

#77



PAGE 2: RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Q1: Please tell us a little about yourself

Forename	CHARLIE
Surname	RAEBURN
Title (e.g. Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/Dr)	MR

Q2: Would you be happy to be approached by the Commission for further discussion about your submission?	Yes
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Q3: Do you consider yourself or your organisation as from or representing?	don't know / not applicable
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Q4: I am responding as an:	An individual
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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
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PAGE 4

Call for Written Evidence

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 and name available, but not my address

PAGE 5

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

PAGE 6: TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

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.

I write with a major concern about the future funding, and associated democratic accountability for Sport and Physical Recreation in particular, and Cultural Services in general.

Around 23 Leisure Trusts have been established over the past few years. These have been set up using one of 3/4 governance structures. They have been set up, largely a) to avoid non domestic rates, and b) to reduce VAT payments.

In theory these "arms length organisations" from are seen as not part of the local authorities. Often these organisations have very limited accountability to local communities - and indeed have been criticised by the Audit Commission. It is not clear in many cases what contracts have been established for these trusts - and indeed if there is a mechanism in local authorities to adequately monitor their operations.

Things are compounded by very limited statutory requirements of local government for sport and physical recreation. And now we note that not any Key Performance indicators for Sport.

Could it be that the time has come to think through these arrangements at the time when local taxes are being considered?

Call for Written Evidence

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?

Given that so much of the sport agenda is carried out by volunteers in the community - should we not consider "capacity building" in the community become a statutory requirement of local government?

Currently the trusts , and indeed local councils are frquently concerned with raising money from the volunteers - by increasing charges for facilties or through offering low level sports classes.

Some of the programmes being offered by Trusts and Councils could easily be run by private sector organisations.

Maybe local taxation could be used to develop a better system?

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?

As above

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.

Please see my paper " An Observatory for Sport in Scotland - a Project Proposal".

www.spotlightonsport.com

This is based on the models of such Observatories in Denmark. Sweden, Swizerland and the Netherlands.