

## **PRESS RELEASE**

14 October 2011:

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

### **Government is Urged to Reconsider Localisation Issues in its Welfare Reform Bill**

The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation has welcomed the findings of the Parliamentary Report into the localisation issues in Welfare Reform, which was published yesterday.

David Magor, IRRV Chief Executive, commented on the issue of the Report findings:

“My Institute supports the general thrust of the recommendations put forward in the Report of the Parliamentary Communities and Local Government Committee, under the Chairmanship of Clive Betts MP.

“The Institute’s views on issues of localisation and welfare reform were presented orally to the Committee in its evidence session by the then President Kerry Macdermott. I am very pleased that the Committee have had regard to the issues we presented, which is evidenced in the many references to the Institute’s evidence in the report.”

The Institute supports the introduction of a simplified welfare benefit scheme, the localisation of its administration and the general principles behind Universal Credit. It has long voiced concerns however that a localised housing support system is essential, and the Welfare Reform Bill will not deliver this,

Mr Magor continues:

“The Committee described the inclusion of housing support within Universal Credit as ‘incongruous’, and I heartily agree. The complexities of administering this support mean that it should be removed from the proposed Universal Credit system and administered locally - that is where you find the very best customer-focused services. Central Government needs to recognise the importance of administering housing costs support at the local level – placing it within the planned Universal Credit will be a universal disaster, and will bring about significant hardship to claimants. We urge the Government to act on the findings of the Parliamentary Committee and rethink the delivery of housing support.”

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The Institute also welcomes the recognition in the Report that the timetable for introducing the council tax support scheme in 2013 is extremely tight and imposes a significant financial risk on councils at a time when budgets are already extremely tight.

ENDS

**Notes for the Editor**

1. The Communities and Local Government Parliamentary Select Committee published its report on Localisation Issues in Welfare Reform on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The Report can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomloc/1406/140602.htm>  
The report examines the implications of the Government's welfare reform plans for the localism agenda. Under these plans, Council Tax Benefit and elements of the discretionary Social Fund will be abolished and replaced by localised schemes run by councils.
2. The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) was founded in 1882 and is the UK's leading professional body in the field of local authority revenues, including the associated valuation for local taxation and the administration of housing and council tax benefits.

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