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My ref:

Your ref:

2 August 1984

Sorensen

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5830

Dear David

LIVERPOOL

You asked for a note of possible engagements that the Prime Minister might undertake in a visit to Liverpool. A list is enclosed.

My Secretary of State has seen this list and commented that a visit "that did not include at least one Liverpool black spot would be misunderstood. To spend the morning at MDC showpieces and the afternoon for example in Sefton and Knowsley would be unlikely to strike the right balance."

In addition to the engagements on the list arrangements could be made for the Prime Minister to address, over lunch, the Liverpool Luncheon Club. This is essentially an off-shoot of the Chamber of Commerce and meets regularly at the Adelphi Hotel. It would provide a good audience of local business and community leaders if this was desired.

The Liverpool component in the enclosed list could be increased but Stockbridge Village has been referred to several times in correspondence and might appear particularly suitable. The local authority dimension will be sensitive. Merseyside County Council shows no signs of accepting the fact of abolition and is one of 18 rate-capped authorities. I do not think any comment is required on Liverpool City Council.

Yours sincerely

JOHN BALLARD  
Private Secretary

David Barclay Esq

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1. The Merseyside County Council area comprises 6 local authorities: the County Council (to be abolished), Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral. The framework for the visit includes engagements in Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton only.

LIVERPOOL (Labour controlled)

Wavertree Technology Park: 64 acre derelict site being reclaimed for high technology industry: £8.5 million land reclamation and infrastructure scheme, mainly financed through Derelict Land Grant. Joint venture between Plessey Ltd, City Council, County Council, English Estates.

Toxteth Sports Centre: built to Sports Council's design. Cost £750,000, funded through the Liverpool inner city Partnership (Urban Programme). The adjoining £310,000 artificial grass football pitch was funded under the £1 for £1 scheme with the public sector contribution (Sports Council) being matched by the private sector.

Water Sports Centre: refurbishment of building funded by Liverpool inner city Partnership to provide centre for canoe club using adjoining canal. Run by Merseyside Council for Voluntary Service. Nearby is example of environmental scheme - the refurbishment of a series of canal locks and restoration of tow path. Funded through the Partnership (County Council scheme). Both the Water Sports Centre and the canal improvement involve the use of temporary labour funded by the MSC.

Education: The Partnership funds a number of Parent Support Units in Liverpool. Their purpose is to encourage closer involvement by parents with their children's schools and to encourage parents to use school facilities to improve their education.

Housing: there are ample examples of poor housing particularly council estates owned by Liverpool. There are also examples of low cost home ownership schemes, and a particularly good example of refurbishment by the private sector of a large tenement block previously owned by Liverpool and scheduled for demolition. This was undertaken by Barratts and is at Minster Court, Toxteth. There are also a number of examples of housing cooperatives. These are housing associations where the responsibility for day-to-day management is undertaken by the occupiers themselves.

Merseyside Development Corporation: the Corporation is responsible for regenerating some 900 acres of disused dock land in the heart of the conurbation. The Corporation's area is in 3 parts, the largest part being in Liverpool. A spectacular project is the refurbishment of the Albert Dock Warehouse, a massive building of historical interest (grade 1). Part of the Albert Dock has just been opened to house the Merseyside Maritime Museum (a County Council project). Another part is being developed for shops and offices and the first shops have just opened.



The Development Corporation are also responsible for the International Garden Festival which is proving very successful. It was opened by The Queen on 2 May and already 1½ million people have visited the Festival. It closes on 14 October.

SEFTON (Conservative controlled)

A visit to Bootle at the southern end of the borough would provide a convenient way of seeing in a compact area three examples of housing problems and initiatives:

Church Street: Typical example of 1950s public sector housing now providing very poor living conditions. The estate is replicated in many areas of Merseyside. An initiative is planned to rescue the estate similar to:-

Marsh Lane Estate: Community Refurbishment Scheme has secured impressive improvement. Scheme involved joint funding by MSC, Urban Programme and Local Authority. Estate based management has been responsible for clearing backlog of repairs, improvement to dwellings, environmental improvements. MSC support has enabled scheme to employ large numbers of local people from unemployment register.

Waverley Park: Example of co-operation between local authority and private sector to rescue dilapidated public sector housing stock. Vacant maisonettes and flats have been sold to Wimpey Construction Ltd who have successfully converted/improved the buildings as houses and flats for sale.

KNOWSLEY (Labour controlled)

Stockbridge Village: Run-down 1960s council estate (3,500 dwellings) sold by Knowsley Council to Trust funded by Abbey National building society, Barclays Bank and Knowsley Council. Now in process of refurbishment with urban programme assistance. Impressive improvement to living conditions, environment, repairs, management. Successful build for sale schemes by Barratts Ltd with some shared ownership.

Knowsley Industrial Park: Very large industrial estate. Sold by Liverpool City Council to Knowsley Council in 1982. Major upgrading initiative using Derelict Land Grant and urban programme funds, MSC and the private sector. On the estate there is an Information Technology Centre providing young people with training in basic computing and electronic skills, funded by the MSC.