



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Press Secretary

LORD PRESIDENT

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

CHURCH COMMISSION REPORT ON URBAN DEPRIVATION

This note records the outcome of a meeting with officials held today by the Secretary of State for the Environment, accompanied by John Patten and Sir George Young, on the above publication.

It was stated that the report was now due for publication at 21.00 hours - ie for the BBC's 9pm news - on Tuesday, December 3, presumably with embargoed copies available up to 24 hours before.

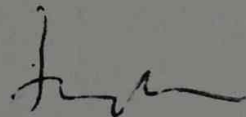
It was decided:

- Department of the Environment should take the lead because the report concentrated on its policies
- no attempt should be made to pre-empt the report this weekend; this, it was agreed, was a difficult judgement to make but on balance it was felt that a preemptive strike could draw more attention to the report than it would otherwise get
- if, however, the report was leaked or trailed this weekend, Mr Baker and his Ministers would be ready to deal with points arising on radio and television
- Ministers should be available in the course of Tuesday to respond in and on the media; but it was important to try to avoid getting into a Church v. Government row while at the same time making the most of the Government's case
- officials should sharpen up draft briefing and prepare a speaking note to be available to Backbenchers in the Whips' Office at the time of publication. (I indicated that the Lord President would like copies before his Liaison Committee on Tuesday morning (9.45)).
- this note should rehearse all that the Government was already doing for areas of urban deprivation

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- every effort would be made to brief Backbenchers in the major urban areas so that they could respond positively in and on their local media on Tuesday evening and subsequently
- leader writers on the Sun, Express, Mail and Times would be briefed on Tuesday
- consideration would be given to Ministers seeing the Archbishop after publication
- efforts would be made to arrange for a leading theologian to analyse the report in a critical way in The Times after publication

The meeting felt it likely that the main point of media stories would be the criticism in Chapter 9 of the report on the morality of Government policy in relation to under privileged areas. Briefing would need to meet the report's moral case against the Government.



BERNARD INGHAM
28 November 1985