

23 July 1985

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AUDIT COMMISSION

Patrick Jenkin wants to preach the Audit Commission's gospel more widely by providing:

1. DoE material for Ministerial speeches on the horrors revealed by the Commission;
2. a summary of the annual Commission report for all English MPs;
3. better figures on unit costs in local authorities;
4. more funds from the DoE's own vote, to finance value-for-money training by the Local Government Training Board, and for competitions to spot both the most efficient and the most wasteful local authorities;
5. a publicity-generating conference on the Commission's work;
6. a new system for following up the defects in central Government practice identified by the Commission.

All of these proposals sound sensible. But the most interesting part of the paper is John Banham's description of the Commission's own publicity apparatus (page 3 of Annex B). Several features stand out:

- small cost (£100,000 pa);
- a small number of very well produced reports;
- free distribution of high-quality glossy summaries;
- frequent presentations, interviews etc (almost one a day);
- constant high-level contact with the 'client group';
- intensive coverage in the Press and other media.

Can central Government claim anything like the same success
for its publicity efforts?

We recommend that you should:

- i. welcome Patrick Jenkin's proposals; and
- ii. ask Patrick to consider using some of the Audit Commission's successful publicity tactics for his new campaigns on inner-city dereliction and surplus land disposal.

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