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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 October 1984

Future of Liverpool Garden Festival
Centre

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 11 October. She was content with the terms of the Merseyside Development Corporation's Press Release. She has noted that your Secretary of State and the Chief Secretary have discussed how the £2 million which would be required can be found.

I am copying this letter to Richard Broadbent (Chief Secretary's Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Andrew Turnbull

John Ballard, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

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AT
15/10
CEAD
FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY
DATE: 15 October 1984

PRIME MINISTER

FUTURE OF THE LIVERPOOL GARDEN FESTIVAL SITE

Patrick Jenkin copied to me his minute of 11 October about the Liverpool Garden Festival Garden Site. ✓ with AT?

2 I talked to Patrick briefly about this and raised no objection to his issuing the press notice attached in draft to his minute and allowing the MDC to issue the press release which was also attached.
...

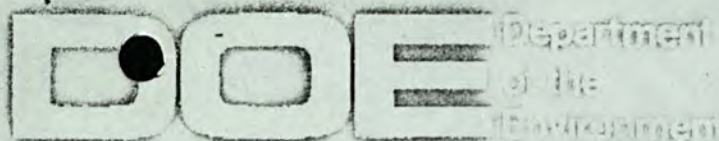
3 The extra cost of the MDC retaining some of the existing gardens and opening them to the public next year will be £2 million. I have already offered Patrick an extra £17 million for his Other Environmental Services programme, which includes the UDC's, and I am asking him to find the £2 million from within that sum. We will be discussing the programme as a whole in MISC 106 early next week.

4 I am copying this minute to Patrick Jenkin and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

for PETER REES

[Approved by the Chief Secretary]

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Press Notice

FAX Parliamentary

Pg 1 of 2

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EMBARGOED: NOT FOR USE BEFORE 1115 HOURS, THURSDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

NW 188/84

6 September 1984

FUTURE OF THE LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL SITE

Speaking in Liverpool today, Secretary of State for the Environment Patrick Jenkin made a statement on the future of the Garden Festival site. He said:-

"The Garden Festival has been a great success. Already there have been 2.8 million visitors, and it is clear that the final total will top 3 million. The Festival has captured the hearts of visitors, and particularly of local people, and I can understand why many people wish to see the Festival retained. But the plan has always been that the Festival should be for this one summer only; many of the gardens and exhibits, both British and international, must be returned to their owners; and MDC have entered into commitments for the future development of the site in accordance with the Riverside Development Programme which they published in November 1982 after extensive consultations.

It has always been the intention to retain a substantial part of the site for the public to enjoy, including the Promenade, the Britannia Inn, the Festival Hall, the Arena and some 45 acres of parkland and fine gardens at the southern end of the site. MDC have an agreement with Liverpool City Council for the Council to assume responsibility for much of this area on 1 January 1985. However, the City Council are understandably concerned that they might not be able to afford the expenditure required, in view of the other priorities which they have for spending in the city. In discussions with my officials this week the Council have made it clear that they could not take a decision on the Festival site until after they know their capital allocations and revenue targets for 1985/86.

This continuing uncertainty about the City Council's intentions is making it very difficult for MDC to make proper plans for the future of the site. However, MDC do not intend to take any precipitate action just yet. MDC will continue to make all the necessary preparations to ensure that it will be possible to open this part of the site to the public next year. However, if the City Council do not reach a firm decision to commit the necessary resources to the Festival site by the end of the year, when they are due to assume responsibility, MDC will clearly have to reconsider their position.

MDC are also considering whether it would be possible to retain and open to the public, for next summer at least, some of the gardens in the parts of the site which are scheduled for development, but which are not immediately required for this purpose.

Press Enquiries: Eileen Jones or Philip Aylett
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Central Office of Information
Sunley Building
Piccadilly Plaza
Manchester M1 4BD
Tel: 061-832 9111 ext 358 or 365

ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION



PRESS RELEASE BY MDC

LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL; PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

There is obviously a good deal of current speculation about the future of the site of the International Garden Festival and it is now considered appropriate to set out the Development Corporation's position.

The Festival is acknowledged as a success in terms of the enjoyment it has given to over three million visitors and the boost it has provided to the image and tourism potential of Liverpool and Merseyside. We will do everything within our power to ensure that the momentum thus gained is not lost.

It may help to summarise the background to the Festival:

Our development proposals, published in 1981, identified the Riverside site - after reclamation - to be used partly for permanent leisure and recreation and partly for housing and industry.

The Festival was superimposed upon this reclamation as an ideal way of upgrading the reclamation itself and providing wide-ranging short and long term benefits for Merseyside. Much of the Festival was designed for temporary use with specific features such as the Festival Hall designed and constructed on the basis of agreements we had reached on their permanent use.

Commitments were given by the Development Corporation on the long term provision of, for example, road access to the Britannia Inn and the Homes and Gardens area, amongst others.



An agreement was signed in 1982 with Liverpool City Council under which the Council will take over responsibility for maintaining and operating the Festival Hall, the Arena, the Arena Theatre and about 45 acres of parkland at the southern end of the site. This includes the lake and some International Gardens, amongst them those of China, India and Japan, since generously donated by these countries to the people of Liverpool.

The Development Corporation has received no notification that the City Council does not intend to honour this agreement, but in view of the Council's well known financial priorities, it would be unrealistic to assume that there was no uncertainty.

Therefore, as far as the area covered by this agreement is concerned, in case the City Council finds itself unable to implement its agreement with us, we are now making our own contingency plans to open up the area, including the parkland and facilities, to the public next year.

Shortly after the close of the Festival, work will begin to fulfill our commitment to provide road access to both 'ends' of the site. The community theme gardens will be dismantled and the sponsors of many of the international gardens will remove their structures and plant material.

The area of domestic theme gardens is not, however, required for immediate redevelopment and will be retained as far as possible in their present form to be enjoyed by the public next year. This 'bonus' obviously depends upon the willingness of the individual sponsors to retain their gardens, but the initial response is extremely encouraging.

We appreciate and understand Liverpool City Council's position, but it cannot be stressed too strongly that the present uncertainty must be resolved without further delay. In the meantime the area must be



maintained and secured so as to continue to be available for the future leisure and recreational enjoyment of the people of Merseyside. As is already widely known the site will have to be closed to the public this winter, apart from access to the public house and river walkway.

One way or another, many of these superb facilities, which have been enjoyed by millions of people this summer, WILL be open to the public next year.

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Prime Minister.

Why not ask for a paper setting out targets & who is responsible, deduced from objectives now agreed?

David Young to be responsible for producing the targets & the paper explaining how it will be done.