

The Youth Service

The last thing?
LEAs want in
more dukes
not

The attached H paper by Sir Keith Joseph makes proposals following the recent report of the Review Group on the Youth Service. The Group proposed legislation to:

- i) require education authorities to assess the need for and ensure the availability of (but not necessarily provide themselves) a youth service in their area for all young people aged 11-20;
- ii) empower them to make provision for people outside this age range;
- iii) empower them to provide resources for these purposes.

[Handwritten squiggly mark]

Sir Keith's conclusion is that these proposals are sufficient to put the youth service on a proper legal basis (which has hitherto been lacking) without imposing additional public expenditure burdens on local authorities.

He proposes therefore that the Government should support any backbencher in introducing legislation on these lines. Sir Keith recognises the risk that such legislation would increase pressure on LEAs to make more extensive provision and proposes that any legislation should contain measures to guard against this. The risk of not proceeding is that backbenchers will introduce more prescriptive legislation with direct expenditure implications which, on past experience, would be difficult to resist in Parliament.

TJ

TIM FLESHER
28 October, 1982

Also attached is a letter from Ferdie Mount on Sir Keith's proposals. He makes a number of telling points but I am not sure that his proposal that the MSC should take over the youth service is a practical proposition.

TJ 29/10.

PRIME MINISTERYouth Service

H Committee considered Sir Keith Joseph's paper on legislation on the youth service at its meeting on Monday; you will recall that you agreed with Mr. Mount's criticisms of the proposal to give local authorities more statutory duties. H agreed as well (minutes attached). Although some members thought that there should be declaratory legislation to put the legal position of the youth service beyond doubt, most of the Committee however thought that it would not be right to support a Bill which extended local authorities' statutory duties. They stressed that the Government had a good record on youth training and sporting facilities and had therefore no need to be defensive. It was agreed that legislation would not be prepared.

Green mt

DT.

4 November 1982

CONFIDENTIAL



jo vs
bc Ferdie Mount

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1982

Dear Colin

The Youth Service

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Keith Joseph's paper on "Legislation on the Youth Service" (H(82)46). She has commented that she would be opposed to any legislation which places new, or further, duties on local education authorities. She agrees with the points made in the fourth and fifth paragraphs of Mr. Mount's letter to the Home Secretary of 29 October: that many local education authorities fail to provide adequate education services, and that such failures should not be rewarded with extra responsibility; and that giving local education authorities further responsibilities for the youth service is likely to reduce the voluntary contribution in that field.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of H Committee and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Willie Rickett

Colin Walters, Esq.,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

♀
vs

CONFIDENTIAL

MR SCHOLAR



10 DOWNING STREET

29 October 1982

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC MP
Secretary of State
Home Department
50 Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON SW1

Dear Willie,

LEGISLATION ON THE YOUTH SERVICE

Keith Joseph's memorandum makes rather disturbing reading and at first sight seems to be in conflict with the general direction of Conservative education policy.

It is quite true that the present legal position of the youth service is not entirely clear cut. But the reason for this is understandable. The framers of the 1944 Act were, rightly in their own terms, anxious that the local authority should not be inhibited from providing the fullest possible education service. Thus, it had to be empowered to provide not only playing fields and swimming pools, but also facilities for further education and all the activities now covered by the youth service. Those activities formed part of the penumbra of the local education authority - within its powers, yet not at the core of its duties.

✓ To lay on the local authority an entirely new duty to ensure a comprehensive youth service would be to take a radical step beyond that. Is this what we really want?

✓ After all, one of our greatest worries at present is whether many local education authorities provide adequate education services. Do we wish to "reward" the failures with extra responsibilities?

✓ It is the usual experience that giving local authorities responsibility for any function gradually reduces the voluntary contribution in that field. It is estimated that 90% of the funds now going into the youth service are privately raised. How long would that happy state of affairs continue after legislation?

Inexorably, the number of paid staff - and the cost to public funds - tends to rise. Again, this is surely contrary to our general purposes. The present paper contends that such legislation would be cost-free at the moment. But if the long-term effect of any such legislation were not to add to public expenditure, then it would be virtually pointless. Again, bitter experience teaches us that complaints of "confusion and lack of co-ordination" usually turn out to be euphemisms for "more money, please".

Moreover, those paid staff tend, as often as not, to be less than sympathetic to our viewpoint. Would one be happy to leave "social

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

and political education" in Inner London or South Yorkshire to the employees of the local education authority?

One of the major difficulties facing any Secretary of State for Education is his lack of power vis-a-vis the local education authority. Can it be in the interests of education in the highest sense further to increase that imbalance of power?

If there is a case for tidying up the legislative position, then surely the more appropriate body to deal with youth services would be the national training body, namely the Manpower Services Commission.

This Government may, indeed, be able to guarantee that no extra expenditure would be necessary as a result of such legislation, but no government can bind its successor.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other members of H Committee, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Your ever
sincerely*

FERDINAND MOUNT

CONFIDENTIAL