

Independent Review Panel - Financial Support for Members

IRP – 66

Response from Rees, Mansel

From: Mansel Rees [mailto:mansel.rees@googlemail.com]

Sent: 03 February 2009 12:06

To: Reading, Chris (APS - Corporate Unit)

Cc: Nicholas.Ramsay@wales.gov.uk

Subject: Members Allowances.

I have recently been in contact with Mr Nick Ramsay, my AM, regarding the allowances and costs attributed to him.

He directed me to the relevant WAG web pages where this information became available.

Reviewing the information, my opinions turned from surprise to one of horror.

Is there any item of cost which they actually pay for themselves?

Every single item incurred by these people are charged to the public purse, there must be staff employed full time, just to collate the information, and make the appropriate requisition.

Again all at the expense of the public.

The largest, most offensive costs, are those of the additional allowances, whereby second home costs, both mortgage and furnishings are charged to the taxpayer, particularly in the cases of Mr Ramsay who lives within commuting distance of Cardiff Bay.

Many of my neighbours, and probably Assembly staff do this journey daily, but not at the taxpayers expense.

Travel costs, I assume are strictly WAG business, and not the cost of getting to Cardiff Bay,? I have my reservations.

Regrettably, politicians when they become elected, clearly take advantage of the established system, and are unlikely to alter any arrangements as it suits their interest, particularly financial.

Westminster is a clear example.

But what I ask myself is the outcome whereby an AM is only elected for one term, claimed in that period every conceivable expense, second home mortgage, furniture, etc, but are any of these costs returned to the taxpayer, or are they just "written off"?

Notwithstanding the current world financial disaster we face, any system which allows elected people, and that is the key, to take advantage of the public, must be stopped.

The unfairness is obscene, and it certainly does not give value for money.

Yours sincerely

Mansel Rees