



THE LONDON BOROUGH
www.bromley.gov.uk

BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE, STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BRI 3UH

TELEPHONE: 020 8464 3333

CONTACT: Steve Wood
stephen.wood@bromley.gov.uk

DIRECT LINE: 020 8313 4316

FAX: 020 8290 0608

DATE: 27 February 2018

AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on Wednesday 7 March 2018

Please see the attached report(s) marked "to follow" on the agenda.

**5 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING-EXCLUDING
EXEMPT ITEMS (Pages 3 - 4)**

*Copies of the documents referred to above can be obtained from
<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/>*

This page is left intentionally blank



Financial Services

Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH

Telephone: 020 8464 3333

Direct Line:

Email:

Fax: 020

Internet: www.bromley.gov.uk

Rt. Hon Esther McVey MP
Secretary of State
Department for Work & Pension
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9DA

6th March 2018

Dear Mrs. McVey,

I refer to Baroness Buscombe's letter of 12th September 2017.

In the intervening period you may be aware that this council has expressed an interest to take part in the joint counter fraud initiative, following the invitation in the Minister's and Baroness Buscombe's letter of 10th October. This will sit well alongside our own existing counter fraud measures such as our investment last year in tackling tenancy fraud.

However, serious concerns remain with regard to the Department's penalties policy, which is at odds not only with this council's practice as regards such cases, when such matters were within our remit, but also the expectations of taxpayers both in our borough and I've no doubt around the country.

Administrative penalties will inevitably be regarded as a 'soft option', which sends a message of a lack of seriousness in pursuing the 'smaller' frauds. Indeed, I read with some dismay that the threshold under which such penalties are deemed appropriate was more than doubled last year to £5,000.

Just as the 'broken window theory' applies to crime on the streets, so the principle in fraud prosecution must be that even such relatively small cases are prosecuted to the fullest extent. Our residents may well ask how the department can justify applying a lower standard to a £5,000 theft from the taxpayer than Marks & Spencer would to the shoplifting of a pair of knickers.

On a positive note, we look forward to the joint working initiative and specialist local authority referrals team producing a higher number of prosecuted cases and, critically, that we do not see the delay in processing such cases that dogged the SFIS previously.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Neil Reddin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr. Neil Reddin
Chairman of Audit Sub-committee
London Borough of Bromley

cc. Cllr. Colin Smith, Leader of Bromley Council
Rt. Hon. Bob Neill MP
Rt. Hon Bob Stewart MP
Rt. Hon. Jo Johnson MP