

I wish to submit the following proposals to the Committee of Standards in Public life.

With regard to London accommodation for MP's I believe the solution has been readily available in mirroring the provision that has been available for many years for members of the Armed Forces in the provision of publicly owned accommodation.

The first opportunity was lost with the disposal of County Hall on the disbandment of the GLC instead of it being converted into apartments for those MP's who required London based accommodation. The second opportunity was lost with the disposal of Chelsea Barracks. However a third and in my opinion, perfect solution might be readily available by procurement of the Olympic Village after the 2012 Olympic Games. This would be particularly appropriate in the light of the large amount of public funding that has or is intended to be invested in the Olympic Village.

The site will be secure for the athletes and therefore readily securable for MPs' occupation and use. There is a direct transport link from Stratford to Westminster and indeed a remote division facility could be easily introduced using 21st century technology. In a similar manner to the facilities provided for the armed forces the provision may well also include a catering facility.

The provision of such publicly owned accommodation will negate any entitlement for MP's to claim second home allowances. Their first home will of course be that in their constituency. There would be no requirement for the "John Lewis List", since all furniture and furnishings could be provided in a similar manner to that provided to our service personnel. MP's wishing to purchase or retain existing private London residences could be allowed to do so but at entirely their own cost with no subsidy from the public purse. Ministers entitled to publicly owned "Grace & Favour" residences should not in any circumstances be entitled to second home allowances or other public subsidy for accommodation.

I believe that such a proposal will find great support from the general public and go a significant way in restoring credibility in the moral standards of MP's.

To avoid any potential abuse all MP's staff should be subject to contracts of employment from Parliament and all should be paid on the same scale as similar public service appointments. They should not be employed directly by MP's though selection of such staff would of course be the MP's responsibility, provided selection is carried out openly and, like local government appointments, based on merit only.

D Knowles