There is one area that I would wish to submit an opinion on which I believe would enable all local authorities to considerably raise revenue and, thereby, reduce their financial dependence on the Scottish Government. This is in connection with a serious anomaly within the Council Tax system which I have had acknowledged by rival political parties who appear reluctant to act.

The present situation is that older properties have not been revalued since 1991 and this has resulted in traditionally built, mostly Victorian, homes having a figure applied to them which when adjusted for house price inflation through the Nationwide House Price Index calculator tends to place them at least one Council Tax band below where they should be with subsequent loss of revenue to local authorities.

Conversely, owners of very modest and energy efficient newer builds tend to be correctly banded as their more recent construction allows for a more accurate assessment of the likely sale value.

A good example of how older properties are undervalued for Council Tax purposes is where my Victorian-built former family home was located in Newport on Tay in North-East Fife. Most of the traditionally built flats or houses in this prestigious street are in Band D or E, even though they sell for between £220,000 and £280,000 respectively and tend to be owned by very successful professionals who are paying less in Council Tax than someone of modest means in a 100 square metre new-build that is worth considerably less.

I have examined a number of these older properties and confirmed my own assertions by using the Nationwide House Price Index calculator, but even a cursory look would confirm my case which also appears to apply in other localities throughout Scotland:

http://www.nationwide.co.uk/about/house-price-index/house-price-calculator

Were a one-off revaluation of older houses to take place, the resulting additional Council Tax would probably run into £billions which would enable local authorities to undertake huge capital and revenue programmes enabling much needed social benefits. This would also address the current situation where those living in modern properties are affectively subsidising, often more wealthy, Victorian property owners due to the anomaly in the Council Tax system.
I hope you will investigate the idea and I would be happy to provide examples to support my claims with the proviso that the source of the material was not made public.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Griffiths  
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