

PRESS RELEASE

17th March 2008

“Livingstone has been systematically evading donations law for 7 years” - Hands

Greg Hands, Member of Parliament for Hammersmith and Fulham, has today reported Mayor Ken Livingstone to the Electoral Commission for failing to make a single donation report to the Commission, as required under the Political Parties and Referendums Act 2000.

The key section of the Act, Schedule 7, refers to “regulated donees,” which explicitly includes incumbent Mayors and Mayoral candidates. Hands has asked Chairman Sam Younger to intervene and that “given the proximity of the London Mayoral election in just 6 weeks, I urge that this be treated with urgency.”

The only exception allowed for donations to Mayoral campaigns is if solicitations for funds are not expressed to be for the benefit of a particular candidate, or for the mayoral campaign alone, and where there is no implication that there is a defined split of the funds between different candidates. In short, for donations to be reported by the political party, and not be subject to Schedule 7, fundraising must be on the basis that the donations are for the GLA campaign fund as a whole (i.e. Mayor plus Assembly candidates *together*) and not hypothecated to individuals.

Yet Livingstone’s website <http://www.kenlivingstone.com/page/content/donateform/> and the donation form included on it is explicit that donations are being sought on the basis that “I want to re-elect Ken Livingstone”, under the banner “Back Ken” and cheques are payable to the “Ken Livingstone Campaign Fund”.

Political parties only need to declare donations of more than £5,000, whereas regulated donees must declare over £1,000. The cover of the national Labour Party also allows Livingstone greater anonymity in his fundraising, and a consequent lack of transparency.

Ken Livingstone has never declared a single donation since the PPERA came into force in 2001, even though many donations have been made specifically for his and his campaign’s benefit, including the controversial donation made by Gerald Ronson just

before the 2004 Mayoral election, which featured in the Sunday Times, 16th March 2008.

Commenting, Greg Hands MP said:

“I have today called in the Electoral Commission to urgently investigate. With just over six weeks to go until the Mayoral election, the public has a right to know who is funding Ken Livingstone’s attempt at re-election. Yet for seven years, Livingstone has been systematically avoiding legal requirements to declare the nature and extent of donations made to him. There is no better time than right now to start cleaning up politics.”