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From the Principal Private Secretary

26 April 1989

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## ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Over the past three or four years the Government has reviewed most of the responsibilities of local authorities. These reviews have either reduced these responsibilities or changed the manner in which they are exercised in the direction of giving greater emphasis to local authorities as enablers rather than providers. The review of community care is also nearing completion. In consequence, the Prime Minister felt it would be a good time to take stock of the position reached and on the way forward.

The Prime Minister was, therefore, rather surprised to see the terms in which the Manifesto for the County Council elections had been drafted. In particular, she felt that the references to no further major structural reforms, on which she had not been consulted, were particularly categorical, and tended to pre-judge the outcome of the kind of examination envisaged above.

The Prime Minister would welcome a discussion with your Secretary of State on how to take matters forward. In preparation for this it would be helpful to have, within the next two or three weeks, a brief note setting out the position reached in relation to local authority responsibilities and the financial regime under which they operate; and on the issues which lie ahead.

I would be grateful if this letter could be seen by Ministers and officials directly concerned with the handling of the subject of this letter.

I am copying this letter to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Turnbull

ANDREW TURNBULL

Roger Bright, Esq.,  
Department of the Environment

SECRET AND PERSONAL