

[ncethdq.let]



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
SANCTUARY BUILDINGS GREAT SMITH STREET
WESTMINSTER LONDON SW1P 3BT
TELEPHONE 0171 925 5000

LORD HENLEY
Minister of State

57/02/27

Mrs H Du Quesnay CBE
Chairman
NCET
Milburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7JJ

26th Feb 97

I am most grateful both to you and to Mr Mike Littlewood for coming to see me on 14 February to discuss the NCET's draft Corporate Plan for 1997-2000.

The general overview that you gave me was most helpful and I would like to express my thanks to you, to other members of Council, and to NCET's staff for their work in putting together this Plan. I believe that it marks a substantial advance on earlier versions, and should provide a sound strategic steer for the period ahead. We continue to believe that the work of NCET has a potentially most significant role to play as the process of technological change increases. The Council is also clearly right to place importance for the future on working closely with key agencies such as SCAA, the TTA and FEDA, and also with other key representative groups such as NAACE and BESA.

We agreed in discussion that over the course of the next year, and in looking forward to the subsequent updating of the Corporate Plan, you would invite Council to look at a number of particular issues. These included:-

- i. the role that NCET should play in helping to address key issues of national concern within education, and in particular the various Departmental and other initiatives to improve the learning of basic skills. I shall be writing to you separately about this shortly;

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ii. the role the Council's activities can play in ensuring that the IT interests of SEN are fully recognised, including the appropriate level of support for the valuable work carried out at the Oxford and Oldham ACE centres;

iii. the need to delineate a clear role for NCET in Europe, which reflects the extent to which the Council's limited resources should go beyond direct support of DfEE and wider Government policy. You thought that this might be an area for early Council discussion;

iv. areas arising for action under the recently completed Efficiency Review, and the changes likely to lead progressively from this in the period ahead.

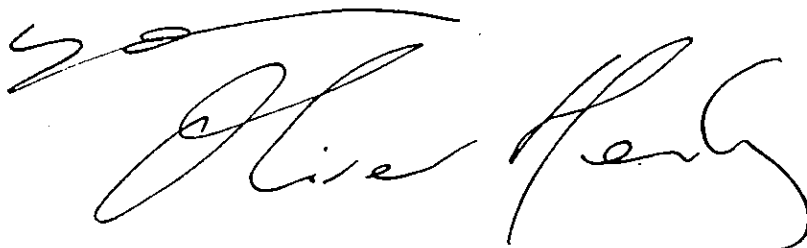
We also noted that, in earlier official discussion, the Department advised that groups established to be sounding boards for Council action should have clear and time-limited terms of reference rather than non-specific general remits.

In the light of our discussion, and having regard to the points above, I am now pleased to confirm the Department's full grant of £4.49m for the 1996-97 Financial Year, the sum earlier indicated to you on a provisional basis. Resources for the following year will of course be reviewed in the normal way, having regard to the Council's wishes and plans.

During our discussion, we also noted the position regarding the appointment of a new Chief Executive and of the appointment of new members to replace those coming to the end of their term. I know that our Assessor, Robin Ritzema, will want to keep in touch with you on these and other issues.

Finally, I applaud your decision to mark the appearance of this year's Corporate Plan with a formal launch occasion though I shall, unfortunately, not be able to attend myself because of a pre-existing diary commitment. However I do send my good wishes for the event.

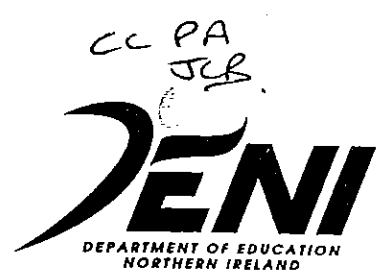
I am sending copies of this letter to Mr Mike Littlewood, as acting Chief Executive, and to the other Governmental Assessors to the Council.

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

LORD HENLEY



FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE Rt. HON. MICHAEL ANCRAM QC DL MP
MINISTER OF STATE



E48/97

Mrs Heather Du Quesnay
Chairman
National Council for Educational Technology
Milburn Hill Road
Science Park
COVENTRY
CV4 7JJ

31 January 1997

Dear Mrs Du Quesnay

Thank you for your letter of 17 January to the Secretary of State about NCET's Corporate Plan 1997/2000, which has been passed to Michael Ancram as the Minister responsible for education. He has read your letter and has asked me to reply.

One of the strategic aims of the Department's Strategic Plan for Education 1996-2000 is to support each pupil in acquiring, to the best of his or her ability, the skills of spoken and written communication, numeracy and working with information technology. A supporting aim is to promote the effective use of educational technology as a tool for teaching, learning and administration in schools. As well as having these shared aims, both plans recognise the importance of having sufficient teachers competent in using the technology appropriately in order to help enhance learning and raise educational standards.

The Department looks forward, therefore, to continuing the close working relationships that it has with NCET in determining how best the Corporate Plan can be effectively implemented in Northern Ireland and would like to thank all concerned for their work in its preparation.



Departmental officials will continue to liaise with Council Officers on the practical outworking of the Corporate Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colin Jack".

C D JACK





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JONATHAN EVANS MP

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From The Parliamentary Under-Secretary

Our ref: CT/97-11856

5 March 1997

Mrs Heather du Quesnay CBE
Chairman
National Council for Educational Technology
Milburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7JJ

Dear Mrs du Quesnay,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January to the Secretary of State enclosing a copy of NCET's Corporate Plan for the period 1997 - 2000.

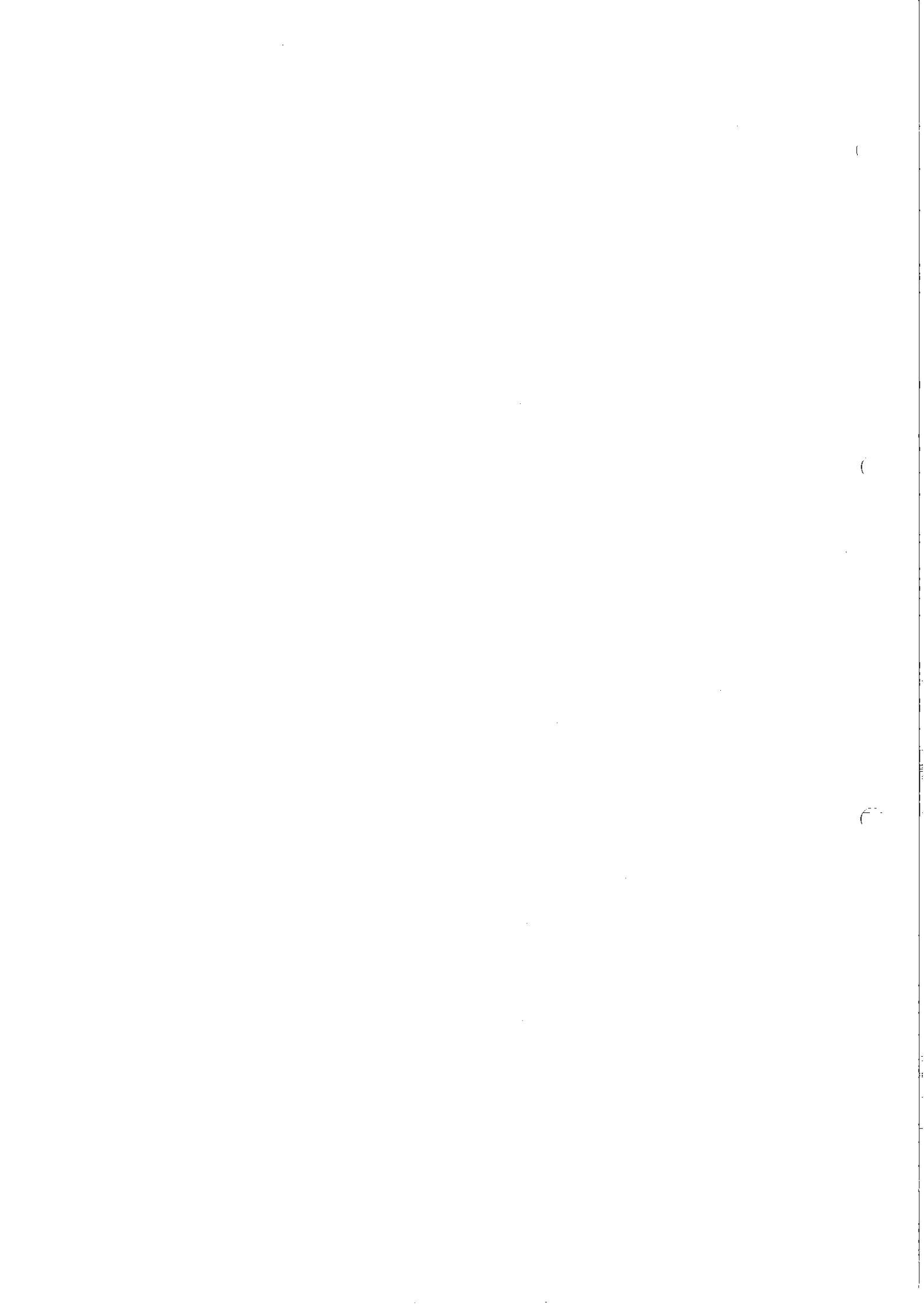
I am very grateful to you and all your colleagues and staff for the effort which has gone in to producing the new style Plan. This is lucid and to the point, and I certainly share your views about the importance of clear objectives and measurable targets. I am keen that the close co-operation between your officers and Welsh Office officials should be maintained to ensure the continued applicability and relevance of NCET's work to Wales.

I am also anxious to raise the profile of NCET in Wales as part of our wider efforts to stimulate the educational community to think seriously about using IT to raise standards. NCET has already played a significant part in that process already, of course - for example, through its excellent work on the Welsh Office Multimedia/Portables Initiative; participation in the Department's regular meetings with IT specialists in the LEAs; and from its own activities in the field. For the immediate future, I should like NCET, in taking forward its activities in Wales, to concentrate on the development of the Strategic Support Plan envisaged in *A Bright Future: Beating The Previous Best*. My officials will be in touch with Council officers about this separately.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to confirm the Welsh Office's grant for the year 1997-98: £266,000. The arrangements for claiming grant remain unchanged.

Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Evans

JONATHAN EVANS



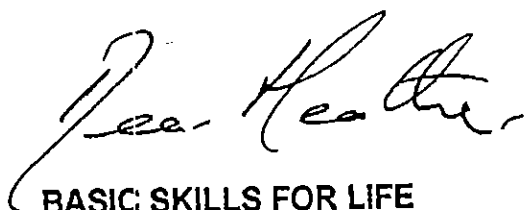


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26 February 1997



BASIC: SKILLS FOR LIFE

When we met on 14 February to discuss NCET's Corporate Plan, we touched upon the issue of Basic Skills and the possibility of a wider role for NCET in this area. As you may know, the Department has now published "Basic Skills for Life", a copy of which is enclosed.

As you know, standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy are central to our policies in relation to schools, young people and adults, particularly the long term unemployed. "Basic Skills for Life" pulls together the wide range of initiatives the Government has put in place and describes a number of new initiatives announced by the Secretary of State on 19 February. It also poses some questions which we believe should be widely discussed to build effective local practice.

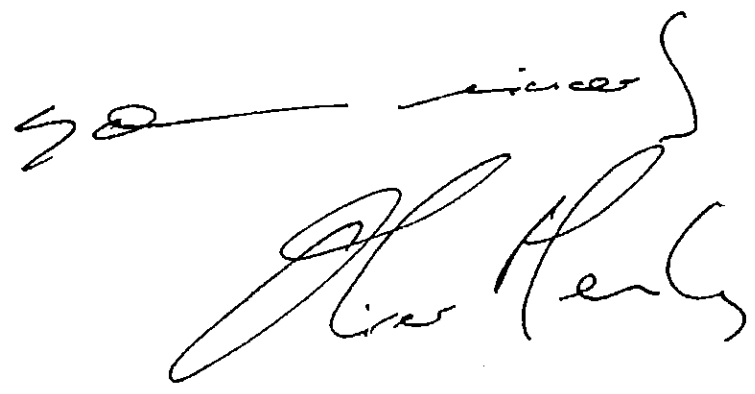
To support such discussions amongst the organisations and individuals involved in basic skills work locally, the Basic Skills Agency has been asked to orchestrate a

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number of regional conferences. Following these we intend to publish and disseminate widely a booklet bringing together a range of local good practice which will help all those involved further develop effective provision.

I am sure NCET will wish to take part in these discussions, as I am well aware of the contribution NCET has made to investigating ways to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy.

I would welcome comments you may have on the issues discussed in "Basic Skills for Life" and look forward to hearing from you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lord Henley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "L".

LORD HENLEY