

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY NO. 1....

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

60TH MEETING

5.00 p.m., Monday, 4th December 1978, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons.

AGENDA

1. Dispersal of Civil Servants: A Position  
Paper by the Research Department, LSC(78)74  
- attached.
2. Any other business.

Conservative Research Department,  
24 Old Queen Street, London, SW1.

CFP/MMM  
30.11.78

LEADER'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 60th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Monday, 4th December 1978, in the Leader's  
Room at the House of Commons.

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)  
  
Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph,  
Lord Carrington, Lord Thorneycroft,  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Pym,  
Sir Ian Gilmour, Mr. Peyton,  
Mr. Maude.  
  
Mr. Atkins.  
  
In attendance: Mr. Younger, Mr. Butler, Mr. Patten,  
Mr. Wolfson, Mr. Ridley,  
Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Block.  
  
Apologies: Mr. Prior.

1. Party Publicity

Mrs. Thatcher reported on the outcome of a meeting between herself, certain colleagues, and officials from Central Office and the Research Department. It was agreed that:

(i) All front bench spokesmen, including non-members of the Shadow Cabinet, would now receive the Calendar of Forthcoming Events produced by the Research Department.

(ii) The Communications Department, in consultation with the Research Department, would decide which spokesmen should be invited to give comments to the press and on television and radio on the various events during the week. A record would be kept of cases where our offers to provide comment on television and radio had been declined by the broadcasting authorities.

(iii) Sir Geoffrey Howe would be making our main comments on the outcome of the EEC heads of government summit on EMS, and Mr. Pym, Mr. Lawson and others would also be commenting.

(iv) The Communications Department would invite other spokesmen to react to other events during the week.

2. Dispersal of Civil Servants, LSC(78)74

There was a discussion on the basis of the position paper prepared by the Research Department. The suggested options set out on page 6 of the paper were agreed. We would, in particular, review the dispersal of posts already situated outside London, such as the proposed removal of posts from Bath and Gloucestershire to Glasgow. We would emphasise that we were not able in Opposition to arrive at more definite judgements as to the desirability of various proposed moves. We would also emphasise the likely importance of the information contained in the forthcoming Strathclyde survey of the economic and social effects of dispersal.

It was also agreed that there was no need for the paper to be discussed by the full Shadow Cabinet.

3. Rate Support Grant

There was a short discussion of the burdens likely to be imposed on the shire counties as a result of Mr. Shore's decisions.

4. Developments following the Bingham Report

Mrs. Thatcher reported that the Government was likely to insist on a proposal to set up a special Commission from both Houses of Parliament, chaired by a judge, to examine further evidence and question witnesses as appropriate. There was a discussion and it was agreed that Mrs. Thatcher would seek a further private meeting with the Prime Minister to express our grave doubts as to the wisdom of proceeding on the lines the Government were proposing.

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.