

622/2.

See 6

*Mr. Prince 2/3*  
*I think this is a classic case for Cent. Sec. Co. activities & would be profitable if we would talk to about.*  
*UAD 2/3*



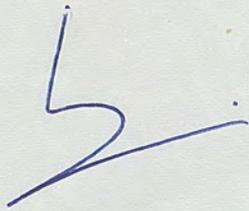
*Mr. Moore*  
*On receipt of all comments we should convene a meeting (early) under Mr. Stanes' chairmanship of all Depts. Mr. Stanes will need to see all the previous papers.*  
*2/3/87.*

Mr Bloomfield

**VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND THE ADJOURNMENT STRATEGY**

1. The Director of NICVA, Mr Quinton Oliver, wrote to Secretary of State on 9 February about the difficulties facing voluntary and community groups which had traditionally depended on District Council support given the adjournment strategy of Unionist controlled Councils. Mr Oliver also referred to the confusion in Departmental responsibilities between DENI, DOE and DHSS. He asked the Secretary of State for guidance and that someone should meet a deputation.
  
2. Central Secretariat circulated the letter to the departments concerned on 12 February and suggested that DENI as the Department responsible for grant aiding district council community activities, should take the lead. Since then, the topic has been kicked around without resolution, we are hard against the date beyond which a reply should not be delayed, and some central action might now be appropriate to pull the strands together. Meantime too, I am concerned that many of the voluntary bodies are in difficulties, initiative is being stifled, and no new developments are possible. I can see this becoming a very hot political issue in the next few weeks.
  
3. One reason for delay has been Mr Needham's wish that DHSS rather than DENI should take the lead, as the advocate of the voluntary sector and the department with which voluntary bodies have extensive dealings. We have pointed out that DHSS has in fact less leverage than either DENI (which grant aids) or DOE (which has the power to act in default). Mr Needham then suggested that DHSS should take over funding from DENI (and in particular the funding of CABs). I have however explained that funding is merely a manifestation of the function which has been given to DENI to promote voluntary community activity through district councils.

4. I may say that I share Mr Needham's growing concern for the plight of the voluntary bodies concerned. Many of them provide services for client groups of the HPSS and our new Strategic Plan will stress the need to involve the community and the voluntary sector. All this will sound rather hollow if we stand by while the groups collapse through financial starvation.
5. Perhaps it is appropriate for Central Secretariat to take the lead and determine a policy line which we can all support.



M N HAYES

DHSS

27 February 1987

cc Mr Barry  
Mr Parkes  
Mr Buchanan  
Mr Armstrong