



Department for Communities and Local Government

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YouChoose website

Last week, the Local Government Association issued a press release and press comments asserting that councils do not use parking charges and fines to raise general revenue.

However, it has been brought to my attention that the LGA's participatory budgeting tool (YouChoose) is actively encouraging councils to raise parking charges and fines to assist the general budget.

<http://www.local.gov.uk/research-youchoose-tool>

It states: "How we can bring money in... Parking charges: In order to raise more income, the council could increase charges, expand controlled parking zones, increase the number of on street pay and display bays, and extend parking controls and enforcement activity." The website also encourages councils to issue more "fines for littering and fly-tipping" to raise money, raising the prospect of a quasi-judicial process being used as an income generator.

You will be aware that the High Court recently re-affirmed existing and long-standing case law that such a practice is unlawful (*Attfield, R (on the application of) v London Borough of Barnet [2013] EWHC 2089 (Admin)*).

I am very concerned that the LGA is actively assisting and encouraging councils to set illegal budgets, placing councils at threat of legal action. It also threatens to undermine public confidence in local government and in participatory budgets.

I would consequently ask that the website is either taken down or amended to stop encouraging unlawful activity.

I am placing this letter in the public domain, given a number of councils are using this internet facility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial 'B' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

BRANDON LEWIS MP