

Dear Sirs

Your paper on the Review of MP's Expenses ( April 2008) invites members of the public to make their views known on the most appropriate means for supporting MPs who are required to work in two locations.

My suggestion is to scrap the PAAE allowance altogether, it is too open to abuse and varying different interpretations and it is deeply unpopular with the public who feel that it is inappropriate for an MP to benefit in times of rising property prices from an allowance which was originally intended simply to enable them to do their job. I accept that the converse is also true and that it is also unfair to an MP to be saddled with a loss sustained on a second home in times of falling property prices.

I also accept that to do their jobs properly, MPs from constituencies outside London and the Home Counties need to have accommodation in London, convenient for Westminster which is comfortable and provides reasonable facilities for them to relax and work. My suggestion is to set aside accommodation from the Athletes' Village after the 2012 Olympics which could be offered to MPs based more than, say, 25 miles from Westminster, rent free whilst they remain elected MPs. If an MP chooses not to take up the offer, he or she would be expected to fund their own accommodation. The benefit is that presumably the initial cost of construction of the units would be absorbed within the Olympic budget and, although I assume the intention would have been to sell the accommodation after the Games to recoup some of the costs, there would be no immediate additional outlay. Basic furnishings could be provided leaving MPs to provide additional items if they so wish. There might also be benefits in accommodating MPs together, special transportation could be laid on between the village and Westminster although I gather that high speed transport links are being put in place anyway and you never know, living in close proximity to each other might improve their general behaviour towards each other!

Anyway, it is just a thought...

Regards  
K Mayes