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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley AMICE MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 3EB

4 November 1988

Dear Secretary of State,

THE COMMUNITY CHARGE: PUBLICITY

Thank you for your letter of 14 October. I have also seen the No.10 letter of 24 October with the Prime Minister's comment, and John Moore's letter of 28 October to you.

I was interested to see the draft booklet and learn that you intend to produce a series of factual supplementary leaflets. I agree with you that a booklet of this type to help people understand their rights and obligations under the Community Charge system is consistent, in principle, with the normal conventions on government publicity. The Community Charge policy is now law for England and Wales as well as Scotland, and people must know how it affects them.

I see, however, from John Moore's letter that there are some details of the Community Charge benefit references that will need amending. My officials also noticed a few points where the drafting will need to be clarified, and they will pass comments direct to your officials. As you say, publicity in this area has proved controversial in the past and there is much to be said for checking all this material carefully to make sure it is absolutely correct. It might be helpful therefore if drafts of the factual supplementary leaflets are shown to my officials, and those in other interested departments, before they are published.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Peter Walker, Malcolm Rifkind and John Moore, and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely,
P. Walker

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

LOCAL Gov: rates pt 11

