

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Southwark Councils decision not to employ contractors involved in work at Greenham Common.

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

February 1983

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
24.3.83							
<b>CLOSED</b>		PREM 19/1086					

Alan -

TLP

DDE note is

'Confidential' - Do you  
wish to keep? Kay

23/3



CC DOE

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 March 1983

Dear Lord Harris,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February about the decision of Southwark Council not to employ contractors involved in work at Greenham Common.

As Irwin Bellwin made clear in reply to your very pertinent speech in the House of Lords, the Government entirely shares your concern over the action that Southwark have taken.

I should like to assure you that the Ministers concerned are in touch with Tarmac, and that very careful consideration is being given to both the immediate and the longer-term implications of Southwark's action.

I hope you will understand that because of the nature of the issues involved, I would prefer not to say more at this stage, but I was grateful to you for raising this important matter in the Lords.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Stober

The Lord Harris of Greenwich

HL



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref: K/PSO/11104/83

Your ref:

22 March 1983

*Dear Willie, by me*

Thank you for your letter of 26 February to Roger Bright enclosing a copy of Lord Harris's letter of 16 February to the Prime Minister about Southwark's decision not to employ contractors who are working at Greenham Common.

Our legal advice is that Southwark's action may indeed be regarded as unlawful. This is not because they have broken any specific statutory provision, but because they appear to have acted unreasonably by taking into account extraneous matters in drawing up their list of approved contractors. Although Southwark has drawn their resolution to the attention of other like-minded authorities, there is at present little evidence that others will follow their lead.

We are keeping closely in contact with the contractor concerned, Tarmac; Mr Stanley has spoken to their Managing Director, and there has also been contact at senior official level. Tarmac have told us that they are now disposed to take legal proceedings against Southwark as a matter of principle. They are having further discussions with their lawyers and will be keeping the Department informed.

Meanwhile, we have drafted the attached reply on the basis that the Prime Minister will wish to express to Lord Harris a necessary concern, and convey that the Government are very closely involved in this issue and its implications, whilst at the same time indicating that the Government is not proposing to intervene directly.

I am copying this letter to Barry Neale at the Ministry of Defence.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Helen Ghosh*

MRS H F GHOSH  
Private Secretary

Willie Rickett Esq

DRAFT REPLY FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO LORD HARRIS

Thank you for your letter of 16 February about the decision of Southwark Council not to employ contractors involved in work at Greenham Common.

As Irwin Bellwin made clear in reply to your very pertinent speech in the House of Lords, the Government entirely shares your concern over the action that Southwark have taken.

I should like to assure you that the Ministers concerned are in touch with Tarmac, and that very careful consideration is being given to both the immediate and the longer-term implications of Southwark's action.

I hope you will understand that because of the nature of the issues involved, I would prefer not to say more at this stage, but I was grateful to you for raising this important matter in the Lords.



da

3/3

Lord HARRIS

10 DOWNING STREET

① 7/3  
② 14/3.  
③ 21/3

*From the Private Secretary*

21 February 1983

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Lord Harris of Greenwich.

I should be grateful if you could provide a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to Lord Harris, to reach us by 3 March.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Barry Neale (Ministry of Defence).

W. F. S. RICKETT

Roger Bright, Esq.,  
Department of the Environment.



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

21 February 1983

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 16 February. I will place this before the Prime Minister and you will be sent a reply as soon as possible.

**W. F. S. RICKETT**

The Lord Harris of Greenwich

*W*



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Lord Harris of Greenwich  
wants you to intervene to  
stop Councils from black-  
listing the contractors on  
Greenham Common. We will  
let you have a reply.

WM

A +<sup>u</sup> reply

I hope

not

21 February 1983

From: Lord Harris of Greenwich

cc 19



HR

16th February 1983

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.  
The House of Commons

*Prime Minister*

I am writing to you following the recent debate in the House of Lords on the decision of Southwark Council to black-list any contractor who obtains a Ministry of Defence contract at Greenham Common.

As I indicated, when introducing the debate, I believe that this decision is unlawful. Unhappily it appears that a number of the contractors concerned believe that if they commence litigation against the Council, other left-wing Councils will retaliate by dropping them from their lists of tenderers; and in a manner which would make a challenge in the courts rather difficult.

Could I ask you to intervene in this matter? It would, as I am sure you will agree, be wholly wrong to allow Government contractors to be punished in this way. The Ministry of Defence surely has a duty to protect its own contractors, and the Department of the Environment has a clear interest in preventing other local authorities from following the unlawful action of Southwark. Is it not possible for the Government itself to bring this matter before the courts?

I would be most grateful if you felt able to take a personal interest in this issue.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
Harris of Greenwich



