

## STEERING BRIEF, AIMS AND APPROACH

### Issue

1. Your meeting with a number of MPs, including James Arbuthnot (JA), Oliver Letwin, Mike Wood, Andrew Bridgen and Alan Bates (AB) to discuss their concerns about the Scheme, a flavour of which was shared with you in your telephone conversation with JA on 28 October 2014.

### Recommendation

2. That, rather than allow your interlocutors to control meeting, you instead take the initiative early on, adopt an assertive approach in setting out POL's position and run the meeting on your own terms insofar as that is possible to do. It is our view that, in so doing, we will be able to kill a number of birds with one stone:

- land the points we wish to make (the facts), not least that while we recognise that they need to deal with the complaints they have received, it is equally important to them and to us that we provide public services to the many thousands more that depend on them (all of them voters);
- force a recognition of all (or at least some) of what POL has inarguably done to make a success of the Scheme and generate some consensus however fragile (the effort and spend); and
- in the process, leave only awkward questions for them to answer such as what more, precisely, they think we could have done.

### Background/Argument

3. The single most important and helpful element of our rejoinder to this hostility is the confidence we can and must have about how POL has acquitted itself throughout the process and to give a strong sense of that confidence throughout the meeting. There is no reason for you in particular or POL more generally to be remotely defensive.

4. Secondly, we would urge you to stress the fact that you are in charge of an organisation that has, at its heart, the determination to improve people's lives (often the most vulnerable in our society). Indeed, you have obligations in this regard. While the issue being championed by MPs may seem important to them in campaign terms, this pales into insignificance to the bigger, social, mission of POL and your leadership of it, not to mention the literally thousands of people who depend critically on our services. It would be a brave MP who sought to champion one above the other.

5. The Horizon issue is one which we are absolutely willing to entertain for the simple reasons that a) we are a human and fair organisation and b) that it brings into question the very life-blood of the 11,500 branches up and down the country which support 6 million transactions we perform every day, all of which will be constituents of the MPs you are meeting and which are the focus, in terms of their being our customers, of everything we do.

6. But there must be limits: we cannot accommodate the self-indulgence of a number of malcontents to the continuing detriment of our customers. The tiny minority making allegations, while deserving of respect and due process, cannot be allowed to pollute our public service mission. The money we have spent seeking to disprove a negative, when we need to continue to invest to further improve our customer experience, is as costly as it is absurd.

7. Context is important. We have 126 complains in the Scheme, as against [XXXXX] thousands SPMS and Officers in Charge who appear, using the same equipment, to be capable of meeting their Communities' needs without getting in to these sorts of difficulties.

8. Given the intemperate language used against POL in this context, you should express a wish to place your position on record as in follows in the speaking notes which appear below.

9. It may be that the course of the meeting does not allow you to open in the way we suggest or, that once in the room, you judge that there is a more effective approach. The substance of these lines could be deployed defensively or less assertively in those circumstances. The Q&A briefing at annex C offers some additional material in support.

#### **Flatter/Assert**

- I want to stress how grateful I am for the very close support you, James (Arbuthnot), have given me throughout this process
- Indeed, but for your candour, it would have been very difficult for me to arrive at my own, and well-informed, view as to where matters stand
- When we spoke on the 'phone, I said I would reflect very carefully on what you had said and I have done precisely that
- It seems to me that it would be appropriate and, quite honestly fair, that you should allow me to say where I have got to in my thinking before we open things up

### Starting Point/Position of POL in Society

- I am immensely proud to be leading a public service, with a long and distinguished heritage, which touches on the lives of practically everybody in the country, including, by definition, the vast majority of your constituents
- Indeed, in admittedly different ways, our mission is similar: to serve the public

### Gracious Indignation

- It is because of these common values we share, that I shall not hide from you the very deep concern I have had upon hearing some of the language I understand has been used to describe POL's actions or approach to the Scheme
- This is not the time, nor the place, to go into details but I will just pause to reflect on the fact that I have been appalled by the fact that someone on Social Media has chosen to remind me of the fact of this meeting, not once but twice
- This is, James, at best an important breach of confidentiality and, at worst, an invasion of my professional privacy since only very few of us knew that this meeting would be taking place at this location and at this time – you would accept that this is intolerable

### Substance

- When you were kind enough to speak with me on 28 October, I told you I would have a careful think about what you had said – I have done so
- There are, in my view, a number of points which my organisation has sought to make which have not, as yet, benefitted from an acknowledgment or response
- I propose to put these to you and your colleagues now so that, perhaps for the first time, we can begin the discussion which will follow on the basis of a more balanced picture
- You will forgive me if some of this goes over old ground but I feel it must

### Uncomfortable Facts

- When confronted with allegations that the very system which underpins the work of 11,500 branch up and down the country, fulfilling the 6 million transactions which your constituents perform and depend upon every day, I acted decisively
- Not only because of the natural business concern I had for the integrity of the network but because of an inbuilt sense of care and fairness which you will surely recognise

- I established the Scheme in good faith, based upon your advice; furthermore, I think you would accept that I allowed you and JFSA a very significant margin of latitude in designing its processes, even to the point of accepting your nominee as Chairman of the Working Group?
- I then went beyond that and agreed (and let me assure you that many in my position would not) of funding not just the Secretariat to support the Scheme's work, but even Applicants, so that they could build the most compelling case against my organisation
- The process we then embarked upon involved, and continues to involve, a highly rigorous and painstaking process of re-investigating each and every case and subjecting this to external review by Second Sight
- POL has now investigated 106 case afresh – in none of these has a fault with Horizon been established or been even close to establishing – while disappointing to those in the Scheme, this will be greatly reassuring to the thousands of your other constituents who rely on our services each and every day
- Mindful of the nature of the allegations, and in particular of the interests of eventual applicants to the Scheme, I also went to great lengths to insist on strict conditions of confidentiality around the entire process – we all agreed
- This was especially in the interests of Applicants themselves – but I find myself observing that these self-imposed rules are being disregarded more often than not
- I have been at pains to do whatever I can to address the concerns you have raised and, in part, have been keen to do so given our respective roles as public servants. And Post Office remains committed to investigating all the cases in full.
- But you must now, I think, tell me what precisely you think it is that I should do over and above what I have already committed to this process
- If that involves my accepting responsibility for matters where the evidence points to a reasonable conclusion that fault does not rest with POL, then I fear I cannot accept.

## **ANNEXES**

- Annex A – Background to Meeting
- Annex B - Scheme Status and Current Challenges
- Annex C - Q&A
- Annex D - Scheme Key Facts
- Annex E - Branch Improvement
- Annex F - MPs and their cases

**Annex A**  
**BACKGROUND TO MEETING**

- Further to your telephone call with James Arbuthnot MP on 28 October, you have agreed to meet with him and 3 other MPs to discuss their concerns about the Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme. You subsequently wrote James Arbuthnot on 5 November setting out the Post Office's view (copy attached).
- Alan Bates (JFSA) will also be present at the meeting. It appears that JFSA have been briefing MPs, journalists and other interested parties on progress with the Scheme and their dissatisfaction. We suspect Second Sight has done similar.
- JFSA has also decided recently not to play a full part in Working Group discussions – leaving the October meeting before discussions on whether a case is suitable for mediation where Second Sight has recommended mediation. They were present for the full meeting on 14 November but the discussion of cases lasted under 5 minutes.
- In your telephone call, James Arbuthnot made the following points:
  - he had received reports that Post Office was not prepared to enter into mediation;
  - Alan Bates and Kay Linnell were extremely unhappy and did not feel able to take part in meetings;
  - Post Office were taking an overly legalistic approach to the Scheme as did the Working Group and the Chair;
  - he thought it likely that JFSA/SPMRs would seek litigation before Christmas and that, as things stand, he was minded to advise them to do so;
  - he was finding it difficult to hold back the media and felt he should speak to them soon;
  - he was getting an increasing number of representations from a wider group of MPs (e.g Mike Wood, Andrew Bridgen), including a number of ministers (e.g. George Osborne, Steve Webb, Priti Patel, Oliver Letwin);
  - Post Office has invested a lot resource into something which is making people even more dissatisfied; and that
  - he did not want to be seen as abandoning the process but felt he could not currently really support it.
- Despite your response, we assume these issues and assertions are likely to be the focus of the meeting.
- JFSA have now written to the Working Group Chair (also attached) setting out their dissatisfaction to him about the way the Scheme is working. The letter (presumably timed with the MPs meeting in mind) was discussed at the Working Group meeting on 14 November. The key points from the discussion were:
  - JFSA had written to set out their views "for the record" rather than for discussion;

- the Working Group reaffirmed that its role is to make decisions on the suitability of cases for mediation despite JFSA's view to the contrary;
- all parties agreed that Second Sight needed to make progress as quickly as possible in completing their Part Two report;
- JFSA assert that Second Sight's case reports and the Working Group give too much prominence to the cause of losses in branch rather than wider "systemic issues" eg unfair contract, lack of support, lack of audit trail. The Working Group agreed that all issues should be considered but that the causes of losses was the most important issue in many cases. POL have investigated all claims in full;
- JFSA assert that one applicant withdrew from mediation and the Scheme owing to POL's approach – this is untrue but owing to the confidentiality of mediation.

Beyond that, a number of cases passed through to mediation and a plan was agreed for the delivery of Second Sight's Part Two Report by the end of March.

## ANNEX B

### SCHEME STATUS AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

1. PO has been investigating Applicants' cases afresh for some 2.5 years. In the cases investigated to date, the accumulated evidence broadly points to 3 scenarios – cases in which losses have occurred through accounting and other errors by staff in the relevant branch, those in which errors have been exacerbated by false accounting, and those involving theft.
2. In not one of the 106 cases investigated so far has a fault with the Horizon system been established. That said, we are being extremely careful to avoid any sense of complacency and we will apply the same rigour in investigating the remaining cases as we have to date.
3. However, PO is entitled to take the view that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the presumption must be that the system is working as it ought to. To start from a contrary position, whereby PO must prove the system's reliability, goes against both common sense and established practice. Bluntly, it is not PO's job to prove that Horizon did not cause the losses incurred by Applicants to the Scheme, but for Applicants to provide evidence that it did.

#### *Current Challenges*

4. Beyond the very significant resource impact that providing all Secretariat functions to the Scheme adds to what is already a major undertaking, PO faces a number of additional challenges:
  - *Breaches of confidentiality/media:* PO has, at all times, been keen to ensure that the business of the independent Working Group should be confidential, not least given the sensitivity of much of the relevant material. That is in line with its terms of reference, agreed to by all parties, and highlighted as the only legally binding obligation on participants to its work. It has unfortunately become clear that that confidentiality has been breached e.g. through articles in Private Eye exposing details of the Working Group's decision making process that could not have been guessed at correctly. PO maintains that, should any participant in the Working Group have an issue or concern they wish to raise, the proper forum for doing so must initially at least be the Working Group itself. That has not happened in this case which, quite apart from legitimate concerns over confidentiality, marks a lack of professional courtesy.
  - *JFSA's non-participation:* JFSA have recently adopted a policy position not to comment on, discuss or otherwise participate in the examination of cases by the Working Group where Second Sight has deemed these suitable for mediation. They now

leave meetings of the Working Group before these cases are discussed, depriving Sir Anthony Hooper and PO of the benefit of their input. Since Second Sight have deemed well in excess of 95% of the cases they have reviewed as being suitable for mediation, JFSA's stance plainly undermines the role of the Working Group and the successful operation of the Scheme. Moreover, JFSA have recently written to Sir Anthony Hooper, questioning whether the Scheme really has a future given POL's alleged intransigence in its approach to cases.

- *Second Sight's reports:* these reports are based on an independent review of all the material available to PO as a result both of its initial, and now fresh, investigation of each case. Second Sight almost invariably conclude that the question of responsibility for the losses in branch (i.e. whether the Applicant or the PO is responsible) is suitable for mediation. As noted above, none of the cases re-investigated to date have produced evidence of a fault with Horizon, or that PO was otherwise directly responsible for those losses. Legitimate questions over the adequacy of training provided by PO may arise in a tiny minority of cases and PO has already embarked on a review of its practice in this regard. In contrast, and in most cases, Second Sight appear simply to ignore the weight of evidence (or the totality of evidence) which points to a clear finding that the Applicant was responsible for the losses, preferring instead to leave the question open and recommend mediation. This is at its most egregious where Second Sight refuse to acknowledge the responsibility of Applicants even in cases where the Applicant has admitted to, and/or been convicted of, theft
- *Expectations gap:* the Scheme, originally designed to resolve concerns around the reliability and performance of Horizon, is in practice more often than not being used by Applicants – some of whom have entered into conditional fee agreements - as a vehicle for making very substantial claims against PO for losses it is alleged to have caused. While the case in which the Applicant is seeking £13 million may represent the extreme end of the spectrum, claims in excess of £1 million are common. In addition, and despite strenuous efforts to head the problem off, a number of Applicants with criminal convictions appear to consider the Scheme as being capable of providing them with an alternative platform from which to appeal those convictions. These wholly disproportionate claims (on any reading) and inappropriate/unrealistic expectations of the Scheme will only fuel the already pronounced sense of dissatisfaction, no matter how misdirected, felt by Applicants towards PO.
- *The appropriateness of mediation:* Second Sight's near default recommendation to mediate, even where there is no evidence to question the original finding that Applicants were responsible or liable for the losses in individual branches, inevitably places PO in a highly invidious position. Partly given their number, it is all too easy to characterise PO's view that these cases are not suitable for mediation as being high-

handed. However, to ignore the evidence in these cases would, in effect, be tantamount to asking PO to accept responsibility for events which simply did not take place. In the vast majority of cases, PO would be quite happy to sit down and speak with Applicants to give them a further opportunity to speak to the PO directly and to explain, where it is possible to do so (false accounting by its nature frustrates this process), how losses occurred. A conversation of this nature would be considerably more appropriate than mediation, not least since each mediation costs PO in the region of £34,000.

5. These issues are far from superficial nor are they capable of a quick fix. Indeed it may not be in Post Office's longer term interests for them all to be addressed, especially if other parties were to walk away from the Scheme. However, for this meeting Post Office's commitment to the Scheme should be restated.

## ANNEX C

### Q & A

#### 1. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

**Q: By allowing applications into the scheme you set a clear expectation that they would be mediated. If Second Sight say the case is suitable for mediation why is Post Office not just agreeing to that?**

It was never envisaged or stated that all cases would automatically pass to mediation. PO never rejected any eligible case at any stage, accepting all for investigation even where there appeared to be little substance to the cases. We have investigated everything. We look at every case on its merits. Where we think a case is suitable for mediation we will mediate.

Mediation is a consensual process and designed to get agreement and compromise. It would be wrong for PO to mediate where neither the applicant, PO nor Second Sight have found evidence to suggest that the applicant was not responsible for the loss. That is not a matter for compromise.

***The Scheme ToRs say (not published and confidential):***

The role of the Working Group is “*To review at each stage Applicants' cases that may not be suitable for the Scheme and to decide whether and/or how those cases may proceed*”.

The Scheme must provide a mechanism to investigate proportionately and effectively an Applicant's concerns.

Where appropriate, the Scheme must offer a reasonable forum, by way of **mediation or through direct discussions**, for an Applicant and Post Office to seek a resolution of that Applicant's **legitimate concerns**.

The Scheme will be funded predominantly by Post Office and must therefore ensure value for money for taxpayers.

***The Scheme published documentation (Page 8 Q&A) says:***

“ the WG may consider that some cases are not suitable for mediation...”

JFSA and Post Office each have a vote on whether a case is suitable the Chair has a casting vote.

**Q: This is about giving closure and a chance to be heard to people who have been through a terrible time. Why are you denying them that?**

Every case is thoroughly investigated and Applicants are given a full report. PO is prepared to discuss and explain why the losses occurred if the applicant would like that but that is not mediation. We have done so in a number of cases and resolved them prior to mediation. However, despite the lack of evidence, some applicants are making claims running to several million pounds against the Post Office, suggesting they are looking for more than "closure" and that the gap in expectations is too great for mediation to be effective. Post Office cannot and will not accept responsibility for losses when there is no evidence that we were responsible.

## **2. POST OFFICE'S LEGALISTIC APPROACH**

**Q: Why is Post Office deploying a team of lawyers to every meeting. It's unnecessary and suggests Post Office is hostile to mediation.**

Post Office's input to the Scheme properly sits within the responsibilities of our General Counsel. This does not imply a legalistic approach or any hostility to mediation. The Post Office's representation on the Working Group is drawn from senior staff, some but not all of whom are lawyers.

The fact that PO, and the Chair for that matter, is asking Second Sight to provide evidence to support a conclusion that that PO may be responsible for the loss does not mean that we are being legalistic.

**Q: I have heard that the Chair is treating the Working Group like a Courtroom. Is there anything you can do to change his approach?**

It is disappointing that confidentiality around the Working Group's meetings appears to be being broken – PO has taken great pains not to do that.

If WG members are concerned about the way the Scheme is working and the WG business is being managed that is a matter for the Group in the first instance.

I should stress that Sir Anthony was nominated by JFSA and his appointment approved by all members of the Working Group.

Although I do not wish to break confidentiality but I understand from my team that Sir Anthony has been painstakingly fair and that all parties, including Post Office, have come under some forensic questioning to justify their position on cases.

## **3. POST OFFICE'S APPROACH TO MEDIATION**

**Q: Even where the Working Group has agreed that a case should be mediated, Post Office has chosen not to mediate (in at least 2 cases). Why?**

We continue to look at each case on its merits. There are instances where PO considers it is inappropriate for a case to be mediated despite the decision of the Working Group.

Mediation is a consensual process and it is open to either party not to take part – including the applicant.

**Q: Are you refusing to mediate all criminal cases?**

We are considering every case on its merits. However mediation cannot overturn a conviction and if an applicant considers their prosecution unsafe they need to appeal that.

Where an Applicant has been prosecuted and convicted, and the new investigations have revealed nothing which calls that conviction into question, it is simply not appropriate to engage in mediation about it. Applicants faced with this situation can, at all times, decide to appeal their convictions following the normal and established court processes.

To date we have seen nothing in the cases we have investigated that suggests any conviction is unsafe. If we did we would make the appropriate disclosure. We take our responsibilities in that regard very seriously.

**Q. Some people have suffered terribly as a result of Post Office's actions. Why don't you accept that?**

There are some genuinely harrowing stories that have arisen from the investigations and we know some people have suffered illness, accident and bereavement. However, that does not mean that Post Office was responsible for any of these unfortunate events.

However sad the case is for the individual concerned and indeed anyone connected with it, it is not Post Office's responsibility to insure people it enters into contracts with against life events, however difficult, where Post Office has no responsibility.

#### **4. SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH**

**Q. I accept that no problem has been found with Horizon, so something else must be to blame. What is it? Lack of training?**

We look at the evidence on a case by case basis. To this point here is no evidence to suggest any systemic fault with Horizon or related issues.

It is not for this Scheme nor Second Sight to go looking for alternative issues about the operation of Post Office's business to target simply because no issues have been found with Horizon. If we had wished to conduct such a wider business review we would have done so and not done it this way.

## 5. SCHEME FUTURE

**Q: JFSA and Second Sight are losing faith in POL and the whole process. They may walk away. What would you do then?**

Post Office entered in to this Scheme in good faith. It was designed collaboratively with JFSA and Second Sight. It would be wrong of me to intervene if some members are not happy with the outcomes.

Having designed a formal and independent structure for dealing with these complaints I need to let that run its course.

## ANNEX D

### **Branch Support Programme - Training and Branch Support Improvements Update**

Post Office provides training to new Subpostmasters prior to them taking up position in branch; on an on-going basis as new products and services are introduced or updated and where additional training is required by Subpostmasters.

Post Office regularly reviews the training provided to Subpostmasters and as such the training offer has evolved over time – from in-branch training only to a mix of classroom and in-branch training supplemented with work books.

The Branch Support Programme (BSP) was set up in August 2013 following the publication of the Second Sight Interim report to improve the effectiveness of the support Post Office provides to Subpostmasters in the running of their post offices. BSP has to date introduced a number of improvements to the training and support provided to branches and is developing some further improvements that will be introduced within the next six months.

#### **Improvements already introduced:**

- The content of the training provided to new Subpostmasters has been refreshed with more focus on balancing and how to look for discrepancies when they occur within branch.
- A revised balancing guide has been produced to help branches when they are unable to balance their accounts correctly ie a best practice guide to look for discrepancies in branch.
- A refreshed approach to supporting branches with loss and discrepancy issues has been introduced by the Branch Support Team. Where NBSC is unable to resolve a caller's query/issue, the Branch Support Team is able to provide more in depth telephone support to the branch. This team will also assess whether on-site additional support or further training is required and will organise if appropriate.
- The volume of calls from branches is now assessed by the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) with the branches that have a higher than average call volume being proactively contacted by the Branch Support team to understand the reason for the high level of calls; establish what extra support can be offered and whether any changes need to be made to training etc. The response has been positive from the branches contacted to date.
- Compliance testing is a precursor to new Subpostmaster training and is an annual regulatory requirement for all branch staff. Traditionally this training and testing has

been delivered by paper workbooks. After a successful pilot, this is now being provided on-line to the branch network. User satisfaction in the pilot scored very highly at 88%.

**Improvements in development:**

- On line training is currently being developed for new Subpostmasters that will reduce the requirement for classroom training and enable Subpostmasters to complete the training when it's convenient for them and at their own pace. Competency will be assessed throughout the on-line training with the requirement for additional training assessed on completion of the initial training. The on-line training is being developed and tested by current Subpostmasters and branch staff and will launch in pilot in January 2015.
- The on-line training will be available to all branch staff to enable refresher training to be accessed by experienced branch staff and as a training package for Subpostmasters to access for new employees.
- A new approach has been developed to analyse the calls received by NBSC to identify the root cause of the issue; to identify the solution for the branch in the first instance and implement wider business changes if appropriate eg content of and method of delivering new product training

## ANNEX E

### SCHEME KEY FACTS – NOT FOR DISCLOSURE EXCEPT IF NECESSARY WHERE HIGHLIGHTED

#### Cases:

It is expected that all investigations will be complete by Christmas

- Number of applicants to the scheme: 150
- Number accepted into the scheme: 136 (4 ineligible, 10 resolved prior to acceptance)
- Number of cases left in the scheme: 119
  - Cases not approved by WG for mediation: 2
  - Cases approved by WG to move to mediation: 15
  - 14 passed to CEDR
    - 6 Mediated
    - 2 passed to CEDR but POL declined to mediate
    - 7 scheduled for mediation
- Number of POL investigations<sup>1</sup> now complete: 106

#### Costs:

- Spend to date: c.£3.4m
- Forecast future spend: c.£4m<sup>2</sup>
- Total forecast spend : c.£7.4m
- Equivalent cost per case: c.£55,000
- To mediate a case: c.£34,000<sup>3</sup>
- Average cost of a case going through the scheme that is mediated: c.£69,000
- Average cost of a case going through the scheme that is **not** mediated: c.£35,000

#### Claims:

- Number of cases where claims are not quantified / not quantified in full or where a CQR was not submitted: **57**
- Number of cases where claims are quantified: **93**
- Total claimed (based on those cases where it is quantified): **£65m**
- Highest claim: **£13m** (M087)
- Number of claims over £1m: **19** (20% of cases where claim is quantified)
- Number of claims over £500k: **33** (More than a third of cases where claim is quantified)

<sup>1</sup> Based on 92 POIRs + 14 not accepted into the scheme

<sup>2</sup> Based on SS production rate of 2 reports per week

<sup>3</sup> Hard + soft costs

## ANNEX F

## MPs AND THEIR CASES

James Arbuthnot

Conservative – North East Hampshire – Majority 18597 – Standing down in May 2015

Case number	Name	SS recommendation	Amount being claimed by Applicant	Criminal case?	Status
M035	Josephine Hamilton	Draft CRR recommends mediation	£472,622	Yes: Applicant pleaded guilty to False Accounting; charge for theft dropped upon agreement that the Applicant would re-pay all monies back to the PO prior to sentencing	Final CRR with the Working Group to decide if suitable for mediation. Decision delayed owing to Second Sight's continuing investigations under their Part Two Report.
M078	Yogesh Patel	Draft CRR recommends case for mediation, though recognises it as a weak case	Claims are not fully quantified but include £22k (+ interest) + compensation for distress and anxiety caused by POL which is said of had a materially adverse effect on both the applicant and the rest of his family.	No	Draft CRR completed. Currently with Applicant for comments.

Andrew Brigden

Conservative – North West Leicestershire – Majority 7511

Case number	Name	SS recommendation	Amount being claimed by Applicant	Criminal case?	Status
M051	Michael Rudkin	Draft CRR indicates case is likely to be suitable for mediation though decision has been deferred pending further investigations	£3.1m	Yes: the Applicant's wife's (who was in charge of the branch) admitted she stole from the branch in order to pay shop, wage and household bills. She pleaded guilty to theft and was convicted	Draft CRR completed. Currently with Applicant for comments.
M095	Mr Stanley Fell	CRR yet to be written	£927k	Yes: Applicant pleaded guilty to False Accounting	Second Sight due to complete draft CRR imminently.

Oliver Letwin

Conservative – West Dorset – Majority 3923

Minister for Government Policy and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Case number	Name	SS recommendation	Amount claimed by Applicant	Criminal case?	Status
M054	Ms Tracey Merritt	Final CRR recommends mediation	Claim not fully quantified but includes 16k + loss of wages & business, the cost of to purchase PO &	No: Although before the auditors commenced their checks, the	Working Group recommended mediation. Case passed to CEDR on 12 September.

			stores, plus loss of reputation	Applicant offered the auditors a personal cheque for £9500 explaining that she had removed cash to that value the night before for "something personal" at home as she needed the cash urgently and was unable to get to the bank.	
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**Mike Wood**

Labour – Batley and Spen - Majority 4406

Case number	Name	SS recommendation	Amount claimed by Applicant	Criminal case?	Status
M084	Ms Alison Hall	CRR yet to be written	Not quantified	Yes: Applicant pleaded guilty to False Accounting in return for dropping the charge for Theft	With POL investigation team for review.