

13/01/11

I have used your consultation website wherever possible, as I am certain that it will be easier for you to transfer answers from that than from an email. However, I found that I could not respond to some of your questions properly within the 500 characters limit. Hence, such answers are here - PART A.

Furthermore, there are some quite important topics which you have included in your submission but not in the questions (a devious trick, that). Responses to them are here also - PART B.

Telford Moore



PART A

Question 7

No

12

This is simply not far enough.

The word "station" is ill-defined. Perhaps London-centric individuals assume that this refers to a railway/tube station, but it could refer to a bus station.

London Transport zones 1-6 means absolutely nothing to me, nor to the vast majority of non-Londoners, I suspect.

13

Renting - fully agree, but a limit must be put on claimable expenses of a hotel stay, or MPs will doubtless see this as a perk, as they did for so many things, and stay at the most expensive London hotels.

14

This must be looked at without delay: MPs cannot be trusted unless things are pinned down.

Question 10

No.

You propose that MPs' receive these perks to prevent them being out of pocket (sic). (i) this does not fit in with IPSA's: "Members of Parliament have the right to be reimbursed for unavoidable costs where they are incurred wholly, exclusively, and necessarily in the performance of their parliamentary duties, but not otherwise"; (ii) no post held before would pay carers extra, since there are no jobs available to the general public which give such a perk.

To prevent some from becoming MPs? Rubbish - There is no shortage of folk who put their names forward to be MPs - no qualifications or experience is needed - all that is required is to be a member of a political party.

Question 13

Yes

"You may only "consider" first class travel for a journey longer than 2.5 hours".

This does not fit with IPSA's statement of "Members of Parliament have the right to be reimbursed for unavoidable costs where they are incurred wholly, exclusively, and necessarily in the performance of their parliamentary duties, but not otherwise".

Question 18

None

7.27 MPs travel often between two places of work.

Most secondary teachers travel every weekday "between two places of work", spending home hours preparing for the following days.

7.27 "Allowing for expenditure in this area would make the role more attractive to people with families".

What a fatuous comment - it is obvious that a perk would make the role (sic) or any proper job more attractive to people with families, but this tactic has never been tried out for great shortage posts.

PART B

7.17 *"MPs should normally be expected to claim for standard class for rail travel, and should only be entitled to claim for expenses for first class travel in exceptional circumstances"*.

This looks reasonable until your main definition of "exceptional circumstances" (hidden where many would not take the trouble to find it) is a journey longer than 2.5 hours". Ridiculous! This is at odds with *"Members of Parliament have the right to be reimbursed for unavoidable costs where they are incurred wholly, exclusively, and necessarily in the performance of their parliamentary duties, but not otherwise"*.

7.28 *"We have proposed, in the last chapter, to provide higher levels of accommodation expenses to MPs with responsibilities for caring for others. The expenses would be provided to allow those MPs to accommodate others with them in two locations. It follows from that proposal that we should also provide funding for the same people to travel between the two locations"*.

Since I disagree with the earlier proposal, I clearly disagree with this one.

Annex D - Working from two locations

(1) *"It is for Parliament to decide whether to take steps to recover gains arising from the payment of mortgage interest from public funds. This might be achieved by resolution of the House of Commons or by legislation"*.

Oh, come come. After the revelations of MPs' behaviour, it is ludicrous to suggest that they should legislate on whether to take steps to recover gains (from themselves) arising from the payment of anything from public funds - they would obviously vote in their own monetary interests, not as representatives of the general public.

Annex D - Working from two locations.

(2) *"MPs who share accommodation as partners will be entitled between them to claim up to a limit of one individual ceiling, plus one-third"*.

Why more than one individual ceiling? You offer no reason, probably because you can't think of one! Make it "one individual".

Annex D - Running offices

(3) You have indicated that MPs should keep publicly-funded office equipment.

For all your many words to try to justify this, MPs' offices have some very expensive taxpayer-funded pieces of equipment in them - computers, scanners, external hard drives, digital cameras, video cameras, mobile 'phones, fax machines, photocopiers. These must not become the property of "downstanding" MPs.

Annex D - Running offices

(4) *"As regards the class of travel (standard or first), the same criteria should apply for MPs' staff as for MPs."*

There is no justification for first-class travel at public expense.

(5) The media has reported that Sir Ian Kennedy, Chairman of IPSA, has indicated that MPs should be given a substantial salary rise. I realise that the general public may be given the chance to comment on that unpalatable topic, and I shall respond fully, but I must caution against IPSA making any such suggestion, as it would provoke even more public outrage and ruin the chances of the public giving MPs the chance to make a "clean start".

I remember well that when elected in 1964, Russell Johnston's salary as an MP was said to be about the same as his previous salary as a principal teacher in a Scottish secondary school. Since 1964, MPs' salaries have rocketed in comparison to Scottish secondary teachers'.
