

SUBJECT CC MINISTER



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 April 1987

Dear Robin,

MEETING WITH MR. RIDLEY

Your Secretary of State called to see the Prime Minister this afternoon. Mr. Stephen Sherbourne was also present.

Your Secretary of State said he saw no need for a Parliamentary statement on low budget UDCs. If the meeting of E(A) tomorrow approved the policy, this could be announced in the Manifesto.

Your Secretary of State explained his views on the need for an authoritative statement reaffirming the Government's policies on matters of development and conservation. (A draft was attached to his minute to the Prime Minister of 9 April.) The Prime Minister agreed that press reports of the Government's policies were exaggerated and misleading. The Prime Minister commented on paragraph 14 of the draft circular that the reference to "moderate sized townships" would cause alarm. This paragraph could be substantially shortened. The Prime Minister said she would hold a meeting both to discuss the proposal for a new circular and the circular on development involving agricultural land.

Your Secretary of State noted that a meeting of E(A) to discuss water privatisation was scheduled for 7 May. He hoped to be able to make a statement to Parliament thereafter: the revised policy should prove very popular.

On housing policy, Mr. Ridley showed the Prime Minister a list of the papers in preparation which would form the basis of further policy decisions. The Prime Minister commented that it would be preferable to amalgamate these into two or three papers for discussion at E(LF). The Prime Minister felt it would be wrong to attempt to publish a White Paper before the election, if that were to take place in June. It might be better for your Secretary of State to make a major speech which could be published as a Conservative Party pamphlet. The details of the policy should not be tied down too firmly at this stage: they were likely to change as instructions for Counsel were prepared. It was agreed that policy papers should be circulated to E(LF) in time for meetings in the week beginning 4 May. Key passages for a major speech on housing policy should also be circulated for clearance by E(LF) during

that week. Whether or not the material should be put out as a speech or in some other form should be decided at that time. Your Secretary of State noted that a policy document was in preparation in his department.

It was agreed that Mr. Patten should not announce in the course of tomorrow's debate on homelessness a scheme or consideration of a scheme for preventing gazumping.

Y
Jan,
David.

(DAVID NORGROVE)

Robin Young, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.