



feels

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

3 October 1984

Dear Robin

Thank you for your letter of 26 September to John Ballard about the report by Sir John Sainsbury's group on the planning system. We had not previously seen the report and you have now sent us copies.

As you say, the Prime Minister will be well disposed towards having a discussion with the Group, as Sir John Sainsbury proposes, and this could clearly be helpful. My Secretary of State would welcome the opportunity to join that discussion, and he will forward his comments on the report shortly.

Mr Jenkin's first impression is that the general attitude and approach that the report adopts is wholly in line with current policy and can be warmly endorsed. the detailed proposals tend to reflect the legalistic character of the system and some of the changes proposed could add to the complexity and delays rather than reduce them; but all are worth serious consideration. They are all intended to ensure that the system works better, rather than envisaging any major dismantling of the system.

There is one point that it may be useful to clarify at this stage. Paragraph 5.1 of the report quotes 48 weeks as the time taken to decide planning appeals. This relates only to the 5% of cases retained for Ministerial decision. Of these cases only those involving an inquiry (57%) took 48 weeks; those decided on written representations took 39 weeks. The times taken for the other 95% of cases decided by the Inspectorate in 1983 were 26 weeks for inquiry cases and 19 weeks for those determined on written representations (which account for 76% of the total). We are not satisfied with these times but they are better than the report might imply and far better than they were 10 years ago.

I am copying this letter to Callum McCarthy (DTI) and Leigh Lewis (Office of the Minister without Portfolio).

Yours sincerely
A H Davis

A H DAVIS
Private Secretary

Robin Butler Esq

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13 OCT 1984

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Sir John SAINSBURY'S
report



5/10. file

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

26 September 1984

I enclose a copy of a letter to me from Sir John Sainsbury covering the Report on the Town and Country Planning System. I expect that you have received a copy of the Report independently. Sir John Sainsbury suggests a discussion with the Prime Minister, and since the Prime Minister has a natural interest in this subject and the Report comes from a group including Lord McAlpine and Sir John Sainsbury I expect that she would be well disposed towards having such a discussion.

BF

I should be grateful for your advice about the handling of the Report before I sign a substantive reply to Sir John Sainsbury.

I am copying this letter and the enclosure to Callum McCarthy (Department of Trade and Industry) and Leigh Lewis (Office of the Minister without Portfolio).

F.R.R.B.

John Ballard Esq
Department of the Environment



file
JSM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

26 September 1984

Thank you very much for your letter of 25 September enclosing the report on the Town and Country Planning System prepared by the group in which you took part. As you know, the Prime Minister will be very interested to see this, and I will write to you again when I have her reactions.

Sir John Sainsbury

207

Stamford House Stamford Street London SE1 9LL

01-921 6000

F.E.R Butler Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister,
No 10 Downing Street,
London SW1

26th September, 1984

FERB
Dear Mr. Butler,

In case it would be helpful,
I am enclosing two further copies of the
document Sir John sent you this morning.

/attached,

Yours sincerely,

*See folder
attached
to file*

Felicity Saunders

Miss F.A. Saunders iss
Secretary to Sir John Sainsbury

1
Prime Minister

Stamford House Stamford Street London SE1 9LL
01-921 6000

The Secretary of State for the Environment sees no objection to your discussing the proposals in the attached report with Sir John Sainsbury and those who helped prepare it. Agree to a meeting with Mr. Jenkin present?
25th September, 1984

F.E.R. Butler, Esq.,
Principal Private Secretary to
The Prime Minister,
No 10, Downing Street,
London SW1

FEB

3.10.

We need detailed comment (with full consideration) for P.O. 15
then - a meeting not

Ackd
26.9.

Dear Robin

The enclosed document has been prepared at the suggestion of Alistair McAlpine, following discussions on the town and country planning system. A number of prominent individuals, with widespread interests in commercial building and development, shared a common concern on the working of the system and the need for reform.

Alistair thought it might be helpful for the Prime Minister if a document was prepared setting out the reasons for our criticism and concern, together with proposals to improve the efficiency of planning that we believe should be considered.

The document I enclose is a result of a number of discussions between those named in the document. We trust that our recommendations will be thought worthy of detailed examination, for they are a genuine attempt by a group who have widespread experience of the operations of the system and whose objective is to assist the Government by drawing attention to the need for change, and the benefits that would arise should such changes be made.

Naturally all of us would be pleased to have the opportunity of discussing our proposals, should the Prime Minister wish to do so.

[Handwritten signature]
[Handwritten signature]

John Sainsbury

