

Prime Minister

BA



This seems a sensible way forward. But it is necessary to move quickly, so that conclusion can be fed into wider discussions on the Community Charge. (CC) A meeting early in the week after next (i.e. after the CC discussion next Thursday) could be fixed. Are you content? BHP

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

COMMUNITY CARE

Yes not

We discussed today whether it would be sensible and feasible to defer the implementation of the proposed changes in community care policy beyond 1 April 1991. I fully understand the points which you made about the additional burdens which the changes would place on local authorities at a time when they would be under considerable pressure and the impact which they might have on the community charge. I share many of your concerns in this respect. However, against that, there seemed to me to be very considerable political difficulties in postponing the introduction of the new policy when it has been warmly welcomed by all those concerned and expectations have been aroused amongst local authorities, the voluntary sector and the public.

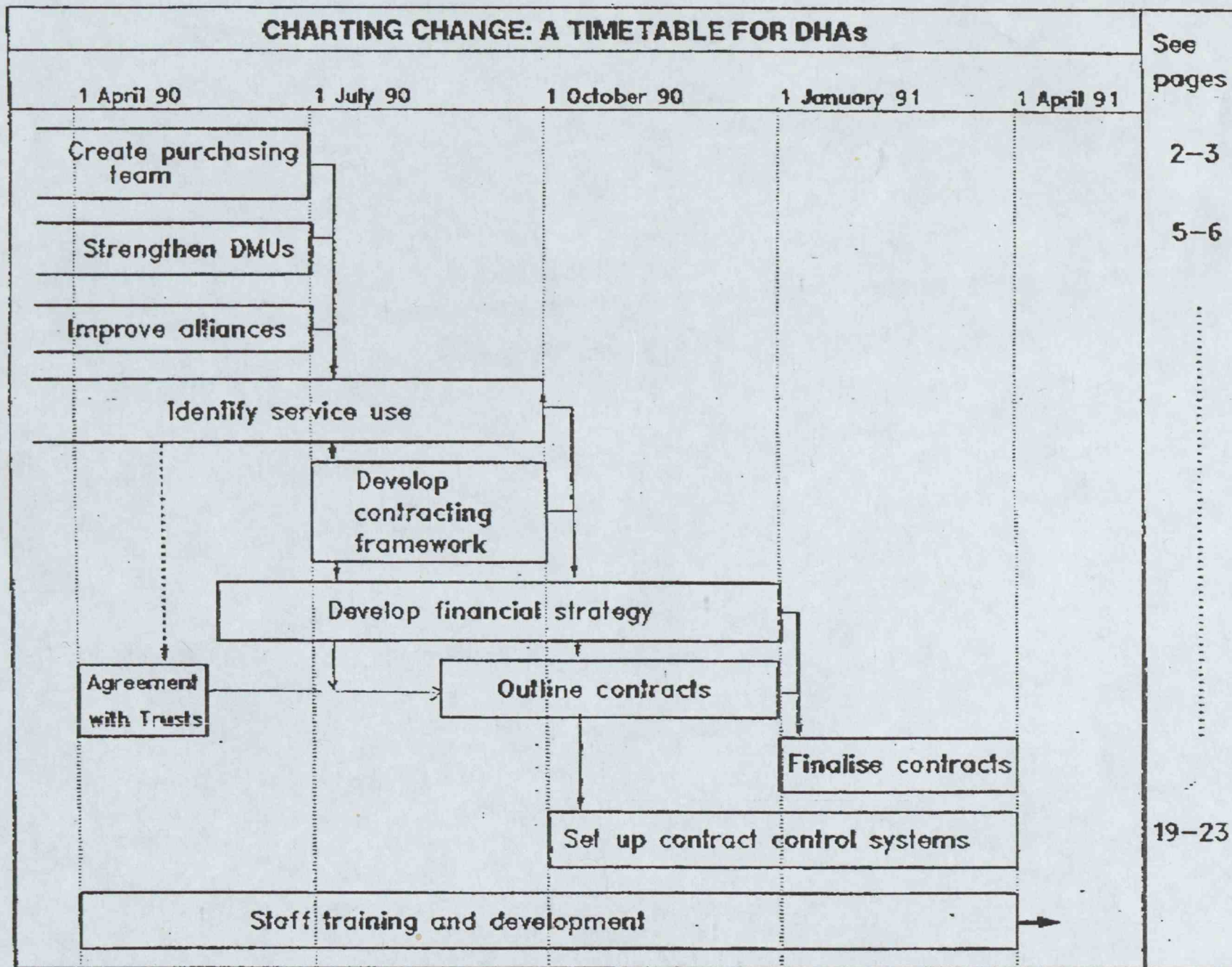
In order to take this forward I suggest that you and I together with John Major, Chris Patten, Tony Newton, Malcolm Rifkind, Peter Walker and Peter Brooke should talk through the issues urgently and assess the desirability and feasibility of deferring the changes. I think it would help our discussion if my officials with the help of those in interested departments prepared a short paper including an assessment in so far as it is possible, of the effect which the changes are likely to have on the community charge as well as Government grants to local authorities, the public expenditure consequences of not going ahead and the state of preparedness of local authorities to take on their new roles.

I am copying this minute to John Major, Chris Patten, Tony Newton, Malcolm Rifkind, Peter Walker, Peter Brooke and Sir Robin Butler.

L.

19 April 1990
Secretary of State for Health

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