



Association of Metropolitan Authorities
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From the Chairman Councillor Jack Smart CBE JP

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

7 July 1981

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to ask you to receive a deputation from my Association about the plight of England's inner cities.

As you know we have put the problems of our urban areas - the lack of resources, the social deprivation, the increased unemployment - before the Secretary of State for the Environment on numerous occasions during the past year. We have protested about the reductions in Government's assistance to these areas, but to no avail.

After the Brixton riots my Association instructed me to go back to the Secretary of State for the Environment again. I did so, and while he expressed concern when we met him there has again been no change in Government policy.

The events in Liverpool over the last few days have emphasised yet again how serious this problem is. We need more resources in our inner cities. It is not true, as some Ministerial statements have implied, that extra resources have been made available to such areas. By the Department of the Environment's own figures the reduction in rate support grant to Liverpool for this year as compared with last is over £11m - in percentage terms a reduction of 9%. And if the Secretary of State enforces his threats of action to cut grant further that loss will rise to nearly £14m.

But this is not just a case about Liverpool. The same problems apply in many of our inner city areas. And furthermore the loss of grant under your Government's policy is much greater in other areas, particularly in inner London. In Tower Hamlets for example the reduction in grant which the Government is imposing is of the order of 40%.

We need more resources for the inner cities, and we need them now. I ask you to meet me and my colleagues for an urgent discussion on what should be done.

Yours sincerely

Jack Smart