

I write to you on behalf of the Plaid Cymru Group regarding your consultation on Residential Accommodation Expenditure.

Plaid Cymru opposes the extension of the outer area zone for the purposes of the Determination on Residential Accommodation Expenditure to the whole of the UK. The outer area should encompass the whole of Wales only.

It is the belief of the Group that the extension of the outer area zone to encompass the whole of the UK contravenes all three principles required by legislation to be applied to the Board's Determination: reasonableness, accountability and value for money.

Firstly, it is not reasonable to expect the tax-payer to pay for the residential expenses of Assembly Members for the National Assembly for Wales who are not resident in Wales. If the Board decides to remunerate Assembly Members' accommodation when their main residence is outside the nation which they have been elected to represent, the National Assembly for Wales will be the only Devolved Administration to do so.

Secondly, the Remuneration Board is accountable to the people of Wales and providing residential expenses to Assembly Members whose main residence is outside Wales can be interpreted as a breach of trust placed by the people of Wales in the Remuneration Board to carry out its duties.

Thirdly, paying Assembly Members' accommodation expenses when their main residence is outside of Wales would be very poor value for money and a waste of public resources as it would be reasonable to expect an Assembly Member for the National Assembly for Wales to be resident in Wales.

Plaid Cymru's Assembly Members have received correspondence from concerned constituents who feel that the proposed Determination to provide Assembly Members whose main residence is outside Wales with expenses for accommodation in Cardiff would be unreasonable, unfair and a waste of public money.

I hope in light of the above reasons that you will reconsider the proposed extension of the outer area zone from the whole of Wales to the whole of the UK for the purposes of determining the remuneration of Assembly Members' Residential Accommodation Expenditure.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr D R Lloyd, AM/AC