



Prime Minister

24 February 1983

GREATER LONDON COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN COUNTY COUNCILS

When Cabinet discussed the future of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils on the basis of MISC 79's report I was invited to arrange for officials to carry out further studies (CC(83)1st Conclusion minute 8). Further work is in hand, and I will put detailed proposals to colleagues shortly.

Timetable

I believe however that there is still much to be said for considering a complete package of announcements on all the issues considered by MISC 79. Consequently I suggest that we should try to keep the work on rates and possible abolition broadly in step. But there is also the decision on public transport in London, which cannot readily be announced in isolation, since it must call into question the future of the GLC. I therefore propose that the further studies of abolition should be completed in time for us to consider the main decisions again by the end of April. I hope that the Secretary of State for Transport will accept that this is the best that we can do to facilitate an early announcement on the MTA.

Future Work

The work by officials on abolition will be in two main parts: detailed working-out of arrangements for the reorganisation of each service; and further study of the implications in terms of the transfer of staff and property, the financing of local government, and other general issues.

It may be necessary however for firm (though contingent) decisions to be made by colleagues on specific issues to provide a better basis for a final decision than previous inter-departmental reports. I therefore suggest that - subject to the views of the Home Secretary - MISC 79 might continue to be the forum for any necessary collective decisions on abolition.

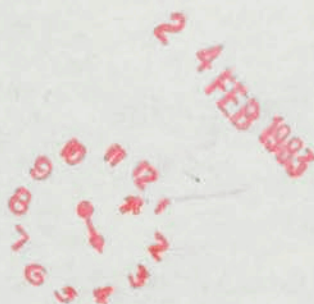
ILEA however raises special considerations, and I am afraid that to avoid abortive work on abolition generally it seems to me to be necessary to arrive quickly at a view on the future of ILEA, because this could interact with financial and other decisions which would flow from a decision to abolish the GLC in respect of non-educational services.

I should therefore be grateful for agreement that:

- (a) we should aim to complete the next stage of further work on the consequences of possible abolition of the GLC and MCCs by the end of April;
- (b) decisions on the programme of work and any detailed issues that subsequently arise should be dealt with by MISC 79.

I am copying this to members of the Cabinet and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Local Govt Relations with
Central Govt P+15



CONFIDENTIAL



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copied to Education
FLEA, P+3

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 March, 1983.

Greater London Council and Metropolitan County Councils

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 24 February.

Timetable

The Prime Minister agrees with the timetable proposed by Mr. King. She also agrees (see the Secretary of State for Transport's minute of 28 February) that a separate announcement of the MTA may well be desirable if the Environment Secretary's timetable slips. The timing of eventual announcements will, of course, be a matter for decision by the Cabinet in due course.

Future Work

The Prime Minister hopes that your Secretary of State will try, so far as possible, to resolve any problems informally with the Ministers chiefly concerned. But if there should be issues which need collective Ministerial discussion, the Prime Minister agrees that MISC 79 would be an appropriate forum. It would naturally be for the Home Secretary to decide at the appropriate time which issues should be discussed by MISC 79.

ILEA

The Prime Minister notes your Secretary of State's view that an early decision on the future of the ILEA is necessary. She would be grateful if the Secretary of State for Education and Science would circulate a paper in the near future so that the Cabinet may reach a decision on this matter.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of the Cabinet, to Gerry Spence (CPRS) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

M. C. SCHOLAR

David Edmonds, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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LETTER TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
THE ENVIRONMENT FROM MICHAEL SCHOLAR:

Copies to: Private Secretaries to Members of the Cabinet,
Mr. Spence (CPRS) and Mr. Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

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GREATER LONDON COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN COUNTY COUNCILS

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of
State's minute of 24 February.

Timetable

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by Mr. King. She also agrees (see the Secretary of State
for Transport's minute of 28 February) that a separate
announcement of the MTA may well be desirable if the
Environment Secretary's timetable slips. The timing of
eventual announcements will, of course, be a matter for
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Future Work

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will try, so far as possible, to resolve any problems
informally with the Ministers chiefly concerned. But if
there should be issues which need collective Ministerial
discussion, the Prime Minister agrees that MISC 79 would be
an appropriate forum. It would naturally be for the Home
Secretary to decide at the appropriate time which issues
should be discussed by MISC 79.

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/ ILEA

ILEA

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For
be. N. Owen.
Local Govt

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 May 1983

ABOLITION OF THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL
AND THE METROPOLITAN COUNTY COUNCILS

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's Cabinet paper C(83)13.

She commented on paragraph 2 of the paper that we must be very sure not to set up new bureaucracies under the joint boards. The boards would not, for example, in the Prime Minister's view need special offices or accommodation.

I am sending copies of this letter to Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

M. C. SCHOLAR

D.A. Edmonds, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

GREATER LONDON COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN COUNTY COUNCILS

I agree with the view of the Secretary of State for the Environment, as expressed in his minute to you of 24 February, that there would be advantages in a complete package of announcements on all the issues considered by MISC 79 if this can be arranged. An announcement on a Metropolitan Transport Authority in advance of a decision on the future of the GLC would be bound to promote speculation and put pressure on us to say something about its future. *with MCS?*

Nevertheless, Cabinet agreed that there is a strong case for setting up a Metropolitan Transport Authority regardless of the future of the GLC or the arrangements for strategic roads and traffic planning in London. There is a wide demand, from our supporters and the public, for early action to raise the standards of public transport services in London and the surrounding areas and tackle the unwieldy LT and BR arrangements which we have inherited.

I am therefore keen to make an announcement and get on with the necessary consultation as quickly as possible so as to be ready for legislation in the Autumn. I am ready to work to the end-of-April timetable proposed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, but if that timetable slips I shall want to go ahead with a separate announcement on a Metropolitan Transport Authority.

I am copying this minute to members of the Cabinet and Sir Robert Armstrong.

David Howell

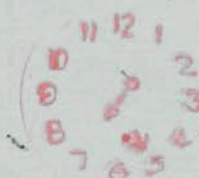
DAVID HOWELL

28 February 1983

Local Govt.
Relations
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28 FEB 1983





Prime Minister

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Please see minutes from Mr King

and Mr Howell.

Agree I write as at May A ?

Ref. A083/0662

MR SCHOLAR

Yes

MS 28/2

Greater London Council and Metropolitan County Councils

T.P.M.'d
with HCS?

I understand that you have asked for advice on the minute of 24th February from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Timetable

2. There must be some doubt whether it will be possible to take decisions on local government organisation and finance as quickly as the Secretary of State suggests, particularly as the work on education vouchers has an important bearing on several of the issues. But there is no reason why the Prime Minister should not endorse what the Secretary of State for the Environment proposes, so as to keep the option of an early announcement open.

Handling of future work

3. It is not clear what issues the Secretary of State thinks it may be necessary to refer to MISC 79: the examples we have been given by his officials are not altogether convincing. But if there are issues genuinely requiring collective Ministerial discussion below the level of the Cabinet, MISC 79 is the natural forum; and I understand that the Home Secretary is willing to continue as Chairman. I suggest that the Prime Minister can accept what the Secretary of State proposes, but should encourage him to try to resolve issues bilaterally whenever possible.

Inner London Education Authority (ILEA)

4. Environment officials say that it is urgent to resolve the question of the future of the ILEA. It has important implications both for the future organisation of local government in London, and for the separate work on finance. The ILEA currently receives no rate support grant (RSG) on its very large expenditure; if it were replaced by a radically different organisation, there could be important effects on the distribution of RSG.



5. The Cabinet has discussed the future of the ILEA more than once before (CC(81)1st Conclusions, Minute 4; CC(81)3rd Conclusions, Minute 5; CC(83)1st Conclusions, Minute 7). Even though the discussion has so far led to no results, it seems clear that only the Cabinet can resolve the issues. The right course therefore seems to be to invite the Secretary of State for Education and Science to circulate a paper.

--- 6. I attach a draft Private Secretary letter on these lines.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

25th February 1983

Local Govt
Relation 04/15



1 FEB 1987

