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My ref:

Your ref:

14 February 1985

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your letter of 4 February enclosing a copy of your latest pamphlet.

I have to say once again that your proposals do not begin to be compatible with our commitment to abolish the GLC. I do ask you to look at the list of functions in Annex B to your pamphlet and consider - what is left to be passed to the boroughs?

copy attached

I cannot believe that abolishing the GLC only to pass all its functions to a successor body elected on a basis seen to be advantageous to Conservative interests would be the best way of honouring our manifesto commitment. Nor do I believe that it would give us an easy passage in the Lords. Your comments on the powers conferred on the Secretary of State in the Bill have been answered again and again. I am disappointed that you repeat what is now discredited GLC propaganda.

Of course, I am always prepared to meet you to discuss any constructive proposals; but I doubt whether any useful purpose would be served by a further meeting at this stage.

Your ever  
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN

Councillor Alan Greengross



ANNEX 'B'

LONDON-WIDE FUNCTIONS

London-wide functions for which a London-wide body would be accountable and for which executive bodies would need to be created, would be

(a) Planning Functions

- (i) Transportation
- (ii) Framework and structure planning
- (iii) Housing mobility
- (iv) Tourism

(b) Financial Functions

- (i) Debt Management
- (ii) Managing residual assets and liabilities
- (iii) Rate equalisation
- (iv) Staff, pensions
- (v) Funding of London-wide voluntary bodies

(c) Service Functions

To ensure, in addition, that effective arrangements operate for the provision of the following services, to fund them London-Wide and to monitor their delivery and performance.

- (i) Fire Service
- (ii) Civil defence
- (iii) Flood prevention and land drainage
- (iv) Refuse disposal
- (v) Resource recovery
- (vi) Setting London-wide pollution standards
- (vii) Statistical services
- (viii) Research and analysis
- (ix) Scientific services
- (x) An archive service
- (xi) Historic Buildings
- (xii) Regional Arts
- (xiii) Regional Parks
- (xiv) Green Belt
- (xv) Specialist Housing Teams
- (xvi) A Concessionary Fares Scheme
- (xvii) The South Bank Arts Complex
- (xviii) Magistrates' Courts in Outer London



London Grand Committee and Select Committee

1. Since March 1984, Sir Philip Goodhart has been developing his idea for a London Grand Committee. Up to and including Second Reading of the Local Government Bill, the proposal was for a London Grand Committee consisting of all 84 London MPs, meeting twenty or twenty-five times a session. The Committee would discuss "the wider interests of London as a whole" and monitor, scrutinise and debate the activities of Ministers with respect to London. Ministers have expressed some interest in the proposal to Sir Philip Goodhart, but have taken the line that it is essentially a matter for the House rather than the Government.

2. Following criticisms that the Grand Committee would be an ineffective talking-shop, Sir Philip has recently modified his proposals. He now proposes (see attached letters) that there should be:

(a) a London Select Committee of nine or eleven members; and

(b) a London Grand Committee of all London MPs which would discuss the reports of the Select Committee, and Ministerial responses thereto.

3. The Select Committee would deal with London-wide subjects in which Ministers have, or will have after abolition, some direct responsibility. Sir Philip suggests that it might initially spend half its time on transport issues. He also suggests that it should deal with issues allocated to lead boroughs or joint boards for which Ministers have a residual interest. He cites waste disposal, grants to voluntary organisations, the fire service. But Ministers interests in some of these will be very marginal. For example, on waste disposal, the Secretary of State will have a power to set up joint authorities of borough councillors if the boroughs do not reach appropriate voluntary agreement.

4. There are, of course, a number of London non-local government functions in which Ministers have at least an equal interest - health, water, industrial development, employment - which would presumably also come within the scope of the Committee. It is difficult to see, also, how it could be deterred from discussing matters relating to the new ILEA, and (as Sir Philip virtually concedes in his letters) to the Metropolitan Police. This could raise questions about the relationship of the Committee to the existing Select Committees.

5. Finally, Sir Philip argues that it would be possible to confine the proposal to London on the grounds that London is the capital, and that the Local Government Bill gives Ministers wider powers in relation to London than in relation to the metropolitan counties. The latter point is doubtful; of the eight powers cited by Sir Philip, seven apply equally to the metropolitan counties.