



cc PA
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The Rt Hon David Waddington QC MP
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1

My ref

Your ref

20 October 1990

Dear Home Secretary,

COMMUNITY CHARGE CAPPING 1991/92 *Her*

Thank you for your letter of 22 October in response to mine of 16 October.

I cannot accept the comments you make about the adequacy of the standard spending assessments (SSAs) for fire authorities and certainly do not agree that the distribution formula for fire does not ideally reflect the relative needs of different fire authorities. The SSAs for fire authorities are as appropriate as for any other authorities and the capping package I have proposed bites on all equally.

We have looked in great depth at the SSAs for the fire services over the last two years and indeed have considered more alternative options on this service than for any other. Douglas Hurd, when Home Secretary, recommended the formula which was adopted and it has always been clear that SSAs would be an important ingredient in the capping criteria. I have also already accepted a squeeze on the control total for the other services block to give a larger increase for the fire service which will have a relatively generous increase over 1990/91 budgets.

I do, however, understand that there will be a need for particularly careful presentation of the policy in relation to single service authorities. At the moment I am at the point of setting out my provisional intentions for using my capping powers. The time to address the concerns you raise will be in the spring when authorities have set their budgets and I make my decisions on the criteria and on the caps for individual authorities.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other E(LG) colleagues, Nick Lyell and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely

CHRIS PATTEN

Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence



LOCAL GOVT: Rates P# 20

