



cc BG
N held at this stage

PRIME MINISTER

MINI UDCs

Nicholas Ridley copied to me his minute of 28 October explaining his proposals to establish several mini UDCs. *atlas*

I agree that the areas that Nicholas is proposing would be suitable for the UDC approach as they certainly have development potential which may be being inhibited by the attitude of the local authorities concerned. For example, the UDC in the East of Bristol would be able to capitalise on the success of the Tourism Development Action plan which has already done much to invigorate the Bristol dock area. I also welcome these areas as they provide the opportunity for resource concentration in areas of potential success that we discussed at our meeting on 26 October and offer scope for closer interdepartmental linkage at national level.

As you will know colleagues representing Departments on the ministerial group on the Inner Cities Initiative agreed to take a special interest in particular Task Force areas. For this Department John Cope has agreed to look after the Bristol and Wolverhampton Task Forces and consequently would have an interest in the future activities of the Mini UDC in Bristol and the proposed extension of the Black Country UDC to Wolverhampton. I would like to suggest that we might invite ministers from all the urban policy Departments to consider

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taking an active interest in the activities of UDCs as they will be doing for Task Forces.

In establishing the new UDCs, I hope that the inevitable resistance that will emerge from the local authorities concerned does not rebound on the local authority sponsored programmes run by my Department and the MSC in these areas. Although our clear preference is for local companies to take the lead in providing training places, in certain areas the local authority is an essential provider and sponsor, for example in the case of the Community Programme.

I also hope that the new UDCs will be given every encouragement to work closely with the regional staff of my Department and the MSC to ensure that training provision is available to meet the skill requirements of developers, contractors and new companies in the UDC areas. Furthermore, it is important that the UDCs play their part in helping local residents to benefit from new developments so that the Government's aim of mutual reinforcement of the various urban initiatives arising from resource concentration can be realised. This would be consistent with the Government's desire to move away from contract compliance as a means to achieve this end.

I am copying this to other members of E(UP) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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November 1987

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