

Call for Written Evidence

#50



PAGE 2: RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Q2: Would you be happy to be approached by the Commission for further discussion about your submission?	Yes
Q3: Do you consider yourself or your organisation as from or representing?	an area with both urban and rural parts
Q4: I am responding as an:	An individual

PAGE 3

Q5: You have indicated that you are responding as an individual. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public on the Commission's web site?	Yes
--	-----

PAGE 4

Q6: If you have agreed to your response being made available to the public, please tell us if we may also make your name and address available.	Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address
--	--

Q7: You have indicated that you are responding on behalf of an organisation. The name and address of your organisation will be made public on the Commission's web site. Are you content for your response to also be made available?

Respondent skipped this question

Q8: Which of the following best describes your organisation?

Respondent skipped this question

Q9: Please provide a short description of the main purpose of your organisation.

Respondent skipped this question

Q10: CURRENT SYSTEM OF COUNCIL TAX: To what extent does the current system of council tax deliver a fair and effective system of local taxation in Scotland? Are there any features of the current system that you wish to see retained or changed? Please illustrate your answer with any examples from your own experience.

To put Council Tax in context you must first look at its history. The previous tax on domestic property which was replaced by the Community Charge worked well and was only discredited to make way for Community Charge. The only fault with domestic rating pre Community Charge was that it was based on rental levels that were difficult to understand. Although Community Charge worked as a tax it received too much bad press and was replaced with a property tax (Council Tax) that was introduced in a hurry and is too broad brush in nature and is inferior to the domestic rating system. A property based tax gives certainty in collection and is easily understood by the public.

The domestic rating system benefitted from regular revaluations and values could allow for minor adjustments to enable agreement in appeals to be reached with taxpayers. Council Tax in contrast has not had its bandings revalued since introduction in 1993 and there is very little flexibility in band adjustments to allow for appeal settlements.

Q11: REFORM OF LOCAL TAXATION: Are there alternatives to the current system of council tax that you think would help to reform local taxation in Scotland? What are the main features of these, and why do you think they would deliver improvement? Do you have any examples of why this is the case?

The good features of the domestic rating system should be considered. It had regular revaluations and it allowed for minor adjustments to the level of value. In addition the ratable base increased on an ongoing basis following improvements to property which resulted in increased revenue.

The former domestic rates system but based on actual capital values would be easy for the public to understand and not as broad brush as banding which would give flexibility in the administration of the system. To make the system more acceptable to the public i would advocate that improvements are only taken account of in values at a revaluation. The present 5 yearly cycle of revaluations which operates in non-domestic rating and also applied to domestic rating gives administrators time to analyse the property market for their levels of value. By lagging behind the property market this system prevents administrators from influencing market values which is an important feature that should be prevented by any new system.

Call for Written Evidence

Q12: LOCAL PRIORITIES:How well do you think that communities' local priorities are accounted for in the way that local taxation operates at the moment? If there is room for improvement, how should things change?Do you have any ideas or examples about how this could improve people's lives?

Communities' local priorities are not taking into account in the present local taxation system, but i do not believe taxation is the place to recognise their priorities. Communities' local priorities are rightly championed by their local councillor who represents their interest when the Council budget is being spent.

Q13: FURTHER INFORMATION:We would like to keep the conversation going. Please tell us about any events, networks or other ways in which we could help achieve this.

Respondent skipped this question