

TO:

PRIME MINISTER

FROM:

KENNETH CLARKE


20 May 1988

ACTION FOR CITIES

Progress continues to be encouraging.

2. We have now had the first three Action for Cities Breakfast Presentations in Newcastle, Leeds and Manchester. Each has produced an enthusiastic response from the private sector audience. So far over 150 companies have already said that they want to become involved, or to increase their involvement, in locally based urban regeneration.

3. The willingness of business leaders to take part in Action for Cities - you of course saw it first hand at the Anglo-American Conference on Private Sector Initiatives at Lancaster House on 3 May - convinces me more than ever that a key part of the work of the Cabinet Office Unit must be to liaise between business and Government. Companies should



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have a single initial point of contact so that they receive swift and clear advice as to how they can best make their contribution. I suggested in my minute to you of 31 March that we should attach a senior private sector secondee who knows his way round the business world to the Cabinet Office Unit to help perform that job. I have since received a number of offers of suitable secondees and remain anxious to make such an appointment as soon as possible.

4. More generally, the Unit seems to be getting on well with its task of pulling together the Government's inner city activities. All Departments are now using a common Action for Cities Press Notice, Ministerial visits - and briefing for those visits - are being properly co-ordinated, and boards and banners signposting Government funding for inner city projects have started to go up. I believe that the Unit has proved its usefulness and has shown that the judgement that the Cabinet Office was the most sensible place for it to be located was the correct one.

5. I am copying this to Sir Robin Butler.

KC