

PRIME MINISTER

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY AND TEESIDE

Hector Laing came to see me yesterday about an idea of Stephen O'Brien's, described in his letter below, that you should host at No.10 a small reception of southern based business leaders in order to interest them in the investment possibilities on Teeside.

I hesitate to burden your time with a function of this kind, but it could be one and a quarter hours well spent - which is all which Hector says would be required - as a demonstration of your commitment to help in the revival of Teeside, perhaps the most intractable of the "inner city" problems. We could invite Kenneth Clarke and the other lead inner city Ministers to this short reception (who could carry on with the reception after you had left).

Of course, it could be argued that if you hold a reception for Teeside, you should do the same for Tyneside, Merseyside and so on. But I think there are good answers to such an argument.

I have not yet explored with Tessa diary possibilities. But are you ready in principle to hold a short reception of the sort described above? If so we will consult Kenneth Clarke and find a time in the diary before coming to final decisions.

What do you think?

Nigel Wicks

26 February 1988

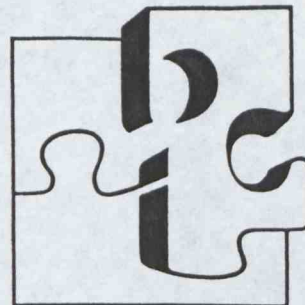
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see Nigel Wickes

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Dear Hector,

You will remember the Prime Minister's much publicised visit to Teeside in the Autumn. Teeside is one of the sites for a BiC local business action team and the group there is chaired by Nigel Clarke of ICI. These business leaders see the promotion of Teeside as one of their key functions and since the Prime Minister's visit they have financed and made (by Tyne Tees Television) a video for this purpose. It is subject to final editing but I saw an almost finished version last Friday. It is of the very highest quality and should make an enormous impact.

The purpose of this letter is to ask whether you think that the Prime Minister might consider hosting a small reception, in the near future, for a number of Southern based business leaders in order to interest them in the investment possibilities on Teeside. It seems to me that this would follow-on logically from the Prime Minister's interest in the area. It would give Teeside an enormous fillip and it would also make an interesting story for the media in itself.

I would be most grateful if you could enquire whether the Prime Minister might be interested to help us take this exciting initiative forward.

Yours ever

Stephen

Stephen O'Brien

cc: Neville Martin