

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



Minister for Housing and Construction

Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street London SW1P 3EB
Telephone 01-212 7601

6 November 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

I had hoped that I would have been able to accompany Patrick when he comes to see you tomorrow, but I understand that this is not permitted.

*He will
now be
attending*

Over the past 17 months, I have been able to visit almost every part of England discussing housing problems with local authorities and seeing the condition of our housing stock.

I remember our Manifesto, to which we are both committed:-

"Our goal is to make Britain the best housed nation in Europe".

We both believe that the private sector should and will make an increasing contribution towards meeting housing needs.

Between 1979/80 and the 1985/86 baseline, the Housing Programme has been cut by 52% in real terms.

Even if we were to adhere to the 1985/86 baseline that would mean an increase in homelessness (which has risen substantially since 1979) increasing disrepair (involving even greater expenditure later on) more overcrowding and more housing conditions which, as I have seen for myself, are unacceptable.

Now MISC 106 has proposed further cuts to a baseline which would, itself, have led in the opposite direction to that set out in our Manifesto.

You and Nigel are the custodians of the Manifesto and of our economic strategy. But the evidence which I have seen over these past 17 months persuades me that any reduction in housing spending below baseline will lead to avoidable higher expenditure and to avoidable hardship later on.

I have shown this letter to Patrick, but otherwise it is, of course, personal to you.

Jim
I.A.

IAN GOW

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher FRS MP
Prime Minister