

## **Accommodation for MPs in London**

The present system of recompensing MPs for accommodation in London is too complex, opaque, and open to abuse. It also permits long-serving MPs to make potentially large capital gains with completely unwarranted public subsidy.

My suggestion is that Parliament should acquire a portfolio of accommodation which could be allocated on the basis of need to MPs with constituencies located more than an agreed travelling time from Westminster (say one hour). This would not all be in one place as that would be too much of a security risk and in any case MPs should not be forced to keep bumping into their Parliamentary colleagues in their leisure time!

Small numbers of flats or houses should be acquired in a fairly large number of variously located developments so as to meet these aims. There could be a selection of 1, 2, 3 or 3+ bedroom units, to fit in with MPs personal and family needs. All property maintenance and Council tax issues would be handled by a Parliamentary Estate team. MPs could be given a choice of furnished or unfurnished units, but no expenses/allowances would apply in the case of unfurnished units.

In my view this is the only reasonable system. MPs need to be able to spend their evenings in a comfortable domestic environment and not be confined to hotels or inappropriate "halls of residence".

## **The fees office**

This organisation is clearly unfit for purpose in its present form and ineffective in achieving a proper internal audit function. It seems to operate on the basis of trusting MPs to keep within very loose and ill-defined "rules". Its remit must be strengthened so that it is similar to units with a comparable role in well-organised private and public sector organisations, policing clearly defined rules effectively and refusing to pay sums that are outside the rules or not properly receipted.

R Foster