CALL FOR EVIDENCE

1. What is your view on the purpose of the Bill and broadly, are you supportive of it?

Generally in agreement that the collection of debt on Community Charge should be stopped and no longer a responsibility for Local Authorities.

2. Do you have any views on the level of the financial settlement that is proposed in connection with the Bill?

It is difficult to comment – as am unable to determine how the sum identified as a “once and for all” settlement has been arrived at. It may be that it has been determined by establishing the value of outstanding debt that has not prescribed in each of the Councils which are still collecting Community Charge income and where arrangements are in place with debtors to recover debt. However this ignores the issue that it appears that each year a number of people who have no formal repayment arrangements in place, though they have debt, actually make payments. If the second type of payment that is currently received is ignored from the calculation then the once and for all payment does not recognise the potential future recovery which Councils may lose as a result of this legislation.

3. Does the settlement figure accurately reflect the total community charge debt that would be recoverable by local authorities, given the operation of the law of prescription?

No – see above answer to question 2.

4. The Scottish Government considers that, beyond the financial settlement that will be provided to affected local authorities, the Bill will have no financial implications (costs or savings) for the Scottish Administration, local authorities, other bodies, individuals or businesses. What is your view of this assessment?

Agreed