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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon Peter Rees QC MP
 Chief Secretary
 Treasury
 Parliament Street
 LONDON SW1P 3AG

30 March 1984

Peter Rees

NRPM
AT
30/3

1984 SURVEY : GUIDELINES

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 21 March to the Prime Minister.

As you know, I am doubtful about the value of the traditional across-the-board options for reductions. I set out some of the general arguments against them in my letter of 30 March 1982 to your predecessor: but may I make one specific point about my own programme?

We have examined, and rejected, often more than once, the likely (and some unlikely) candidates in previous Surveys. Your proposed 3 per cent means £100m for DES Vote expenditure - much of which could only come from universities or science where there is no room for manoeuvre, at least in the next two or three years.

At the very least, I suggest that, if options are to be sought, they should build up progressively in size (as in previous years) from 1 per cent in 1985-86 to 3 per cent in 1987-88. This would recognise the inefficiency involved in making sudden large changes in programmes like mine with long lead times.

I am copying this letter to those who had yours.

Gwen. Keir

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