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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

14 January 1985

Mr Patrick,

NEW BURDENS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 21 December to Peter Rees.

I agree with much of what you say. The correspondence has promoted a common understanding of the importance of identifying as accurately as possible the cost of new responsibilities in close consultation with the local authority associations; and the need to consider each proposal on its merits against the background of overall restraint on public expenditure.

It will also be important that we continue to consider carefully the implications for value for money of new proposals and their effect on the delivery of our policies for services. We must be flexible enough to be ready to make changes by putting new requirements on local authorities when we are persuaded that they would improve efficiency and effectiveness. The alternative is just to let our policies ossify.

Both George Younger and I have emphasised that it is not realistic to presume that there can be a PES transfer into local authority current expenditure in respect of any new responsibility. Each proposal has to be considered on its merits with clearly Peter Rees having an important part to play in identifying where resources can be found when there is common agreement that a policy change should be implemented.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, members of E(LA) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Eric - Jenkin

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for the
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