Local Government and Communities Committee

Consideration of the Council Tax (Substitution of Proportion) (Scotland) Order 2016

Submission from Derek Adam

I wish to present my submission on the proposed council tax changes.

The proposed changes may appear fair as a vague propaganda statement but in fact are very unfair to many people in particular circumstances and in particular pensioners who are on fixed and often low incomes.

My submission is based on two points.

1. Property that was of lower value prior to the revaluation was revalued disproportionately higher in more popular areas. Similar properties bought for similar prices can have very different council tax bands solely depending on location. This means that many mainly elderly people who bought their often modest property before revaluation and now find their property is in a higher tax band are paying a disproportionately heavier burden in council tax. For many pensioners this can amount to a large percentage of their income. This is at odds with the original Scottish Government promise of tax according to the ability to pay.

2. The proposed increase in the multiplier will only exacerbate the hardship already suffered especially for those on fixed incomes and those on low incomes will pay a greater proportion of their income in tax. As the council tax will now be expected to rise in line with inflation they can expect a double blow.

The proposals do not take into account those on limited and fixed incomes, which would obviously result in a lower standard of living and as most elderly people have lived frugally and saved they will be excluded from any relief that is not available to anyone with savings.

My objections to your proposals are to the inherent unfairness, which is not based on the ability to pay - as was originally promised by the Scottish Government, as many wealthy people live in lower tax band properties. There are of course many wealthy pensioners who can afford to pay the higher council tax but the proposals do not differentiate – like the poll tax – they are just inherently unfair, they do not redistribute wealth they take it from the very people who may now be retired but were the hard working backbone of our society.

D Adam