

Prime Minister ①

Agree Oliver's suggestion which
has PoE's blessing?

AT

3/5

19 April 1985

MR ADDISON

c Mr Redwood
Mr Sherbourne

LEADER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT COUNCILS

Roy Thomason's letter asks for a meeting with the Prime Minister about Local Authority financial reform.

Since it is essential to carry Conservative opinion along with any reforms that may be proposed, and since Mr Thomason is a sensible, articulate and highly influential person, I strongly recommend that the Prime Minister should see him. However, it would be both more courteous and more useful to invite, at the same time, the Conservative leaders of the ACC and the AMA (Lewis Moss and Peter Bowness), so that the Prime Minister receives a balanced impression of the views of Conservatives in all three associations. (It would not be sensible to invite the Chairmen of the associations, who are somewhat senescent).

As a matter of diplomacy, it would be sensible to hold the meeting as soon as possible after proposals for consultation have been settled at the E(LF) discussion on 20 May: this would give the three leaders a sense of being consulted appropriately early in the process.

Oliver Letwin

OLIVER LETWIN

828 4931
0202 24222

R17/4.

"Leavenhalls"
7 Berwick Road
Bournemouth
BH3 7BB

15th April 1985.

Dear Prime Minister,

Local Government Financial Reforms

As the Conservative Leader of the Association of District Councils I have noted with great interest the current discussions and proposals to reform the rating system and amend arrangements for local government finance. You will know that this Association has prepared a background paper on the subject and taken a leading role in formulating proposals.

I was very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting Dr. Oliver Letwin recently and introducing him to the Chairmen of the Association's Committees. I believe there was an extremely useful exchange of views and I am sending him a copy of this letter.

I believe that it is particularly important that a radical review of local government finance takes place, but also one which will find broad acceptance within the Conservative Party. After the traumas of recent reforms and the strains which they have imposed, I believe it is particularly important that new proposals are introduced which will draw on the political and fiscal experience of Senior Conservative

Councillors as well as achieving the objectives which we all seek. No proposal, particularly one which is radical, can expect universal acceptance, but I know that there is a great deal of goodwill amongst Conservative District Councillors who wish to help in achieving a correct solution and would like to be able to publicly proclaim their support at the appropriate time. The views of those Conservatives who are in control of Councils may be more important and experienced than those who lead opposition groups.

If it would be of any help to you in considering possible action and the options which may be open, I would be delighted to discuss these with you. Should you wish to widen the meeting, I can arrange for the Chairman of the Association to join us if you feel it appropriate, perhaps with two or three other senior colleagues.

The last time that I met you for a similar meeting was on the question of "rate capping" in a climate and against a background which I hope we will be able to avoid on this occasion by finding solutions which can unite rather than divide.

Yours sincerely

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. M. Thatcher, M.P.
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

K.R. Thomason
K.R. Thomason



10 DOWNING STREET

10th May, 1985

You wrote to the Prime Minister on 15th April suggesting a meeting to discuss the reform of local government finance. Mrs. Thatcher would be pleased to see you though she feels it would be helpful if the Conservative Leaders of the A.C.C. and A.M.A., Mr. Lewis Moss and Mr. Peter ~~Barnes~~^{Bowman}, could also be brought in.

If you are content with such an arrangement, I will be in touch to fix a time. This is likely to be early June when a little more progress has been made within Government in developing ideas.

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE
Political Secretary

K.R. Thomason, Esq



10 DOWNING STREET

STEPHEN

~~Olive Letwin~~

For your? view pl.

Mr. Thomason rang back to say that ideally he would prefer to see the Prime Minister alone for reasons he could explain to you on the telephone but if this was not acceptable he would of course see her with the other two leaders.

S
16/5

Can you give him a ring sometime.

His office number is 0202 24222.

He sounds very nice and quite understood that you might not be able to come back to him until next week.

Stephen

AC

If he prefers to come on his own, that's fine: but the others will have to come too, one after the other. Private Office & Dore will need to be consulted.

Ok
19. v. '85

T.R.

SS. Insist on a joint meeting. We don't
have time to do these meetings. Mr Thomason
can put his own views in writing.

MR. TURNBULL

HT
23/5

Mr. Thomason - Leader of the Association
of District Councils

Do you have any views on

1. Mr. Thomason's suggestion that he should see the Prime Minister alone.
2. Oliver Letwin's consequential thought that the others will have to come afterwards and separately.

I await the views of yourself and DOE.

pp *Shanda*
STEPHEN SHERBOURNE
23.5.85

not to be done

CR Memorandum

MR. TURNBULL

I have spoken to Mr. Thomason (Leader of the Association of District Councils).

1. He has agreed to come in with the other leaders.
2. He will write to the Prime Minister privately either before or after that meeting.

Once you have agreed that this meeting should take place, I leave it to you to pass to Caroline to fix up.

SS

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

31.5.85