

CONFIDENTIAL

Qa 06259

To: PRIME MINISTER

From: JOHN SPARROW

14 February 1983

Family Policy Group: Housing

1. At tomorrow's meeting of FPG we are due to discuss housing issues. The papers cover ways of developing assured tenancies in the private rented sector, further extensions of Council house sales, and approaches to tackle the severe problems of difficult-to-let estates.
2. These papers usefully focus on some important aspects of housing but I still believe that the Group should at an early opportunity address the problems of those who (over 80 per cent) are likely to remain Council tenants. Although the proposals on sales will enable one million to be completed by the end of next Parliament, there will still be well over 4 million families in England alone who will still be Council tenants by the end of the decade (only 300,000 of whom live on difficult-to-let estates).
3. Perhaps of all the areas of concern to FPG, Council housing is the one in which the public sector has most undermined the individual's sense of responsibility. The management of Council housing is often both paternalist and bureaucratic. Self-reliance by individual tenants tends to be discouraged, if not forbidden. Of course, not all local authorities are guilty but many are.
4. Changes are needed which will get away from the concept of the all-responsible and all-deciding local authority. The tenants' right to repair, and the encouragement of management co-operatives are steps in the right direction. But much more is needed. I would suggest that the Group might think that tenants should have a right to form tenants' management co-operatives. We might also examine the terms of Council tenancy agreements to see in which way tenants can be given more freedom to arrange their own affairs. The concept and operation of Council house waiting lists also need to be considered from an FPG



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perspective - they are paternalist in intent and design. The same points often apply to the rent structure. Of course, any changes in this direction might encroach on the autonomy of local authorities (although no more than the right to buy). But the purpose of such changes would be to increase the autonomy of the family vis-a-vis the local authority.

5. I suggest that a further paper is needed for the Group which addresses this range of issues from the perspective of FPG. The CPRS would be happy to help in any way wanted.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to Tom King.

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Home Affairs

IN CONFIDENCE - NOT ON CPRS FLOAT

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FPG

To: MR FLESHER

28 February 1983

From: G J WASSERMAN

*[Handwritten signature]*

c Mr Mount

FPG: Interdepartmental Liaison Arrangements

We spoke. As I told you, Mr Sparrow has asked me to have a word with you and Mr Mount about the inter-departmental network of "link persons" which has been established to service the FPG. Can I leave it to you to arrange for the three of us to meet for, say, 15 minutes within the next few days?

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