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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP
 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
 Department of Trade and Industry
 1 - 19 Victoria Street
 London
 SW1H 0ET

B/F // *C.F.*
Rt Hon *encl B/F*
at flap.
PLC
12/4

12th April 1988

Dear Chancellor,

ACTION FOR CITIES

I have seen a copy of your minute of 31 March to the Prime Minister and other members of E(UP).

In general I am content with the measures suggested in your minute. I note that you are proposing targeting programmes on a relatively small number of areas where we might expect Government policies to produce the best results. Provided this means refocusing existing public expenditure, I am in favour of targeting the use of Government programmes as a means of pulling through early and visible results and therefore encouraging local initiative elsewhere. But, as you will recall, during discussions of this issue last year the balance of opinion was against selecting particular areas for favourable treatment, though this was in the context of a published document on inner cities policy. Though I understand that you do not have in mind publishing a list of selected areas, the way in which we choose to allocate resources from existing or planned new programmes is bound to generate questions about the reasons for our choice. We therefore need to be very clear about the criteria for the choice of areas including what can be said publicly if this proves necessary.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister to members of E(UP) and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely,

PP JOHN MAJOR
 (Approved by the Chief Secretary
 and signed in his absence)

REGIONAL POL: LINDA C. STEIN

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cc/B

TO:

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

FROM:

KENNETH CLARKE

Contact, subject to any
comments from Robin B. Me?

31 March 1988

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ACTION FOR CITIES

1 I am keen to maintain the momentum of the successful Action for Cities launch on 7 March. Departments are already carrying forward their new initiatives. In order to maximise the impact it is my view that we need to co-ordinate all new inner city announcements and that we should concentrate on a small number of priority areas.

2 In due course we will want to be able to demonstrate that our policies have had a significant impact on specific locations. New initiatives therefore need to be targetted on a relatively small number of areas where we can expect to see an improvement. I have asked the Urban Policy Unit at the Cabinet Office to review urgently with Departments the targetting of their existing programmes.

And visits by Ministers

3 At the same time, we need to consider where new initiatives should be located. There are three major new programmes - Housing Action Trusts, Safer Cities and Compacts - where individual projects are currently being worked up. I would like the Cabinet Office Unit to be closely involved, with the responsible Department, in deciding where these should be located. I would also like colleagues to consult the Unit when considering locations under any other initiatives within the £3bn total that we announced in our Action for Cities document.

Private companies

4 Companies have responded well to the Action for Cities launch. I see as a key role for the Cabinet Office Unit exploring with major companies practical ways in which they can help inner city regeneration. Business in the Community and other organisations can be used to ensure that companies get clear guidance about inner city opportunities.

5 Plans are well advanced for the series of breakfast presentations. The first one will be on 13 April in Newcastle. These are specifically aimed at local business leaders and will provide them with comprehensive information about inner city business opportunities. An expanded and free-standing Guide to Action for businessmen is being prepared, jointly with business organisations, based on that included in the Action for Cities

document. I am also hoping to have a private sector secondee located with the Cabinet Office Unit to facilitate their contact with major companies.

Publicity

6 Although much has been done by Departments to ensure that Government gets credit for its effort and investment in inner cities, people are still largely unaware of the extent of its contribution. I would like to see our contribution to inner city projects acknowledged by Departments using prominent Action for Cities signboards on all their projects within the £3bn total and for all related Press Notices to be in the standard Action for Cities format. A format for Press Notices has already been agreed with Departments and I have asked the Cabinet Office Unit to consult Departments on a standard format for signboards.

7 The attached table of Ministerial inner city visits over the next two months shows the considerable scope for getting the message across. This table will be regularly updated and will show the purpose of visits and opportunities for linking announcements and themes for speeches. Again, however, it is essential that the Cabinet Office Unit should try to co-ordinate these visits to achieve the maximum impact. I hope

Departments, who will receive the schedule, will continue to keep the Unit informed of their plans for Ministerial inner city visits. The Unit in turn will give advice about announcements they would like visiting Ministers to consider making during particular visits.

Other Practical Measures

8 I will let you have regular reports on progress with the measures within the £3bn budget, including any additions to the portfolio of success stories. I have asked the Cabinet Office Unit to prepare a schedule showing where and when progress on inner city measures can be expected.

9 I am also arranging for there to be a standard master brief on inner cities for use by Ministers. This will be regularly updated. Area profiles giving facts and figures about individual towns and cities will be made available to Ministers making visits to inner city areas.

10 There is at present no systematic photographic record of inner city projects. I have asked the Cabinet Office Unit to set up a system so that successes in inner cities can be clearly demonstrated through before and after photographs.

Recommendations

11 I therefore propose that:

i) the relevant Departments should consult the Cabinet Office Unit on the location of specific Action for Cities projects, notably Housing Action Trusts, projects under the Safer Cities initiative and Schools-Industry Compacts.

ii) Departments should confirm their agreement to using the Action for Cities Press Notices and should consult the Cabinet Office Unit on a standard format for Action for Cities signboards.

iii) Departments should check the attached table of Ministerial inner city visits and ensure that it is kept up-to-date.

iv) Departments should ensure that all Ministers making visits are provided with the Cabinet Office profile of the city being visited as part of their briefing material.

12 I hope you and colleagues are content with these proposals.
I am copying this minute to members of E(UP) and Sir Robin
Butler.

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Attachment Clarke to PM, 3/13/88

