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P . Latham

Kettering

The Secretary  
Committee on Standards in Public Life  
35 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BQ

Wednesday, 13 May 2009

Dear Sir,

I have recently written to my local MP, Philip Hollobone (Kettering, Northamptonshire) regarding the MP's Expenses Row, with particular attention to the Second Homes Allowance. Mr Hollobone welcomed my suggestions, and suggested that I write to you with an outline of what I had put forward to him.

I am not sure what the plans are for the future of MP's expenses, or indeed the plans for the second homes, which must, when all added together, come to an eye-watering amount of tax-payers money.

I am fortunate that I do not have to commute far to work, but I am aware of a number of people that travel daily to London to work, from great distances. I have friends in Oakham and Peterborough who commute to London every day of the week. It would seem that they do not have the opportunity of being offered a subsidised home in London to make their lives easier as a result of their place of work. I may be wrong, but I don't think that the MP's who have second homes in London are required to or even do travel to London every day of the week all year round? I would imagine that on average an MP would need to travel to London roughly 3 times a week? I may be wrong, and I am sure that there are times in the year or during various events and incidents where they need to travel in more often and conversely times during the summer break when there may be several weeks going by without them needing to travel in at all.

I would like to see a complete end to expenses for second homes for Members of Parliament. If an MP is able to afford a second home, then they should pay for this privilege themselves. There should, in place of second homes, be a government run hotel in London, which caters for the needs of all the MP's who need to stay in London. I understand that there are currently 646 MP's in the UK. I am sure that an hotel with 700 rooms could be developed in a part of London, which would enable MP's to come and book in whenever they wanted, dine for free, make all the necessary calls and meet in a series of rooms, etc.. which would be easier to control in terms of expenses, than trying to organise 600 sets of accounts and claims forms from all over the country.

As for a location for this hotel, I understand the Chelsea Pensioners have a large building which stands pretty much empty, and in the next few years, may become redundant? I may be wrong, as I think that the injured soldiers from current war areas are

involved in this building/organisation? Would this house be a suitable location for such a development?

Also, and this may be more suitable, with the Olympics coming in 2012, I imagine we will be building an all singing all dancing Olympic Village for every competitor with rooms, bars, restaurants, cinemas and facilities to cater for all of the world's athletes. After the games, I would like to see this village turned into an MP's village, used and maintained by the government. It would be seen to make the most of what will undoubtedly be a high security, and state of the art development after the Games has been and gone, and will also, I am sure, be easier to control in terms of MP's expenses as they will be able to check in and stay for free, dine and enjoy themselves with plenty room for meetings etc.. The only expense that need be claimed for is travel expenses to and from their constituency and travel through London to Parliament.

I hope you don't mind me writing with these suggestions? I may be too late, and you have already thought of these ideas and they may be unsuitable. I did want to make the suggestion however, and hear your thoughts on it.

Yours faithfully,

  

OTBAM