

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

IMPORTANT/SENSITIVE EVENTS

Liverpool: the possibility of deliberate bankruptcy in the near future is a matter of acute political concern. The crisis could come very soon (eg if the City Council refuses to strike a rate for 1984/5) or it could be a prolonged and drawn-out affair throughout the year. Legislative contingency plans are being considered.

Legislation: the DOE's other problems this year will be mainly in the legislative field.

- a) Rates Bill - particularly difficult times could be report and third reading in the Commons (11 April); second reading (26 April) and Committee Stage in the Lords.
- b) The "paving" Bill foreshadowing the main Bill abolishing the GLC and Metropolitan County Councils, will cancel the 1985 elections, provide for nominated councils in 1985/86 and require council officials to produce information. It ought to be less contentious than either the Rates Bill or the main abolition Bill. Second reading in the Commons will be on 9 April and in the Lords on 14 May.
- c) the main abolition Bill will be published at the beginning of the next Parliamentary Session.

d) The only other major legislative difficulty might be the clause on charitable housing association tenants in the Housing and Building Control Bill now about to go into Committee in the Lords.

Other issues

9 February - new draft circulars on housing and green belt (the previous ones having been withdrawn after a public outcry)

10 March - Conservative Local Government Conference (with the Prime Minister).

? July - Setting expenditure limits for 12-20 local councils for 1985/86 under the provisions of the Rates Bill now before Parliament.

Note It will be appreciated that almost all the above dates are subject to alteration.

*C Mockler*

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