



cc 25  
2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC  
Lord President of the Council  
Privy Council Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1

NBM

29 July 1986

Dear Lorie

COMMUNITY CHARGE - WITHHOLDING SERVICES FROM THOSE NOT REGISTERED

E(LF) on 3 July touched on the possibility that access to local authority services might be limited to those registered for the community charge.

Such an approach has attractions as a way of discouraging people from attempting to avoid being registered for the community charge. But it would be extremely difficult to frame the legislation needed to give effect to it. To begin with, such a requirement could not include those services that are provided communally, such as parks, highways and refuse disposal. We would also need:

- to provide an exclusion for emergency services, such as police and fire, and for some social services like taking children into care;
- to make clear how this requirement related to the duty to provide certain services (like primary and secondary education);
- to decide what to do about services such as swimming pools, where a policy of refusing admission to those not registered would require names to be checked at the entrance against a copy of the community charge register, or the use of identity cards.

Even if we could overcome these difficulties their would still be the problem that some people wishing to use local services will quite legitimately not appear on the register there. They may be:

- people visiting a holiday area, or staying with friends or relatives, or working in an area like Westminster or the City; all these people will be registered elsewhere;
- people living in property liable for the collective community charge, who will be paying the community charge to their landlords with the rent, rather than being individually registered with the local authority.

This suggests to me that, rather than attempting to prevent those who are not registered from making use of local services, the emphasis should be on encouraging registration by making it known that, whenever use is made of local services, the community charge register may be checked and names will be added if they do not already appear there and it appears they should.

In some cases, especially where the service is a one-off (like putting someone on the waiting list for a council house, or applying for financial assistance of some kind) it may be possible to check the community charge register before the service is provided. In other cases, simply to prevent long queues developing, that checking will take place later. But the outcome will be the same: names and addresses will be checked against the community charge register and, subject to any further enquiries that may be needed (for example where someone claims to live in a property that is liable for the collective charge) and the proposed right of appeal, the authority would add to the register anyone whose name did not already appear and send them a community charge bill.

To back up this approach, we also need to encourage authorities to operate 'season ticket' schemes; and provide enabling powers if necessary. Such season tickets would give access, at reduced rates, to local facilities such as leisure centres or evening classes. They would be available free of charge from the authority to those who were registered for the community charge, or who could show that they lived in property liable for the collective charge.

Subject to colleagues' views, I would be grateful for your agreement that we should adopt the approach set out in this letter, rather than attempting to devise a scheme for withholding services from those not registered for the community charge.

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

*Nicholas Ridley*

NICHOLAS RIDLEY





PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

23 August 1986

Prime Minister (2)

MSF 26/8

Dear Nicholas

COMMUNITY CHARGE - WITHHOLDING SERVICES

Thank you for your letter of 29 July about the possibility that access to local authority services might be limited to those registered for the community charge. I am grateful also for the views of Nick Edwards, Norman Tebbit, John MacGregor and Malcolm Rifkind.

I accept your judgement that it would be impracticable to make registration for the community charge a prerequisite for the provision of local authority services. I agree that we should instead encourage local authorities to check that those using local services are registered for the community charge, possibly backed up by some form of duty on the local authority or the registration officer to take all reasonable steps to maintain a comprehensive register. You and Malcolm Rifkind may take it that you have the authority of E(LF) to proceed on this basis.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of E(LF) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John Major*  
*William*

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment

LOCAL GOVT

RATES

PT 4

CC/39



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)  
01-233 (Llinell Union)

WELSH OFFICE  
GWYDYR HOUSE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER  
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)  
01-233 (Direct Line)

Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

19 August 1986

*Den Ullie*

*MBPM*

**COMMUNITY CHARGE - WITHHOLDING SERVICES FROM THOSE NOT REGISTERED**

Nicholas Ridley wrote to you on 29 July about the possibility of limiting access to the local authority services to those registered for the community charge. I have also seen Malcolm Rifkind's letter of 4 August and the one from Norman Tebbit's office of 5 August on the same subject.

I agree with Nicholas Ridley that, upon examination, the practical problems of the course suggested in E(LF) on 3 July make it too difficult to be worth pursuing. It could in any case only be applied to a limited number of services and we would run the risk that the community charge could be seen as a tax on those services alone rather than upon the whole spread of local authority activity. In extreme cases, individuals may choose to forego those services rather than pay the charge. There would also be presentational problems in defending what would be interpreted as a Draconian measure needed to make the community charge register work.

I very much prefer the system of checking to see if those using the services are actually on the register, which could be operated more simply and over a wider range of services. As long as the people who should be on the register are identified, it does not really matter whether this is done before or after they make use of any particular service. But I do not go along with Norman Tebbit's view that authorities should have a duty to check. It is in an authority's interests to act in such a way, since this would help to maximise the tax base from which some of its own income would be derived. Where an authority is not disposed to make checks on those using services the problem is more likely to be its general attitude to the function of the register, rather than a specific objection to making such checks; this may be better taken care of by giving them a more general fiduciary duty to take all reasonable steps to establish and maintain the register as comprehensively as possible.

I favour the 'season ticket' proposal to encourage people to register and think that this could perhaps be taken a stage further; it would be simple to operate an incentive scheme for registration whereby those who appear on the register for the first time received a booklet of vouchers allowing them a number of discounts, or even exemptions, on charges for local authority services such as leisure centres, car parks, bus services or concerts.

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

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC  
Lord President of the Council  
Privy Council Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1

*J ewe*  
*DM*

LOCAL GOVT: Rating Reevaluation Pt 4

CFBG



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

NBM.

Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley AMICE MP  
 Secretary of State for the Environment  
 Department of the Environment  
 2 Marsham Street  
 LONDON  
 SW1P 3EB

8 August 1986

Dear Secretary of State,

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 29 July to Willie Whitelaw. I have also seen Malcolm Rifkind's letter of 4 August. <sup>at 11ap</sup>

I am content with what you propose. Our aim is to get the community charge register as complete as possible. But at the same time we must have a system that is credible, operable and will not overburden local authorities with excessive administration. I am sure that your approach, of granting concessions and discounts to registered residents, and initiating a canvass whenever someone does not appear to be registered in some local authority, is the best way forward.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, other members of E(LF) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

John MacGregor

JOHN MacGREGOR

(Approved by the Chief Secretary  
 and signed in his absence)

LOCAL GOVT. Rating PT4

03/90





Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

CABINET OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

Tel No: 233 3299  
7471

5 August 1986

Brian Leonard Esq  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1

NBPM

Dear Brian,

COMMUNITY CHARGE - WITHHOLDING SERVICES FOR THOSE NOT REGISTERED

The Chancellor of the Duchy has seen a copy of your Secretary of State's letter of 29 July to the Lord President. <sup>at flap</sup>

The Chancellor accepts that the difficulties associated with many services would make it impossible to frame a statutory provision that access to local authority services should be withheld from those not registered for the community charge.

The Chancellor would, however, agree with the Secretary of State for Scotland that access to local authority services can be a valuable aid to the enforcement of the community charge. The Chancellor therefore agrees that there is scope for using the register to provide easier, or cheaper, access to certain services for those registered and, conversely, to check the register when some services are used. Indeed, the Chancellor wonders whether the latter aspect may be backed up by a statutory duty upon authorities to take reasonable steps to ensure that those persons in receipt of their services on the basis of a residential qualification are also registered for a payment of the community charge.

I would be grateful if this could be considered.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the private secretaries to members of E(LF) and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours Sincerely  
Andrew Lansley

ANDREW LANSLEY  
Private Secretary

LOCAL GOVT. Rating PT4





NEW ST. ANDREW'S HOUSE  
ST. JAMES CENTRE  
EDINBURGH EH1 3SX

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC  
Lord President of the Council  
Privy Council Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1

*NCM*

4 August 1986

*Dear Willie,*

COMMUNITY CHARGE - WITHHOLDING SERVICES FROM THOSE NOT REGISTERED

Nicholas Ridley wrote to you on 29 July about the suggestion made at E(LF) on 3 July that access to local authority services might be limited to those registered for the community charge.

We have always envisaged that records of the use of local authority services would be a valuable source of information for checking and updating the register. The fact that such checks were made would, as suggested at E(LF), be an aid to enforcement. But I agree with Nicholas Ridley that to make registration for the community charge a prerequisite for the provision of local authority services would cause very serious practical problems as well as raising difficulties about emergency services or those which local authorities have a statutory duty to provide.

I am copying this letter Nicholas Ridley, other members of E(LF) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Malcolm Rifkind*

MALCOLM RIFKIND

Ratong System: Loehr Gov A4

