

Our Ref: 12/17/DMcC/KS

28 August 2007

Ms Nancy Heron
2007 Executive Review of Domestic Rating Reform
Rating Policy Division
Department of Finance and Personnel
Room D12, Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR
BT19 7NA

Dear Ms Heron

Re: Rates Review Consultation 2007

NILGA has submitted a response on behalf of the local government sector to the recently publicised review of the domestic rating system. We wish to indicate our general support for the thrust of the NILGA submission and make a few additional comments below. In making any changes to the rating system it is considered important that the logic for such change is adequately clarified and communicated within the sector, and the public as is relevant.

- It would be desirable to improve the predictability of income for local government for planning purposes as the current arrangement presents difficulties, particularly in terms of timeliness and accuracy. It also represents a poor basis on which to do medium-term planning.
- The link between ratepayer and elector is considered of importance in particular, where the public can associate the services delivered with the people elected to Council. It is clear this link can be enhanced to civic benefit by delegating further powers and services to local government were improved public service efficiency can be achieved through integrated and co-ordinated service delivery to the benefit of citizens/consumers.

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- Local rates could be developed to influence the nature of regeneration and development within a locality, by acting as an incentive or otherwise. It is considered appropriate that research should be undertaken to establish the practicalities of such a scheme and how it could benefit locally led regeneration.

Yours sincerely

DAVID McCAMMICK
Chief Executive