

c.c. Mary Brown (LPS's office)

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PRIME MINISTER

## CENTRALLY CO-ORDINATED EFFICIENCY EXERCISES 1983

Your Private Secretary's letter of 26 January invited proposals for the 1983 scrutiny programme.

I propose this year to undertake a study of the arrangements in DOE for disseminating information to the public and outside bodies. This is something which occupies a great deal of time within the Department where our policy divisions respond to many public enquiries about matters which could perhaps be better dealt with in some more organised way. In addition, we spend some £1½m to £2m a year on paid publicity, including free leaflets, advertising, films and so on. I would therefore propose to study the cost-effectiveness of the various techniques available for disseminating information, identify the best practice both within and outside the Department, and obtain recommendations both on the level of our activity in the area and the most cost-effective way of meeting the Government's objectives.

I attach draft terms of reference. However, this is a complex area where I will have to set out my objectives very carefully, and if you are broadly content I would like to give the matter some further thought before settling on precise terms of reference. I would not in any case propose to begin this study until later in the year: our studies for the 1982 programme are only now in their final stages and there are advantages in keeping up a steady momentum in the planning of reviews.

25 March 1983

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## DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INFORMATION STUDY

To consider the methods used within the Department for disseminating information to the public and to interested bodies in those areas for which it has a policy responsibility and where a reasonable need to inform the public exists; to compare these methods with the best practice both within and outside the Department; and to make recommendations designed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of the Department's arrangements.

The study should have particular regard to:

- a. the cost-effectiveness of different methods of dissemination, including free and paid publications, films, paid advertising, exhibitions and press briefing;
- b. the take-up of information through specific outlets, such as local authorities, citizen's advice bureaux, professional and trade associations;
- c. the use of different approaches in different parts of the Department, and the scope for rationalisation;
- d. the practice of selected outside organisations, including other government departments;
- e. the Department's use of COI and HMSO;
- f. the role of the Library in disseminating information to outside bodies ~~only~~;
- g. the role of officers in the Department in responding to public enquiries by letter and telephone, and the possible need to rationalise this (eg by increased use of enquiry points).



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