

Mr. Ryder.
(F)

OFFICE NOTICE

Contingency Plans for a Possible
Thames Flood

A Thames flood is a slight, but real, risk. The Government has put in hand some contingency planning, to cope so far as possible with such an emergency.

This note gives some background, and the outline plan for No.10. I would be grateful for help in completing that plan from those who receive this minute, which please show to those concerned.

The difficulty is obvious of making a detailed plan for a situation which is only hypothetical until it happens - and nobody knows exactly what might happen. But we ought to be ready.

BACKGROUND

A risk of a Thames flood remains until the Barrier at Woolwich is completed, now due in 1982. Such a flood could inundate 45 square miles of the low-lying areas of London, and the lower Thames Valley. Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, 10 Downing Street, and a number of Government buildings are in the risk area. On the worst assumption, flood water in the Whitehall area could be about 1½ metres above pavement level, and power and other basic services could be interrupted. Public transport would be withdrawn.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND NO.10

If there is a Thames flood, the Prime Minister, with supporting staff from here and the Cabinet Office, will move to New Court, Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. This is a Government building, under the control of the Property Services Agency. It is a "working" building only with no residential accommodation as such; there will clearly have to be arrangements made for night duty staff. The Prime Minister would probably go to Chequers each night.

It is not possible to predict how long it would be before the Prime Minister would be able to move back to No.10.

/On present planning,

On present planning, the following staff would be required at Carey Street:-

(Prime Minister)	1
Principal Private Secretary	1
Private Secretaries	5
Political Secretary	1
Press Officers	2
Duty Clerks	4
Garden Room Secretaries	6
Detective	1
Messengers	2
Drivers	2
Telephonists	<u>2</u>
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WARNINGS

The first public warning of a Thames flood would be given by the GLC 4 hours beforehand. If this occurred during the day, employers would send home all those who worked in the risk area, or would have to travel through it to reach their homes.

There would be a further warning 1 hour before flooding was expected.

These flood warnings would be given to the Duty Clerk.

ACTION TO TAKE

In outline, this would be as follows:-

If the 4-hour warning occurred during office hours, those who had to travel through the risk areas would be sent home. Those moving to Carey Street would be responsible for collecting together stationery, portable typewriters, essential files etc. Those not going to Carey Street, but who would have no problem in reaching their homes, would be expected to remain to help in any way they could.

The Prime Minister and supporting staff would leave No.10 for Carey Street at the 1-hour warning.

/If the

If the 4-hour warning occurred outside office hours, the Duty Clerk would telephone all those required for Carey Street, to let them know they would be required there in the morning. Certain staff would also be asked to report to No.10 as soon as possible.

Arrangements are being made to man No.10 itself during the emergency, and to take what steps we can to protect records.

DESIGNATION OF STAFF

Would Heads of Section concerned please designate members of their staff accordingly, and let me have names, with addresses and telephone numbers? Clearly, it would be sensible, so far as possible, to choose those who could reach Carey Street under their own steam, and without having to travel through flooded areas.

The next step will then be to draw up a detailed plan.

I will do my best to answer questions.

CVP

30 November 1979