

NOTE FOR BACKGROUND BRIEFING BY PRESS OFFICERSSEMINAR ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

This was a meeting to take stock of the progress of the review of local government finance and the rating system which was announced by the Secretary of State for the Environment last October. [List Ministers who were present.]

The purpose of the review is to see if a fairer, simpler and more stable system of local government finance can be found which would strengthen accountability of local authorities to their communities, while maintaining a reasonable balance between the interests of central and local government. The review is covering alternatives to domestic rates and is also concerned with business taxpayers, who at present pay rates but do not have a corresponding voice in local government elections.

The Prime Minister and other colleagues present today welcomed the progress made with the work. ~~This was not an occasion for taking decisions.~~ ^{final} There is much further work to be done over the next few months, including consultations with Ministers not represented at Chequers today, and there will be opportunities for wider public discussion before final decisions are made.

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APR 1974

Declined over the telephone to Christine Wall, Press Office

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* The Prime Minister, Lord President, Secretary of State for Environment, Scotland and Wales, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Minister without Portfolio, the Paymaster General, the Minister for Local Government (Mr. Kenneth Baker), the Parliamentary Secretary Department of the Environment (Mr. Waldegrave) and the Parliamentary Secretary Scottish Office (Mr. Ancram).