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Ministry of Justice
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Sent by E-mail to: courtsandtribunalsintegrationprogramme@justice.gsi.gov.uk

25 February 2011

Dear Sir/ Madam

IRRV Response: A platform for the future: A consultation on a unified Courts and Tribunals Service

The Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) is pleased to respond to the above consultation paper. The IRRV is the professional body concerned with all aspects of local taxation in the United Kingdom. Its members are engaged in the valuation of property for taxation, local tax administration, the appeals process, local authority benefits and financial management in local government. The Institute represents the professional interests of its members who work within these disciplines.

A rationale for the change is that users and partners will be better supported in terms of accessing the administrative and judicial processes; and administrative processes will be better designed and delivered and will be more consistently applied.

We would like to pick up on the concept of offering better support in terms of accessing the administrative and judicial processes. There are aspects of the management and administration of both the HMCS and the Tribunals Service that leave much to be desired. The merger will presumably be about achieving improved outputs with fewer staff, but under one organisational roof. In all of this, what value for money will the users get? On the basis that the proposal will save costs, then the user should ultimately benefit from reduced fees. There is no evidence of this being considered as an outcome in these proposals.

We have also regard to what these proposals may mean for rating appeals costs in the longer term, with the VTS coming under the Tribunals Service (as it is currently) umbrella. There are compelling reasons for allowing free and unfettered access to the appeals process for all ratepayers and we would seek reassurance that the unification process does not seek to do away with the free access that has been preserved in respect of rating appeals.

Yours truly,

Moira Hepworth

Policy and Research Projects Officer

About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

Full name Moira Hepworth	
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (e.g. member of the public etc.) Policy and Research Projects Officer	
Date 25 February 2011	
Company name/organisation (if applicable): Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation	
Address 41 Doughty Street, London	
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If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	(please tick box)
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

The IRRV is the professional body concerned with all aspects of local taxation in the United Kingdom. Its members are engaged in the valuation of property for taxation, the appeals process, local authority benefits administration, local tax administration and financial management in local government. The Institute represents the professional interests of its members who work within this broad church.

The Institute has developed this response through its Valuation Faculty Board, which draws upon the considerable valuation expertise of the Board members. The Institute strives to bring about improvements in the valuation and related administration processes.