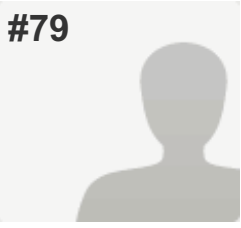


Call for Written Evidence

#79



PAGE 2: RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Q1: Please tell us a little about yourself

Forename	Gerry
Surname	Hastie

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?	an area with both urban and rural parts
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Q4: I am responding as an:	An individual
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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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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
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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?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
Q8: Which of the following best describes your organisation?	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>
Q9: Please provide a short description of the main purpose of your organisation.	<i>Respondent skipped this question</i>

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.

It doesn't. The bands seem almost arbitrary and the current system resembles the poorly thought out and hastily designed alternative to the 'Poll Tax' that it is. Some features like discounts for single people and those with low incomes and disabilities should be retained.

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?

I think that local taxation should be based on a mix of ability to pay (earnings/savings/assets), those living in the property and the value of the property. This would make it a more progressive tax for domestic properties. The variations between some bands as compared to the size of the property can seem unequal and favours those with more wealth who spend relatively much less amount of their income on local taxes. Size and value of property are choices for those with more wealth i.e. rich people don't need to live in a large house or own more land but often choose to. People also who are less wealthy sometimes choose to live in large houses even though they get into debt. This continues to push up the value of housing (great for banks etc) but the debt created money circles around the economy and gets hoovered up by those who create money contributing to inequality and making it harder for people to buy houses and pushes up the value of land increasing the cost of building new houses, especially social housing. A system of taxation that is progressive may discourage some people from making vanity house/land purchases and may help stabilise land and housing prices making the economy less prone to boom and bust and ensure that maximum value is put back into the economy. I.e. If people make more modest choices about house purchases they spend more of their disposable income in shops and businesses which also feeds back into the local economy. It's about creating a virtuous cycle of spending with increased velocity of money as opposed to people either having high levels of personal debt and ordinary folk being able to purchase or rent decent houses because the costs are more stable. Essentially higher taxation for middle to higher earners might lead to more modest house purchases not to pay a higher rate of domestic local tax but the benefits for the local economy and services may be via increased spend. Mixing taxation with earnings levels may help predict the tax base as will seeing what earners at different income levels become prepared to pay higher taxes because get buy expensive houses. Some people like vanity purchases - they'll pay high levels of car tax for a car they like. It's a a win/win! If a proportion of our income tax was sent to the local office than to the treasury people might see taxation as more of an investment and care more about how it is spent.

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?

I think more taxes raised locally could be spent according to more localise decision making. Give community councils prosper budgets and control over local spending and you'll a much more engaged community who will see local elections as being of equal importance to national govt elections. Smaller administrative areas would be required - local devolution of you like.

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 engage with and through the new media in Scotland - that run by Common Space , Bella Caledonia, The National newspaper etc. as well as traditional media sources. A lot of of the post Yes campaign people are very active and intelligently aware. Those engaged with Better Together also became more aware and involved in good debate. Keep the conversation cross party at political level. Engage with new political groups - Common Weal, Scottish Left Project, Radical Independence, etc. Engage with business, academia, trades unions. Advertise - get people involved - sent a mail drop to every home in Scotland.