

G.L.C.
(Environment)

5th July 1984

The speech by Patrick Jenkin on the GLC on 21st June (copy attached) in my view deserves the widest publicity: it is so good.

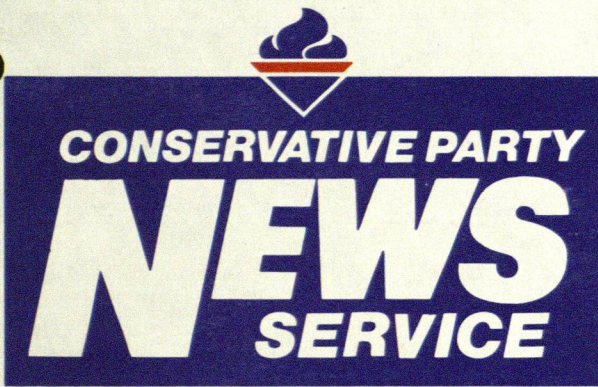
I do hope attention is being given to this. Perhaps you could let me know what, if anything, is being planned?

Very many thanks.

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RT HON PATRICK JENKIN MP

Release Time: 20.00 hrs, Thursday 21st
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Extract from a speech by the Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP (Wanstead and Woodford), Secretary of State for the Environment, to the Westminster North Conservative Association at St John's Wood, London, on Thursday 21st June 1984.

The case for abolishing the GLC is overwhelming. Consider what the GLC does not do. It has no responsibility for the personal social services or the police. The ambulance service has been taken away. So has drainage. Housing has been largely devolved to the boroughs, thanks to the previous Conservative GLC administration. Most planning is done by the Boroughs. Education in the outer boroughs has nothing to do with the GLC. ILEA will soon be an independent, directly elected Authority. As for public transport, it was an All-Party Committee of the House of Commons which recommended, unanimously, that London Transport be removed from direct control of the GLC. This comes into force next month.

So what is left? The Fire Service, plus a scattering of miscellaneous minor functions. What is left does not begin to justify an entire tier of local Government. If we were starting now, no-one in his senses would invent the GLC. One thing is certain: whatever else it does, the GLC does not run London! It is this lack of any proper role that lies at the heart of the problem. For the GLC has had to invent a role. The GLC has no responsibility for Northern Ireland, but this has not prevented it from having a Northern Ireland policy. It has no responsibility for defence, but it has a defence policy - unilateral disarmament.

What other local authority gives grants for the Union of Turkish Workers; the Unity of Afro-Caribbean People and even the Abyssinian Society? Who says that the GLC has no foreign policy? The truth is that the GLC today has no real function other than to campaign expensively at ratepayers' cost - £3m with more to come - for its own purposeless survival.

/... We hear a lot

POST-ABOLITION

We hear a lot of scare stories about the end of democracy in London. They are of course utter rubbish. Local Government in London will be run by the 32 elected London Boroughs plus the City.

The Boroughs will have only one London-wide body and that is the fire service. That will be administered by the boroughs through a joint board. That is the only function which the boroughs will have to perform across London. Elsewhere it will be straightforward local government in London. The boroughs are already powerful bodies in their own right. They will take over the remains of the GLC housing functions, waste disposal, traffic management, planning and other functions.

The removal of the GLC will mean decisions will be arrived at more quickly. Local government will be simpler and better, closer to the people. It will also be cheaper. There will be substantial savings for domestic ratepayers and for businesses.

When one considers that the GLC has an architects' department of over 1700 people; that the council has doubled its spending in just three years; and that it is this year busy employing an extra 1500 people, it would be extraordinary if abolition did not produce savings. You remember the famous Sherlock Holmes story of the dog that did not bark? Why did the GLC not hire a firm of accountants to prove abolition would not save anything? Because they know very well that any reputable firm would find that millions of pounds could indeed be saved.

A study has been done by four London boroughs, including Westminster. They have identified total savings of £200m in the 1983/4 budget, partly from cutting out waste and bureaucracy, partly from policy changes. Of course the GLC must go and I have not doubt that both services in London and the ratepayers of London will benefit.

ENDS

1) Existing Councils for whole of period - Apr '86

2) Councils until main bill through }
 & then transition

- in charge of control then
 acceptable.

Disallowing then follows

3)