

STATEMENT BY PETER LUFF MP TO HIS CONSTITUENTS ON THE DAILY TELEGRAPH EXPENSES STORY

At 12.07 yesterday, Thursday, while I was taking evidence with my select committee in Lancashire, I received an email from the Daily Telegraph. Because I had no access to my claims I was unable to do more than respond in general terms.

At the outset, I want to make it clear that I have asked for the Party scrutiny of my expense to be dealt with as quickly as possible. If it is felt I have broken the spirit of the rules I apologise unreservedly. I will, of course, be bound by the judgement of my Party.

I also want to make it clear that, as an MP living beyond commuting distance of London I have two places of work, two offices and therefore two homes. As you would expect, I have at all times paid for one of these homes with all its related expenditure entirely out of my taxed income, just as all my constituents do; this is a vital point - like most MPs, my income is sufficient to pay for one home but not two

I am now looking through the paper's individual "allegations" each of which I am confident I can answer satisfactorily, even though it will demand a great level of detail. For example, three kettles? Yes – two broke and my wife wrote about this in an article in The Times two weeks ago as an illustration of what costs were involved in running a second home as an MP's wife.

So, I remain confident that each of my claims was within both the letter and the spirit of the rules but I am awaiting the conclusions of the scrutiny process.

As I said earlier in the week, and before the controversy over my expenses, in a public statement:

"I strongly support openness and believe I have nothing to hide. However, in the current climate it will be more difficult than normal to explain either the reasons for any delay in publication or the justification for specific claims.

"I hope it does not need saying that at no stage have I claimed for anything on the expenses I did not need and would not have had to buy if I had not had the expenses

"My claim for my second home contains many detailed items that may prompt the thought, "But I have to pay for that and he claims it!"; I repeat, I do pay and I have always paid for all the costs of running my main home out of my taxed income."

ENDS