



010
CCB/4
CCB/1
Prime Minister 2

DW
14/7.

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

**ABOLITION OF DOMESTIC RATES ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 1987
COMMENCEMENT**

mf

A Commencement Order is required to bring the provisions of the Act into force and the purpose of this minute is to let you and members of E(LF) know that I propose to bring the Act into force around the middle of August.

Although quite a bit of preparatory work has been done at official level, and I have commissioned a preliminary study on computer system requirements which should be ready by the end of this month, it is clear that, at the political level, there may be some tendency to foot-dragging on the part of local authorities. Making the Commencement Order will place the Government's intentions beyond doubt. At the more technical level, it confers upon existing local authority officials (the Assessors) the duties of community charges registration officer and requires local authorities to provide sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources to enable the registration officer to perform his functions under the Act. I hope that, once the Act is in force, there will be no question of local authorities in Scotland refusing to obey the law. But I have to acknowledge that there will be considerable scope for them to delay action on some of the necessary preparatory work, and it will only become clear over a period of several months whether or not this is happening, and whether there is any serious risk to the timetable of introducing the new system on 1 April 1989.

I propose to undertake formal consultations with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and will be sending them a draft of the Commencement Order in the next few days. I intend to announce in Parliament that this has been done and to make clear the general timetable I envisage, since it is plain that the Order (which requires no Parliamentary procedure) cannot be made until after the House has risen.

I am copying this minute to members of E(LF) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

MR

MR

14 July 1987

EML19409

