

1.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Carlisle has rethought the attached proposal. He had already looked at existing agencies, and concluded that there was none suitable to cover the wider range of activities which the programme is to promote. He found no alternative but for the Department to have direct responsibility for the programme, with close Ministerial oversight.

He now asks whether you would accept an advisory committee, with the number of outside specialists "as near as possible" to the three or four which you suggested.

This would not be a quango, but a departmental body. Agree that Mr. Carlisle may go ahead on this revised basis?

*Perhaps he would have
- word. I think that it
is already met*

MAP

20 May 1980



ELIZABETH HOUSE,
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

M A Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

19 May 1980

Dear Mike,

MICROELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thank you for your letter of 6 May. When my Secretary of State decided to launch this development programme, he considered first whether an existing agency could handle it or supply the necessary expert advice. Mr Carlisle concluded that there was no existing body which could be made to cover the wider range of activities which the development programme will seek to promote. He was therefore driven to the conclusion that the programme would have to be the direct responsibility of the Department, with close Ministerial oversight.

Mr Carlisle will try to get the number of outside specialists on the advisory committee as near as possible to that suggested by the Prime Minister - given the very wide range of the programme. Would the Prime Minister be content for him to proceed on this basis?

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever
Robert Green
R J GREEN
Private Secretary

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File

289



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 May 1980

Robert Green wrote to me on 19 May, explaining that your Secretary of State had reconsidered the proposed Advisory Committee on Microelectronics Development Programme.

The Prime Minister is still most reluctant to agree this proposal. She would like to have a word with Mr. Carlisle about it. I suggest that we arrange this in the margins of the next occasion on which Mr. Carlisle attends a meeting here.

M. A. PATTISON

Mrs. Mary Bowden,
Department of Education and Science.

28



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 May 1980

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to us of 1 May, about your Secretary of State's intention to establish an advisory committee for the microelectronics development programme.

The Prime Minister is most reluctant to see the creation of new non-departmental public bodies. In this particular case, she is surprised that your Secretary of State finds a need for a body with 13 members. She has asked why this advice could not be channelled through some existing body, preferably by using a team of 3 or 4 specialists.

I am sending copies of this letter to Geoffrey Green (Civil Service Department), John Craig (Welsh Office), Jonathan Margetts (Northern Ireland Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and David Laughrin (Civil Service Department).

M. A. PATTISON

Robert Green, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

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ELIZABETH HOUSE,
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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

C A Whitmore Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

1 May 1980

*Not a new
change - put it
through some
other committee.
And not
13 members
3 or 4?*

PRIME MINISTER

*Content that this
advisory committee be set up?*

*MJP
2/1*

Dear Clive,

MICROELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

My Secretary of State proposes to establish a small committee, chaired by an official but including individuals outside the Government, to advise the Education Departments on the management of the microelectronics development programme for schools and colleges which was announced in an oral reply on 4 March. This requires the Prime Minister's approval and I am enclosing a submission, which my Secretary of State has approved, containing details of the proposed size and structure of the advisory committee.

The Head of the Civil Service has been consulted and is content with what is proposed. I am sending a copy of this letter to his Private Secretary and to the Private Secretary to the Secretary of the Cabinet as well as to Geoffrey Green (CSD), Craig (Welsh Office) and Brown (DENI).

Yours ever,

Robert Green

R J GREEN
Private Secretary

MICROELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
PROPOSED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Note by the Department of Education and Science

A microelectronics development programme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland was announced in the House of Commons on 4 March. The programme is designed to give schools and colleges a better understanding of the potential applications of microelectronic technology by commissioning new development projects and by building on existing work in this field. Nine million pounds is to be made available for this purpose over the next four years. The programme will consist of a number of projects, managed by a fulltime director under the supervision of the Education Departments (DES, Welsh Office Education Department and the Department of Education Northern Ireland).

2. It is proposed to appoint a small advisory committee to assist the Education Departments in the supervision of this programme by providing expert advice. The committee would be chaired by a senior DES official but most of its 13 members would be individuals from outside the Government knowledgeable and experienced in the field of microelectronics applications in education or in the demands which this technology is likely to make on young people in employment. The external members would be appointed on a personal basis (not nominated by representative bodies) but would between them cover the main interests in this field.

3. The advisory committee would have no executive functions and would cease to exist when the development programme came to an end. This would be made clear to prospective members, and they would be appointed on the understanding that the Departments were free to reject their advice. The chairman of the committee would be required to submit an annual report to the Secretaries of State reviewing past work and outlining their plans for the following year. This will provide Ministers and other senior officials with a regular opportunity to review progress.