

RECEIVED 30 SEP 2008

Rating Policy Division
Department of Finance and Personnel
Room D12
Decant Annex
Rathgael House
Balloo
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Bangor
B17 7NA

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on the Introduction of Green Rebates

My attention was drawn recently to an article in a local 'free sheet' (East-Antrim Advertiser) advising that input from ratepayers was being sought on some current consultations aimed at improving the lot of domestic rate payers. Ignoring my initial thought that my opinion did not merit the cost of a stamp to seek my views directly I have decided to write in respect of the consultation which considered the introduction of 'green rebates'. I would offer the following comments:

- (1) Probably in common with the majority of domestic ratepayers I believe that I pay rates in respect of:
 - (a) refuse collection services
 - (b) water supply and drainage
 - (c) local community services (I'm not sure what this covers)
- (2) In respect of refuse collection:
 - (a) I am a single owner occupant and my general waste output is, therefore, minimal – the recently introduced two weekly cycle of bin collections is more than adequate for my needs
 - (b) I recycle waste as directed but, again as a single occupant, use the kerbie bin every 3 or 4 weeks only, according to necessity; blue and brown bins are also used infrequently
- (3) In respect of water supply and drainage:
 - (a) As a single occupant I make minimal demand on water supply and consequent waste/drainage services
- (4) I do not make use of any local community services

The points I would like to make are:

- (a) Comments made by Finance Minister Nigel Dodds lead me to understand that there is to be no rates rebate for single occupant dwellings although

this is the position that maintains on mainland UK ie even though I am less of a burden on council services I still pay the same as more demanding consumers such as families with children or persons living in larger properties

- (b) From information that was forwarded to me on a previous occasion I understand that water charges – if and, more likely, when they are imposed – are likely to be in the form of another rate bearing no resemblance to the amount of water used and waste produced
- (c) I do not understand how introducing 'green' technology to my home is going to reduce the already minimal demands I make upon services as herebefore noted and consider the whole idea preposterous

In conclusion, if serious consideration is to be given to fairness in the matter of rates let them be reflective of actual usage of services (the technology exists to measure all that we use via meters and chips) and forget about red herrings which only serve to divert attention from reality.

Yours faithfully

