



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

March 1983

Don Bedford

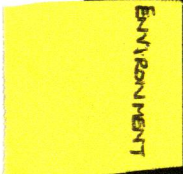
Thank you for your letter of 8 February. As requested, I enclose a note of the points for possible inclusion in a Manifesto, covering my area of responsibility.

I would make 2 points. First, the very important material on local government finance and structure obviously cannot be finalised until we have reached views in MISC 79, ELF and Cabinet. Second, this is very much a first draft, primarily intended to give an indication of the ground to be covered. At the appropriate time, I would, of course, like to work further on the drafting.

Tom King

TOM KING

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe MP



HOUSING

The Conservative Government has fulfilled its promise to widen opportunities for home ownership. We shall continue to meet the aspirations of many families to own their own home. We shall build on and improve the present right to buy scheme for public sector tenants. The range of low-cost home ownership initiatives will be expanded, especially through a widening of the shared ownership schemes in both public and private sectors.

We shall further develop the assured tenancy scheme for the private rented sector. In the public rented sector the most pressing need is to improve the conditions in which many tenants now live. We shall implement the right to repair provisions of the 1983 legislation. We shall concentrate on better management, with tenants taking greater responsibility for their own estates. We shall continue to support the investment by the public sector in improvement and rehabilitation.

[Section on building society powers.]

URBAN POLICY

Priority will continue to be given to the areas most in need of assistance, through the Urban Development Corporations, the Urban Programme, and via the Partnership and Programme Authorities.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

We shall consider whether new machinery is needed to coordinate and initiate urban renewal activities in the areas of greatest stress. There may be a larger role for housing associations. The partnership between public and private sectors will continue - including the continuation of the urban development grant - to enable available resources to be used to maximum effect. The programme for the reclamation of derelict land will continue, as will our efforts to secure the disposal of under-used public sector land.

RURAL POLICY AND WILDLIFE

It is important to strengthen and diversify the rural economy, and we shall encourage new initiatives wherever possible. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the most important piece of legislation affecting the countryside ever introduced in Britain. It is designed to safeguard areas of natural beauty and to protect features of scientific interest. We shall build on that. We shall not extend planning controls over farming activities and we shall concentrate on the principle of voluntary agreements with land owners. We shall continue to support measures to protect endangered species and carry forward the progressive approach we have adopted towards the conservation of whales, seals and other wildlife.

ENVIRONMENT QUALITY

We are determined to advance the cleaning up of dirty rivers and estuaries. The firm programme to bring under control all

discharges to rivers, estuaries and underground water will be implemented. In some areas - like the Mersey estuary - we shall seek even faster progress, in cooperation with private industry.

We shall tighten up the controls over the disposal of hazardous wastes, and continue to give strong support to the recycling and reclamation movement. Although the worst problems of air pollution have been resolved, in some areas the level of smoke and sulphur dioxide need to be reduced still further. The substantive programme to reduce lead levels, not just in petrol but from other sources will continue.

In some areas of our towns and countryside there is a concentration of pollution, blight, contamination and dereliction. We will concert effective action by combining the efforts of public, private and voluntary sectors.

PLANNING

The planning system plays an essential part in the protection of the environment for every family. But it should not be an oppressive regulatory process or an impediment to much-needed economic development and regeneration. So while affirming our commitment to the basic objectives of the planning system, we need to bring about less detailed control at local level, and less intervention from the centre. Much can be achieved through a change in direction and attitudes. We shall simplify the system wherever possible.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The efforts of over 4 years to bring under control the expenditure of local government are now bearing fruit. We shall need to ensure that local authorities spend no more than the nation can afford on the consumption of services. Manpower is now down to the lowest level since . The control of current expenditure will bring about a lessening of the demands on the domestic and industrial ratepayers.

/Rates and finance.7

/Metropolitan Structure.7

The establishment of the Audit Commission will bring about a substantial improvement in economy, efficiency and effectiveness in all areas of local government activity. We shall continue to find cost savings through privatisation schemes and through contracting out of services.

THE HERITAGE

It is vital to safeguard our heritage and at the same time to give more people the chance to enjoy it. The new Commission for Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings being established in October 1983 will be strongly supported.