environment), Alison Brimelow (Department of Trade and Industry), Roy Griffins (Department of Transport), Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office), and to Richard Wilson, Eric Sorensen and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

Paul Gray

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Peter Smith Esq
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office.