



2 MARSHAM STREET

LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

ms.
13 September 1985

Prime Minister ②

All this assistance is that
provided through Partnership money.
It excludes RTD and Community
Programme assistance, eg.

Dear David

HANDSWORTH

My Secretary of State was asked at yesterday's Cabinet to provide a short note for Ministerial colleagues on the support that the Government has given to Handsworth through the Birmingham Inner City Partnership. The note is attached.

MEP
13/9

I am sending copies of this letter and the note to the Private Secretaries to all Cabinet Ministers, with a request that they let other Ministers in their Department have copies, and to Richard Hatfield.

Yours sincerely

Alan Davis

ALAN DAVIS
Private Secretary

David Norgrove Esq

HANDSWORTH AND THE BIRMINGHAM INNER CITY PARTNERSHIP

The Birmingham Partnership, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for the Environment, brings together Central Government, the Birmingham City Council, the West Midlands County Council and the Health Authorities.

Since 1979 it has spent £130m. Handsworth is a priority area, and has received £20m in the last 4 years.

£14m has been spent on housing enveloping schemes which involve the wholesale external renovation of private properties at no cost to their owners and represent a better economic proposition than clearance/redevelopment. The Government contributes 75% of the money on Urban Programme (UP) schemes; the local authority finds 25%. Enveloping schemes are also subsidised by Central Government.

Nearly all the investment has been achieved since 1981, and assertions, based on the 1981 Census figures, that Handsworth has been neglected or is full of crumbling housing are wide of the mark.

Examples of Government funded projects in Handsworth are:

Housing Enveloping: to date 6,300 properties improved; another 1,000 in the pipeline. This has involved UP expenditure of £2.7m and housing expenditure of £14m. The UP has also supported schemes to improve houses in multiple occupation and to help unemployed young blacks to refurbish empty houses for reoccupation, often for themselves.

Shopping. £2.75m has been spent on the systematic upgrading of shops in Soho Road, Lozells Road, Villa Road, Dudley Road.

Health. A new health centre has been built in the Soho area, at a cost of £0.4m. The Partnership has also funded specialised health workers and investigations relevant to dietary, health and child care needs of black and Asian families.

Leisure and Recreation. £0.5m has been spent on the improvement of Handsworth Park (62 acres) and the associated Sports Hall. A Play Centre at the Sports Hall is to be built at a cost of £150,000. Other sport and play facilities have been built or improved, and Grove Lane swimming pool is to be replaced at a cost of £1.4m.

Economy and Employment. £3m has been spent on industrial developments close to the residential area, including Camp Lane, Soho Road and Avenue Road. £1.5m has been spent on schemes to train and counsel black offenders for work and skills training courses at Handsworth Technical College.

Community Relations. "Lozells Project" pioneered community policing (UP cost £0.25m).

Social Fabric. Well over 100 other schemes have been supported under UP, includes projects which promote self help among ethnic minorities, such as the Handsworth Cultural Centre (£0.3m), Muhammed Ali Centre (£0.25m) and Community Transport (£0.5m), and projects encompassing day nurseries, provision for ethnic minority mentally ill, single homeless, interpreters for minority languages, lone mothers and children, Asian women groups, childminder visitors.

BACKGROUND NOTE ON HANDSWORTH

The area in which the disturbances took place lies around the junction of the City Wards of Handsworth, Soho and Lozells. Together these three Wards contain 88,000 inhabitants, about 9% of Birmingham's population and about 30% of the core area covered by the inner city partnership. About half the population is black or Asian, fairly evenly divided (it is the Sikh stronghold in Birmingham). It is a residential area, housing mainly built for Victorian artisans, with shopping along the Soho and Lozells road, but with little industry or scope for industrial sites. In consequence the contribution of the Urban Programme in this part of the City has mainly been on housing and environmental schemes and on support for community enterprise and voluntary groups among the large ethnic population.

Unemployment in Handsworth is high - 40% total unemployment in June 1985; less than 35% car ownership (1981 Census); demand for training places in (white-run) schemes is low. There is however no evidence to suggest that Monday's rioting was a product of community resentment about the physical conditions of the inner city; and several of those community leaders whose projects the UP supports have come forward as peacemakers. There are no grounds for concluding that the Urban Programme has failed in Handsworth or that major new investment in the area is needed, but it will be important to continue support, in particular for responsible black leaders.

Handsworth/Soho/Aston Wards (1981 census figures except where shown)

Population (est 1984)	88,000	9% of City population
Persons in households with head born in New Commonwealth	Aston 38% Handsworth 55% Soho 62%)) 49% overall)
Owner-occupation	Aston 22% Handsworth 51% Soho 51%	
Car-ownership	under 35%	
Unemployment (June 1985)	11,700 (40%)	
Youth unemployment (16-19) (Jan 1985)	54%	
Young blacks unemployed (est)	60% +	