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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WSPM

Jm

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP  
 Lord Privy Seal  
 68 Whitehall  
 SW1A 2AT

4 October 1984

*Dear John.*

**EDUCATION IN LONDON**

Thank you for your letter of 21 September. In the light of the responses I have had from you and others I am content to postpone making the announcement about the timing of the first direct elections to the new ILEA until the Commons returns.

A separate letter covers the question raised by the Prime Minister.

You suggest, somewhat to my surprise, an Oral Statement. I had envisaged that a Written PQ would be appropriate to an issue which has attracted so little attention during the Recess. This would also enable us to gauge the public reaction to the decision before we needed to deal with it orally and should lead to more considered and informed oral exchanges, when I am due to take Oral Questions on 30 October.

I am of course content to abide by your judgement but I would like to know whether you feel that the factors I have mentioned have merit.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, William Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, Patrick Jenkin, Peter Rees, Michael Havers, Kenneth Baker, John Wakeham, John Selwyn Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours,  
 Keith.*

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PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

8 October 1984

*Dear Keith*

*NBM*

*J*

EDUCATION IN LONDON

Thank you for your letter of 4 October. I note that you do not now intend to make your announcement about the timing of the elections in advance of the return of Parliament on 22 October.

With regard to the form of the announcement, I continue to feel that an Oral Statement would be the safest course. I entirely accept that the degree of interest expressed in this subject during the recess has been slight, but am inclined to believe that this is due to external factors, and not to any lessening of sensitivities about matters connected with the abolition of the GLC and MCCs. It would, I think, complicate the future Parliamentary handling of these already very difficult questions were we so early in the session to be accused of giving the subject less importance than it merits.

I should be glad to have a word with you about this if you wish.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, Patrick Jenkin, Peter Rees, Michael Havers, Kenneth Baker, John Wakeham, John Selwyn Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John Biffen*

JOHN BIFFEN

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Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP  
Secretary of State for Education and Science

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

*W  
17/10*

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP  
Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House  
68 Whitehall  
LONDON SW1A 2AT

16 October 1984

*Dear John,*

EDUCATION IN LONDON

*with it*

Thank you for your letter of 8 October. I am happy to fall in with your view that the announcement of the timing of the direct elections to the new ILEA should be made by an Oral Statement. I understand that our offices have already been in touch and have provisionally agreed that the Statement should be on Tuesday 23 October.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, Patrick Jenkin, Peter Rees, Michael Havers, Kenneth Baker, John Wakeham, John Selwyn Gummer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Cope*

*Em,*

*Kewi*

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HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

15 October 1984

Dear Elizabeth

DATE OF ORDINARY ELECTIONS IN 1986

When your Secretary of State wrote to the Lord President on 10 August about announcing the date of the first ILEA elections, the Home Secretary wrote on 20 August to explain that he was planning when Parliament reassembles to announce the decision to move the date of the 1986 ordinary local elections from 1 to 8 May and that the two proposals needed to be kept separate.

... I enclose the draft of an arranged Parliamentary Question which, subject to the views of his colleagues, the Home Secretary plans to have tabled for reply as soon as the House returns.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to those who received the Home Secretary's letter of 20 August; could I please have any comments by 19 October.

Yours CW,  
Hugh Taylor

H H TAYLOR

Miss C E Hodkinson

DRAFT QUESTION FOR ANSWER ON [22 OCTOBER]

[The Hon Greville Janner, QC (Leicester West)]: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has any plans to change the date of the ordinary local elections in 1986.

DRAFT REPLY

Ordinary local elections are held on the first Thursday in May: in 1986 this is Thursday, 1 May. The Board of Deputies of British Jews has made representations that the elections should be postponed a week because 1 May 1986 is a day of the Passover. Following consultations with the local authority associations, we have decided to include in the forthcoming Representation of the People Bill a provision moving the ordinary day of election from 1 to 8 May 1986. The local authorities affected are London borough councils, district councils in England and Wales which are elected by thirds, some parish and community councils in those districts and regional and islands area councils in Scotland.



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