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Prime Minister
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My ref:
Your ref:

The Rt Hon John Wakeham MP
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
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19 April 1988

Dear John

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NEW BURDENS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As usual, I am enclosing the latest lists of Central Government initiatives, having financial and manpower implications for local government, which have been notified to my Department during the last six months. List A contains details of proposals which are likely to result in increases in demands on local government and List B identifies measures which are expected to lead to some reduction.

The first list shows some increase over that for the preceding period (29 compared with 24). A substantial majority (21) are expected to have only minimal implications for local authority expenditure. We should nevertheless continue to have regard to the cumulative effect of additional new burdens, however small, on local government.

I am encouraged that we have logged 12 initiatives which seem likely to lead to overall savings for local authorities, compared with an average of only 4 over the two preceding periods. I welcome colleagues' efforts to look for savings and I am sure that they will continue to examine the scope for reducing burdens on local authorities wherever possible.

These regular six monthly assessments indicate that our overall demands on local government, despite occasional fluctuations, show little sign of abating. It is therefore important that Departments continue to assess the impact of all new Central Government initiatives at an early and formative stage, and to make financial provision wherever necessary to ensure that local authorities have the means to undertake their new tasks.

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

Nicholas Ridley

NICHOLAS RIDLEY



NEW INITIATIVES AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT - 13 SEPTEMBER 1987 - 12 MARCH 1988:

EXPENDITURE AND MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS

A. POTENTIAL INCREASES

PROPOSAL	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL & MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS	CURRENT STATUS WHERE KNOWN AND OVERALL COMMENTS
1. Disposal of colliery spoil : assessment of alternative options	DOE	De minimis ; longer term resource savings expected	Circular issued on 27/7/87
2. National radiation monitoring network (RIMNET) : LA role in informing public in event of an overseas nuclear incident	DOE	De minimis (negligible)	HMSO booklet on statement of proposals published 20.1.88
3. Derelict land survey 1988	DOE	De minimis	
4. Nature conservation: circular	DOE	De minimis	Circular issued 16/12/87
5. Licensing system for football grounds	DOE	Not yet quantified; some scope for privatising the system	Legislation proposed for 1989/90
6. The common parts grant: circular	DOE	De minimis	Circular issued on 22/2/88 under the Housing and Planning Act 1986.
7. Control of air pollution from municipal waste incineration.	DOE	Not yet quantified ; gradual adaptation of existing plant over, say, 5 years - costs to be established once HMIP take control.	Regulations to be laid in Spring 1988 giving HMIP control.
Direct access to the local Ombudsman	DOE	De minimis	Local Government Act
Water metering	DOE/DTI	De minimis expenditure arising from involvement in consultation on metering trials. Other costs (eg restoration of footpaths after the installation of external meters) recoverable from water undertakers.	Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill

PROPOSALS	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL & MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS	CURRENT STATUS WHERE KNOWN AND OVERALL COMMENTS
0. Firearms Legislation	HO	De minimis	
1. Possession of child pornography	HO	De minimis; small additional burden on magistrates' courts	Criminal Justice Bill
2. Enforcement of the Video Recordings Act 1984 by Trading Standards Officers	HO	£99,000 pa; LAAs expect costs to be greater	Amendment to the Video Recordings Act by means of an addition to the Criminal Justice Bill
3. Fitness in the fire service: training course	HO	De minimis	Implementation scheduled for Spring 1988
4. Sale of alcohol in wholesale quantities to children	HO	Not yet quantified	Proposed amendment to the Licensing Bill
5. Licensing vineyards	HO	Likely to be de minimis	Proposed amendment to the Licensing Bill
6. Prohibiting the sale of alcohol by unsupervised under 18 year olds.	HO	Likely to be de minimis	Proposed amendment to the Licensing Bill
7. Provision for licensing justices to impose restriction orders on licensed premises where afternoon opening is giving rise to difficulties.	HO	Likely to be de minimis	Proposed amendment to the Licensing Bill
8. Hot water temperatures: guidance note	DHSS	Likely to be de minimis	
9. Unruliness certificates	DHSS	£1.7m	Due for Implementation in 1989/90
20. "Keep warm, keep well": publicity campaign	DHSS	De minimis	
21. New system for the release of population monitor series	DHSS (OPCS)	De minimis	
22. Proposed pesticide residue regulations	MAFF	Not yet quantified; two options being considered	

PROPOSAL	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL & MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS	CURRENT STATUS WHERE KNOWN AND OVERALL COMMENTS
23. Charges for statistical publications on agricultural land prices	MAFF	Not yet quantified	
24. Welfare of broiler chickens	MAFF	De minimis	
25. EC free food scheme	MAFF	Not yet quantified ; Likely to be de minimis	The extent of burden on LAS is unclear.
26. Direction Signs Review	DTp	£1m pa for 10 years	
27. Increase in weight of goods vehicles: road sign implications	DTp	£171,000 spread over 3 years; consequently de minimis	
28. Product counterfeiting: discretionary power for TSOs	DTI	Expected to be de minimis	Copyright, Designs and Patents Bill
29. Simplifying the system of business licensing	DTI/EDU	Not yet quantified	

B. DECREASES

PROPOSAL	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL & MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS	CURRENT STATUS WHERE KNOWN AND OVERALL COMMENTS
1. Competition in waste disposal operations	DOE	Short term initial costs will be significantly overtaken by savings from the transfer of 5,000 staff to the private sector	
2. Tenants' Choice : right for secure council tenant to seek a new landlord for his existing home.	DOE	Transitional increase in administrative and legal manpower to prepare for and handle initial applications. Later savings of costs and manpower as housing stock reduces ; also income from disposals. No estimates yet.	In Housing Bill. No plans yet for commencement
3. New planning inquiry procedure rules	DOE	Not yet quantified	New rules to be made in about May 1988
4. Housing action trusts	DOE	Some modest reductions in local authority manpower in areas where HATs are established.	Part of the Housing Bill.
5. Longer licensing hours (allowing local authority inspections at more reasonable times and leading to fewer applications for extensions).	HO	De minimis	Licensing Bill
6. Triennial (as opposed to annual) renewals of licences.	HO	De minimis	Licensing Bill
7. Abolition of the requirement to renew extended hours orders.	HO	De minimis	Licensing Bill
8. Review of procedures on stopping up and diversion of highways	DTP	Not yet quantified	

PROPOSAL	ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL & MANPOWER IMPLICATIONS	CURRENT STATUS WHERE KNOWN AND OVERALL COMMENTS
9. Road Traffic Regulation: Package of proposals	DTp	Not yet quantified	Policy clearance sought from 'H'
10. Restrictions on young people's hours of work under the Shops Act 1950	DEM	Not yet quantified	
11. Financing the public library service: consultative paper	OAL	Potential increase in gross income of up to £30m	Policy clearance sought from 'H'. Green Papers published ; comments due back on 30 June 1988.
12. Education Reform Bill: Abolition of ILEA	DES	Not yet quantified; net savings assumed.	