

Councillor Young

- (1) To ask the Convener for Finance and Resources if he is aware of the regulations regarding Allowances and Expenses for Councillors and if so does he recognise the words of an anonymous Administration Councillor who said in the Press and Journal on 2nd July 2010 “he had been given an envelope of cash for a trip abroad and there were no instructions about how to hand any change back” regardless of his awareness of the regulations can he confirm or otherwise if giving an envelope to a Councillor full of cash meets the requirements of any Act or Regulation laid down by statute and will he refer the matter to the Audit and Risk Committee for scrutiny for them to investigate this and other matters relating to Councillors receiving cash in envelopes?
- (2) To ask the Convener for Finance and Resources what instructions if any has been given by him, his predecessor or by Council officers in relation to ensuring that cash given to Councillors to spend on trips abroad or within the UK given in an envelope or otherwise but unused is returned to the Council?
- (3) To ask the Convener for Finance and Resources to provide Council with a detailed breakdown of all monies given to Councillors for trips abroad or within the UK and the amount returned by Councillors from these trips either within or without the envelope given to them at the start of the trip from May 2007 to present.
- (4) To ask the Chief Executive if she can confirm or otherwise if this Council fully conforms to the regulations laid down by Scottish Ministers in relation to the reimbursement of expenditure incurred on approved duties by Councillors?
- (5) To ask the Chief Executive to confirm or otherwise if Councillor Fletcher’s claim published in the Press and Journal’s letter page on Wednesday 24th June 2010 and the Evening Express letter page on the same day which states and I quote “I will finally admit that I, too, have waived a significant amount of salary, over £33,000, and not submitted one claim form for councillor expenses, since 2007” is either incredulous or incredible given the fact that the STATEMENT OF ALLOWANCES & EXPENSES FOR ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL PAID TO AND ON BEHALF OF ELECTED MEMBERS FOR THE YEAR 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010 confirms that Councillor Fletcher has claimed a significant amount of expenses. Will the Chief Executive confirm the amount of claim forms submitted by Councillor Fletcher since 2007 and also the amounts claimed?

Answers:-

- (1) I am aware of the Allowances and Expenses regulations, but can relate to the quote in the Press and Journal as no information about returning unspent money was given to me on the first of the three overseas trips I have made on behalf of the Council in my eleven years as a Councillor. I asked for that to be rectified on my return from Ireland. I received the relevant advice the second time I went away.

It does not require me to refer the matter to Audit and Risk as the Convener of Audit and Risk can ask for reports on matters of concern and I would be quite happy for the Audit and Risk Committee to look at all matters regarding overseas trips since the inception of this Council in 1996.

Councillor Young seems to be alleging other suspect activities in his line of questioning. If Councillor Young has any knowledge of any wrongdoing then I would urge him to contact the Police and the Monitoring Officer.

- (2) I refer Councillor Young to the answer I gave to question 1. I cannot answer for any other Councillors who have held the Finance Convener'ship in the past.
- (3) I refer Councillor Young to the spreadsheet attached.
- (4) The City Council complies with the guidelines set down by the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee.
- (5) Details relating to Councillors' Allowances and Expenses are available on the City Council's website at:

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/CouncilTax/fin/ctx_FinInfo_Home.asp

It is not for the Chief Executive comment on the content of Councillor Fletcher's letter to the Press and Journal.

Councillor Young has stated that he is unhappy with the answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 as it appears that Councillor Kevin Stewart does not fully understand his brief as the Convener for Finance and Resources and Depute Leader of the Council therefore he requires proper answers to his questions which only the Convener can answer.

In relation to questions 4 and 5, Councillor Young has stated that he is unhappy with the answers and requires further information to be provided by the Chief Executive.