

PRIME MINISTER

GENERAL REVALUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

You will recall you recently had an exchange of letters with Tony Benn about the position in Northern Ireland with relation to the Community Charge. You replied saying that it had already been made clear that, given the different local government arrangements for the Province, the Community Charge would not apply there.

Peter Brooke has now written round (Flag A) proposing that, since the rating system is to continue, an urgent move should now be undertaken to carry out a revaluation. He proposes doing this in two stages; revaluing non-domestic property first and, after this has been completed in 1992, proceeding with domestic property. He seeks views from colleagues on the substance of the presentation of this issue.

*16 descend*  
John Mills in the Policy Unit (Flag B) questions whether it makes sense to make such an announcement in the present atmosphere of controversy about all matters concerning the Community Charge. He doubts whether a case for urgency can be sustained; but if it can, recommends that any announcement should only relate to the non-domestic revaluation (which could be presented as simply mirroring what has already been done in GB.)

You will want to consider the potential for read-across between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. While I see the force of John Mills' point, one possible counter argument, which would favour Peter Brooke proceeding as he proposes, is that announcing a domestic revaluation in the Province would underline the point you have been making that this would have been the inevitable consequence of not introducing the Community Charge in GB.

i) Content with Peter Brooke's approach subject to comments from colleagues?

Or

ii) Prefer to caution Peter Brooke on the lines suggested by John Mills?

*Yes mk*

*Recg.*

(PAUL GRAY)

2 April 1990

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