

Sir Christopher Kelly, The Committee,

I know you will have been inundated with information and suggestions etc but, just in case no one else has come up with this idea!!!! Please consider the following which came up during discussion with friends this week.....

Given that the Olympic village is a 'publicly' funded initiative (at least in part), some of these homes could be used to accommodate MPs who live outwith London and need to attend parliamentary business in London. They would stay within the permanent ownership of the parliament.

This would be a relatively small number of the apartments so would not drastically alter any existing plans for this accommodation.

As I understand it, this accommodation will be within in easy travelling distance (tube?) to the centre of London so would suit those who need to live away from home to be able to attend the House of Commons etc. These homes should be provided for our MPs if they live, say 40/50 miles or more outwith the city.

Travel to and from this accommodation and Westminster should not be met through allowances or expenses. I believe that it is important that everyone in the UK pays for their own travel to and from their work 'base' e.g. I pay to get to my base school (my regular place of work) but will claim for expenses should I be required to travel outwith this distance.

I suggest that travel to and from London and the constituency home is essential (economy travel) and therefore this should be met through minimum economy expenses or within a salary band that recognises this requirement.

Men and women, whether living in their constituencies or at the London accommodation, need to eat, however, given that there are cooking facilities within the apartments no claims should be made for food at all. We should all pay for our own food. If there are no kitchens within the apartments, a cafeteria facility should be provided. However, everyone should pay for their food.

At the end of the day this would mean:

No allowances

No mortgages, mortgage interest, rents or hotel bills

No subsistence allowances

No travel expenses (apart from those essential journeys from distant constituencies)

I also believe that MPs staff should be employed from a central pool of staff and not by the MPs themselves.

These ideas will seem unattractive to those who have made so much money and enjoyed a certain lifestyle from the current system - a system which undoubtedly encourages greed. I daresay I too could have been tempted, had so much been presented to me. However, we must encourage real folk who are not driven by greed, to represent us.

Forgive me for another email. As an honest and truly committed teacher in local authority employment I am so upset at what has been going on, really, really upset. I know this committee have a difficult task but now is the time to make a difference.

As for 'who should be responsible to decide the pay of MPs' perhaps we should consider a panel of local authority employees, or a 'jury' consisting of 12 tax-payers which could be refreshed every couple of years. It seems barely possible that we have, until now, allowed MPs to decide pay, allowances and expenses for themselves. Sadly, we were naive to think this could be fair to the tax-payer.

Finally, I would ask that the committee include within their remit the requirement of those who have clearly abused the system to repay money that has not been absolutely necessary to claim for parliamentary business. Those who have profited from mortgage and mortgage interest payments, those who have used allowances to pay for luxury items such as home interiors, TVs and other luxury electrical appliances, Any gardening costs, and general home improvements. This is not an exhaustive list - Few of us really know what has been paid for in this way.

I wish you all the wisdom you will need for this task and trust that you will do it well.

Regards

J Duncan