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My ref:

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The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP  
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*WDA*

*cc* 28 July 1988

*rb*

*Dear Kenneth*

CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I wrote to you in August last year about the arrangements for consultation with local government, following the suggestion from the Associations that there might be scope for a dialogue with local government interests in a smaller and more private forum than CCLGF. As we near the end of consultation under the present RSG system, I have been considering further what consultation arrangements we should have at Minister/Member level in the future.

I did hold one informal meeting with a smaller group of councillors. This was moderately useful and, so far as I know, the Local Authority Side did respect the need for a degree of confidentiality. It has, however, become clear from discussions with the Associations that they would not see an informal group as an acceptable alternative to a body such as CCLGF as the main means of consultation on local government finance matters. The Prime Minister's view at the time, recorded in Mark Addison's letter of 6 August 1987, was that the informal group would not prove to be the right way forward.

I know you share my view that CCLGF is of limited use. Nevertheless, as the Associations clearly attach considerable importance to a forum of that type, I think it would be more trouble than it is worth to abolish it. I have therefore concluded that CCLGF should continue though I hope, given the simpler arrangements we are planning, that 2 rather than 3 meetings a year will be enough. I see no case for having a regular series of informal meetings as well as CCLGF, and will be making this clear to the Associations.

I am sending copies of this to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Secretaries of State for Energy, Employment, Social Services and Transport, the Chief Secretary, the Minister for the Arts and to Sir Robin Butler.

*John*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

*Nicholas*



LOCAL GOVT: Relations

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