



2 PPS

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

21 December 1983

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 23 November.

I agree with your assessment of the position so far as Tony Marlow's Bill (now published) is concerned and I also agree that the initial leak about our intentions on dog licensing did not generate the amount of public and media interest that I thought might follow; it has certainly fuelled the Lobby groups and led to a fair number of individual enquiries. Since I wrote to you there have been two Questions asking if the Government has completed its consideration of the PAC report on dog licensing. Significantly, these were asked by Miss Janet Fookes MP, Member of the RSPCA Council and Vice-President of JACOPIS (The Joint Advisory Committee on Pets in Society, whose members include the Veterinary associations, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the RSPCA, and the Pet Food Manufacturers Association); and by Lord Irving, a Vice-President of the Association of District Councils. In addition the President of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales has written to me referring to the recent press speculation and strongly urging that the dog licence be retained and increased; the NFU have also issued a Press Notice on this.

I still feel that an early announcement would have advantages but, apart from George Younger, I have not heard from colleagues generally that they have any great wish to see an announcement yet. In the circumstances I accept, for the present at least, your suggestion that we defer any Government statement until the consultation paper is ready or until the date of the PAC debate. However, if pressures do arise as we envisaged, particularly in the media, then I may indeed come back to you on the desirability of an earlier Government statement. In the meantime, the Department is working up its draft consultation paper for consideration by colleagues as quickly as possible.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to members of L and H Committees, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir George Engle.

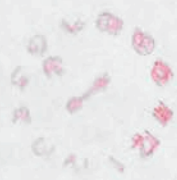
*Yours  
Patrick*

PATRICK JENKIN

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP



Pam Legis P11



DEC 22 1988



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

21 December 1983

Dear George

*will request if required.*

Thank you for your letter of 5 December supporting my proposal for an early announcement of Government intentions on dogs in the context of Tony Marlow's Bill.

However, as you will see from the enclosed copy of my reply to John Biffen's letter of 23 November, colleagues generally did not appear to favour this idea and in all the circumstances I have agreed that we should defer any Government statement until the consultative paper is ready, or until the date of the PAC debate. I have made the proviso that I may raise the matter again if pressures do arise, particularly in the media. I hope that this course will appear acceptable to you.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of L and H Committees, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir George Engle.

*Yours  
Patrick*

PATRICK JENKIN



Pam legis At 11



DEC 23 1991





PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

23 November 1983

*Dear Patrick,*

*JD 23/11*

DOGS; MR TONY MARLOW MP; TEN MINUTE RULE BILL

Thank you for your letter of 11 November in which you suggest that an early announcement on dogs should be made in reply to a Parliamentary Question.

There are, as you say, a number of factors involved and it is a matter of judgement which of them carries the most weight. At present, I start from the presumption that no announcement should be made until the consultation paper is ready. Looked at from this point of view, I do not think Tony Marlow's Bill weighs very heavily. For the reasons you give, I do not think that we should attempt to use it as a vehicle for our own policy. Nor do I think that he would withdraw. In any event, I see no reason to rush into a hasty announcement because of this Bill. It is fifth order on 2 December and therefore almost certain not to be discussed. We can certainly arrange for it to be blocked on that and subsequent days. There is therefore no immediate prospect of having to debate it.

Secondly, there is the press speculation. You will be more in touch with this than I, but it seems that the initial leak has not led to any further speculation and without a Parliamentary Debate, no particular reason why it should be revived. I would not therefore be inclined to hasty action on this account.

Finally there is the PAC debate. I quite agree that it would be preferable to have the Government's policy clear and announced before then, but the timing of that debate has not yet been fixed.

My own preference therefore would be for work to go ahead as quickly as possible on the finalisation of the consultation paper, and for no announcement to be made until either the paper is ready, or the PAC debate or a debate on Tony Marlow's Bill seems imminent. In this way we can minimise the delay between announcement and the issue of the consultation document.

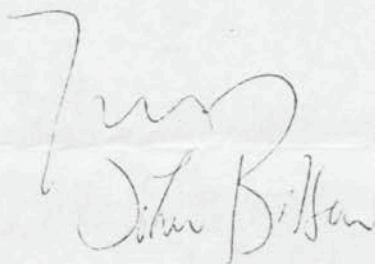
/I do appreciate ...

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP



I do appreciate of course that there may be pressures on you of which I am not aware; if so I am sure that you will come back.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, to members of L and H Committees, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir George Engle.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Biffen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

JOHN BIFFEN

Parliament,  
Legislation,  
P411

23 NOV 1983







2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref: J/PSO/15095/8

Your ref:

11 November 1983

Dear John,

JD  
15/11

DOGS : MR TONY MARLOW MP : TEN MINUTE RULE BILL

Thank you for your letter of 25 October. Now that H Committee has discussed the conclusions and recommendations of the PAC Report, I am able to come back on the handling of this ten minute rule bill. Given the Committee's decision there appear to be three possibilities, as follows:

- (i) The Bill's Sponsor, Tony Marlow MP, might be asked to withdraw. However, in his position as Chairman of the League for the Introduction of Canine Control it might be awkward for him to do this even if he were informed in confidence of the intended Government action.
- (ii) Timing of Second Reading will be affected by the handling of other Ten Minute Rule Bills and more particularly of Ballotted Bills: Mr Marlow's Bill might fall by the wayside. However, if Second Reading takes place the Government could explain that it has plans for future legislation on dogs (in the 1984/85 Session), on which it will be consulting with local government and other interested organisations; it could then block the Bill.
- (iii) Alternatively the Government could support the Bill and say that it wishes to re-draft in Committee Stage to meet its wish for a discretionary form of local authority registration (as against Mr Marlow's scheme for local determination of the level of fee). Without a published text it is difficult to predict whether this would be practicable. In addition this course would add to the burden on my Department's resources - we already have some half dozen bills for this Session. Further, the proposal for consultation with outside bodies and local government would be diluted. Any consultation would probably have to take place in tandem with putting the legislation through Parliament.



R E S T R I C T E D

On the basis of these options my view would be that we should try to persuade Mr Marlow to withdraw his Bill but if this was unsuccessful, and if the timing was such that the Second Reading was debated, then we should block the Bill and explain that consultation on other proposals will be forthcoming.

The position is affected, however, by the leak about the H Committee decision (Mail on Sunday, 6 November). The article states, incorrectly, that I am expected to make a formal statement abandoning the licence before Christmas. As you know, H Committee decided that no announcement should be made until further details had been worked out. It occurs to me that in the circumstances there might be merit in making a statement soon, say in answer to a Parliamentary Question, before other rumours appear; this could also lead to withdrawal of the Ten Minute Rule Bill. The statement could be to the effect that the Government has now considered the PAC report and agrees that the licensing system should be abolished; but that recognising the need to deal with local dog nuisance problems the Government is considering giving local authorities powers for local registration schemes and for self-financing local action where needed. We could indicate that we expect to issue a consultation paper soon with a view to legislation in 1984/85. I favour this course. I realise that this would to some extent pre-empt the Financial Secretary's response to the PAC Reports but as I understand it no date has been fixed for that debate, while the Second Reading of Mr Marlow's Bill is on 2 December. We need therefore to act fairly quickly.

I am copying this letter to other members of L Committee, the Chairman and members of H Committee, Sir Robert Armstrong, First Parliamentary Counsel and, in view of recent correspondence, to No. 10.

*You are*  
*Pat*

PATRICK JENKIN



NOV 15 1981

R E S T R I C T E D

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP

*Patience:*  
*Legislation Pt 11*