

ACA REVIEW

Sir Thomas Legg KCB QC

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

30 November 2009

Constituency: **Birkenhead**

Dear Mr Field,

Thank you for the comments and representations about my provisional conclusions which you have supplied to me and which I have now considered. The conclusions about the ACA payments made to you that I now intend to include in my report to the Members' Estimate Committee are as follows:

Mr Field claimed and was paid a total of £19,885 over the five years of the review period for the services of a housekeeper, cleaning and gardening. No other MP is known to have claimed in this form, and the detailed content of the resulting payments is not easy to allocate to recognised headings. Mr Field has provided examples, from which it would appear that some of the housekeeping services involved were clearly allowable; some consisted of further cleaning and garden maintenance, and were thus allowable up to defined limits; some were clearly not allowable; and some were arguable either way. The proportions of these various elements are not clear. In the unusual circumstances, I recommend what is admittedly a rough-and-ready solution. This is to take Mr Field's total claim (£19,885), give him the full benefit of the annual cleaning and garden maintenance allowances (£15,000), and then allow one half of the remainder (£4,885) as valid and regard the other half as invalid. On this basis, Mr Field would be treated as having been overpaid by £2,442.50.

He was also paid £800 for petty cash and household sundries from July to December 2004. From June to December 2005 he was paid a further £1,000 in unspecified incidental costs and sundry expenses. Petty cash in any form is not payable under the ACA, so under this head he was overpaid a total of £1,800.

He was also paid £228.55 for three BT bills which did not relate to his second home address: December 2004, £80.79; April 2007, £75.35; August 2007, £72.41.

He was further paid twice for the following items: electricity, £19.58, in September 2004 and November 2004; gas, £17.41, in September 2004 and November 2004; clock radio, £79.95, in May 2007 and August 2007 (total overpayment £116.94).

Total repayment recommended: £4,587.99

Total repayments received since 1 April 2009: £116.94

Balance recommended to be repaid: £4,471.05

I currently expect to submit my report to the MEC in mid-December. I will be dealing further in that report with some of the more general points about my approach to the review which have been raised in the correspondence about my provisional findings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Legg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Thomas Legg KCB QC