

Review of MPs Expenses
The Committee on Standards in Public Life
35 Great Smith Street
London SW1P BY

23 April 2009

Dear Sir,

My view is that tinkering with MPs' expenses is not good enough. The Government suggestion that expenses be "limited" to £15,000 pa is shameful; that is more than many people earn in a year.

To solve the initial problem and to restore public confidence we need a radical, drastic and decisive solution.

I propose to you that all MP expenses be abolished. They are already paid an excessive salary, get incredible pensions and enjoy other perks never experienced by the man in the street. MPs used to take the job as a public service, because they believed in their cause; now it seems they just see the job as a get rich quick scheme, taking all they can from the public purse and lining up their retirement career for some big-business job.

I believe that an MP should always live in her/his constituency where the vast bulk of her/his workload should be and thereby any need to visit the Commons could be funded out of salary.

This policy could easily be introduced at the next election, thereby not leaving any MP expecting the rich rewards of expenses.

More importantly, since every MP has contributed to the lowering of standards to the position we now find, I believe all current MPs should be barred from holding that high office ever again. They have all let us down badly and none should get away with it. That includes all ministers, shadow ministers and party leaders.

Thereafter you should introduce the kind of reforms spoken about over the years - like PR, less MPs, no speaker, no pomp and ceremony (which so discredits Parliament) and primary elections for all candidates in all constituencies, run on an equal national standard.

I believe that in this way and only in this way can the public have faith in the standards expected of their MPs.

Yours sincerely

J K Smith
Morpeth
Northumberland