

To whom it may concern,

My concerns, in terms of Rating Reform, are:

(1) The overall tax burden, for the individual, is higher in Northern Ireland than elsewhere in the UK. Those below the 40% tax band have very little capacity to take on additional tax demands.

(2) The majority of people believe that they already pay for water in their rates. Therefore, in any future system, the way in which rates plus water charges are calculated, need to show a reduction in rates before the additional water charges are added.

(3) Again transparency is the issue. Many people suspect that significant increases in rate bills in 2006-07 and 2007-08 were, in part, used to pay for the formation of the new Water Go Co and to cover the deficit created by delaying Water Charges. It would be helpful for any review to confirm or deny this approach.

(4) I currently pay for my utility services (gas, electricity, phone) based on the units used. Therefore my preference, as a 2 person household, is to pay for my water use through metering. I would consider any other system to be theft.

(5) Finally, I appreciate that there are infrastructure issues with water and sewage systems. However, this is as a result of under investment by previous London administrations and should not now become a burden on the NI citizen, but should be recovered through a reparation package from Westminster.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation process. A fair and reasonable outcome is extremely important for confidence in the decision making ability of the new administration.