



**Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government**

Clive Betts MP  
Chair, Housing, Communities and  
Local Government Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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**Rishi Sunak MP**  
*Minister for Local Government*

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*Dear Clive,*

**Business Rates Appeals and 'Check, Challenge, Appeal'**

At the oral evidence session on Business Rates Retention on 5 March the Committee raised a number of questions about the business rates appeals system. During the session I referred to my plan to meet with the Chief Executive of the Valuation Office Agency to discuss some of the issues raised.

I have now met with Melissa Tatton and am writing to update the Committee, in particular on plans to support the effective operation of the new 'Check, Check, Appeal' (CCA) system.

The VOA clearly understands the concerns of stakeholders in relation to the absence of certain features from the new online system for CCA. Melissa has assured me that the Agency is working closely with stakeholders to design and deliver improvements to the system – for example making the process for registering on the system as smooth as possible, and making the system work better for agents or ratepayers with large numbers of properties.

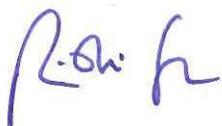
Given that we are now in the second year of the system, and that a number of the key concerns from stakeholders were originally raised last summer, the VOA needs to deliver these changes as soon as possible. They have assured me that they will deliver the key changes that are the biggest priority for stakeholders. The VOA has informed me that they will share the timetable for delivering these remaining improvements with stakeholders in May, following the purdah period for local elections. The VOA will send you a copy of this plan once it is published.

I also discussed with Melissa the need for the Agency to improve the VOA's engagement with stakeholders to ensure that they understand what improvements are being delivered and when. Communicating their updated plan for the system improvements is a part of this, but the VOA will also continue to engage with system users on a regular basis.

Finally, we discussed the VOA's work to clear remaining appeals from the previous ratings list. Given the impact this can have on business and local government, I was pleased that the Agency is making good progress on clearing these appeals, and had cleared over 114,000

appeals between April and December 2017. I was clear that I expect the VOA to continue to make progress in clearing these appeals as quickly as possible.

I hope this update is helpful and thank you again for raising these important points at our previous discussion.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rishi Sunak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**RISHI SUNAK MP**