



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

Date: 15 June 2007

### **Information Commissioner respects MPs' private lives in ruling on their additional cost allowances**

The Information Commissioner has ordered the House of Commons to release information on the total expenses claimed by some MPs for areas such as mortgage costs, cleaning and furnishings.

The Information Commissioner's decision strikes the right balance between transparency and accountability for public expenditure and the private lives of MPs and their families. The Information Commissioner has ruled that the total amounts claimed by some individual MPs under the additional cost allowance – the regime for MPs to reclaim expenses for running one home close to Westminster and one in their constituency - should be released under specific headings. These include: mortgage costs; hotel expenses; other food; service charges; utilities; telecommunications charges; furnishings; maintenance & service agreements; cleaning; insurance; basic security measures; other. The Commissioner ruled that, as expenses are claimed directly by MPs in relation to their public duties, the public has a right to know the total amounts claimed under these specific headings.

The Information Commissioner does not believe it is necessary to disclose the full itemised details of expenditure on the running of a MP's private household. To do so would invade the privacy of MPs and their families.

The full Decision Notices can be viewed on our website at the address below. These decisions relate to a number of requests for information that were originally refused by the House of Commons under the Freedom of Information Act. The Information Commissioner has in effect partially upheld the original requests.

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/tools\\_and\\_resources/decision\\_notices.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/tools_and_resources/decision_notices.aspx)

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)
3. Requesters asked for information relating to specific dates for the following MPs (and former MPs): Margaret Beckett, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Menzies Campbell, Barbara Follett, George Galloway, William Hague, Alan Keen, Ann Keen, Peter Mandelson, Mark Oaten, George Osborne, John Prescott, John Wilkinson
4. The Commissioner's decisions cite a recent ruling by the Information Tribunal regarding MPs' travel expenses which accepted the Commissioner's view that it is correct to take into account whether personal information relates to the private or public life of the individual. Particularly, to the extent that the public function of an MP is the reason the information is being processed.
5. The House of Commons has 35 calendar days from the date of the Decision Notice to disclose the information. It also has the right to appeal to the Information Tribunal. Appeals on either side must be made within 28 days of the date of the Decision Notice