Pre Minister:

Mr FLESHER

Flagged at A is the press notice for the Reading contract and your visit and at B is the White Paper.

cc PS/Lord Privy Seal
Mr Priestley

FORMS EXHIBITION

8/10

The Prime Minister is to visit the Forms Exhibition in the Cabinet Office on Monday 11 October, at 2 40pm. The Lord Privy Seal will accompany her.

2. The background is a Rayner Review which identified scope for considerable improvement in administrative forms. The Government announced a firm policy for fewer and better forms in the White Paper on Administrative Forms, published last February.

Copy with Questions

3. The exhibition is designed to show staff the importance of good forms and the seriousness of the Government's drive for improvement. The opportunity of the Prime Minister's visit has been taken to announce a modest contract with Reading University to provide advice to government departments on forms design. But the main thing is that we are following up the White Paper by means of a small Forms Unit working to me in MPO and co-ordinating the work of similar units in departments. The PM will have a report on progress since the White Paper next February.

4. Mr Priestley and I will be available to answer any enquiries. The Prime Minister might like to look particularly at the 3 most important forms incorporated in the exhibition (the tax return, the supplementary benefit claim form and the VAT return from businesses), at the panels relating to costs, and at the ways in which the centre is promoting good practice. The key issues are:

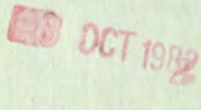
- Do officials recognise the importance of having good forms?

- What progress are we making now and what successes can we point to?

- Where do we go after February 1983?

B R MORRIS
8 October 1982

A contract to make forms simple to be left to a University. What are Universities doing these days. We have polytechnics, colleges of art & design, further education colleges, evening classes and yet Universities go in for design. Why? Over £57,000! This is for the LPS to answer - not me!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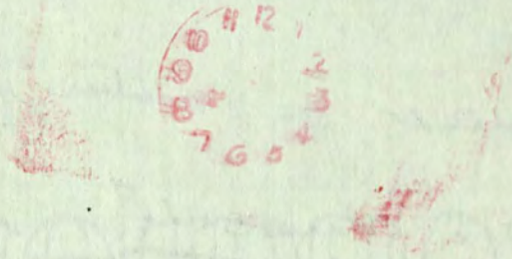

Govt Mach 4

Prime Minister:
To note.
18/11

MR FLESHER

cc Mr Priestley

FORMS

You may recall that when the Prime Minister visited the Forms exhibition last month, she commented on the need to increase the take up of family income supplement, and on the FIS application form. You might like to note that DHSS have confirmed to me that the latter is to be reviewed.

B R MORRIS
17 November 1982

Gov March:

Administrative Forms:

Sept 80

cc Cabinet
CWO
CO
LOD

Gov mach HL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 October 1982

Dear Private Secretary,

The Prime Minister has recently visited the exhibition on administrative forms, now on display in the Cabinet Office. She hopes that all Ministers will take an opportunity of examining the exhibition when attending meetings there, and ensure that it is displayed in due course to as many officials as possible in their own Departments.

The Prime Minister attaches considerable importance to making progress on Government forms. The contrast in the exhibition between good and bad forms is, she thinks, very striking, in terms of both the public face of Government that forms represent, and the gains in efficiency that are possible.

The Prime Minister is looking forward to receiving the report of progress since the White Paper on Administrative Forms due next February, which the MPO is co-ordinating.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to all Ministers responsible for Departments.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Flesher

Tim Flesher

Prime Minister:

I thought it worthwhile to follow up your visit; do you agree that I should send the attached minute?

There is no reason why we should not have the exhibition in No 10 for a while: it would also give it some prestige. Do you agree that we should do so?

Mr Flesher

FORMS

Pse type signature, & send P—S—. Thx. PT 12/10

cc
PS/Lord Privy Seal
PS/Permanent Secretary
PS/2nd Permanent Secretary
Mr Priestley

The Prime Minister visited the Forms Exhibition yesterday and I am glad that she reaffirmed the drive for better forms.

2 I understand that you agree with the suggestion that we take this opportunity of reminding Ministers of the Government's commitment in this area. I attach accordingly a draft letter for you to send to Private Secretaries.

3 The Prime Minister suggested that the Exhibition could perhaps be moved into No 10 itself, to ensure that Ministers had an opportunity of seeing it. My initial view was that this would be overtaken by writing as in the attached draft. We happened however to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer this morning, who evinced great interest in forms; and who also said that he would not normally pass the Exhibition at its present site. I should therefore be grateful if you could further consider the Prime Minister's suggestion (and I have left the reference to the Cabinet Office in the attached draft in square brackets accordingly).

B R Morris
12 October 1982

We could have it here just for 2 days or so Tues - Thurs. - but let us keep other things full. no

DRAFT LETTER OF 11 OCTOBER FROM MR FLESHER TO PRIVATE SECRETARIES TO MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

GOVERNMENT FORMS

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4 I am sending a copy of this letter to Private Secretaries to all Ministers responsible for Departments.

Civil Service

Ref: A09696

11/10

MR. FLESHER

I gather that the Prime Minister hopes to come and see the Forms Exhibition here in the Cabinet Office this afternoon.

2. I should of course have wanted to be here to receive her myself; but I am afraid that I shall be giving evidence at the Franks Committee at that time. I hope that she will forgive my absence.

RA

Robert Armstrong

11th October 1982

GR papers.

Mr B R MORRIS

cc for optional comment

Mr Flesher

FORMS EXHIBITION: VISIT BY PM ON 11 OCTOBER

I attach a draft minute to Mr Buckley in the LPS's office, following our visit to the Cabinet Office this morning.

2. I should be glad to know whether it makes the points which need making. You might also have a word with Mr Flesher about his copy of this minute and see whether he has any advice for us.

C PRIESTLEY
4 October 1982

Enc: Draft minute

DRAFT OF 4 OCTOBER 1982

Mr BUCKLEY

cc for information
Mr Hatfield (CO)
Miss Goodison (MPO)
Mr B R Morris
Mr Stubbs

FORMS EXHIBITION: VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER, 11 OCTOBER

1. The purpose of this minute is to consult the Lord Privy Seal about arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit to this exhibition, which I have seen in company with Mr Morris and (briefly) with Sir Robert Armstrong.

2. Mr Morris has somewhat re-jigged the exhibition to focus it more immediately and sharply on action since the White Paper. The main intention is to bring the Prime Minister up to date with developments and to remind her that she may look forward to a report early next year on the first twelve months action.

3. The Lord Privy Seal will presumably go to 10 Downing Street and walk through to the Cabinet Office with the Prime Minister. Mr Morris and I will await the Ministerial party in the Cabinet Office. The Lord Privy Seal will no doubt wish to introduce Mr Morris to the Prime Minister (whom he has met before, at one of the financial management presentations in 1981).

4. I suggest that Mr Morris then takes the Ministers to the exhibition in Cockpit Passage and leads them through it. The COI has designed the panels to tell their own story, but I have asked Mr Morris to prepare a commentary, drawing

attention to the main points and filling out some of the detail in which the Ministers might be interested.

5. I understand that the press may be present. You will wish to ascertain the Prime Minister's wishes in this regard with the Press Office at No 10. They may like to form a judgment in company with Mr Morris who could take them over the exhibition. It is perhaps relevant that in my judgement there are only one or two panels which would photograph well in a daily paper.

6. Subject to your consultations with the Press Office, I should be glad to know whether the Lord Privy Seal is content for us to proceed as suggested above.

C PRIESTLEY

FICE VB

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 September 1982

Thank you for your letter of 14 September to Tim Flesher, who is away at the moment, about the White Paper on Administrative Forms.

The Prime Minister will be delighted to come and see the exhibition which has been prepared when it is on display in the Cockpit Passage in the Cabinet Office. On present plans, she would come along at 1500 on Monday 11 October.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Ministers in charge of Departments, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

MCS

D.R.H. Board, Esq.,
Lord Privy Seal's Office.

010

Management and Personnel Office
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
Telephone 01-273 } 4400
GTN 273 }

14 September 1982

Prime Minister

I can find 15 mins at 1500 on Monday 11th October. Agree? Yes no

Tim Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Tim

OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTERS TO VIEW ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS EXHIBITION

In its White Paper on Administrative Forms (Cmnd 8504) published earlier this year, the Government announced a comprehensive programme to get rid of some of the 2,000 million forms and leaflets which departments issue annually and to improve those which have to be retained. As part of this drive, an exhibition has been prepared and is on show to civil servants at a number of locations. It drives home the importance of good forms and the price of bad ones, both in extra administration and for members of the public and businesses who have to complete them.

When Sir Robert Armstrong saw the display he suggested that Ministers might find it both convenient and of interest if it were shown for a period in the Cabinet Office. The Exhibition will therefore be on display from 27 September to 22 October in the Cockpit Passage and the Lord Privy Seal is glad to commend it to her colleagues.

The MPO will be reporting to the Lord Privy Seal and the Prime Minister next February on the progress which departments are making in implementing the White Paper, but if the Prime Minister were to be able to find time to see the Exhibition the Lord Privy Seal would be very willing to explain it and the work which is in progress.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to Ministers in charge of departments, and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Douglas Board

D R H BOARD
Assistant Private Secretary