

Cope 3

08/01/2010

Hello,

Having read a little more of the full consultation document, and adding to my earlier online submission, I am a little confused about why an MP manages staff when they are paid directly from the state. Let the constituency office be permanent with employees permanently employed as protected/special employees. Working for the MP, but this would mean one constituency office - no need to worry about transition arrangements.

You should differentiate benefits provided to an MP as part of their employment contract, and expenses. The issue of expenses is being confused in your consultation document by other important but separate issues. The expenses procedure should be clearly articulated. Then there should be an document detailing the benefits awarded to MPs. You may want to recommend interest free loans for travel to and from Westminster enabling MPs to buy annual travelcards. My employer gives me a loan to cover the cost, but I pay for it out of my salary.

I don't think the format of the consultation document was an appropriate one. I expected to see the expenses procedure - the document MPs will use to determine what is allowed and what is not. It is a pretty state of affairs when I should be in a position to need to ask for review of the expenses process. Why can't the House do this for themselves? Don't have the skills?

In terms of my earlier comments about a management layer for expense approval, I wonder whether an employee of the Speaker could perform that role. This would provide the management layer akin to commercial organisations.

Regards
Ben Rowden