This paper has been written to stir up discussion, not conclude it. Since it was completed, the 2015 Autumn Statement has given councils in England the power to put a surcharge on council tax to help meet the cost of social care. As a result, within five years, council tax could be 22 per cent higher than it is today. The idea that such an increase can be imposed upon a tax base which has not been updated for 24 years is – or ought to be – unthinkable.
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1. **Summary**

**Why council tax reform is needed now**

1. In England (and Scotland), council tax is still levied on the basis of the 1991 property values used when the tax was introduced in 1993. Since then, all houses and flats have gone up in value but some have gone up more than others. As time goes by, council tax becomes ever more arbitrary.

2. To end this arbitrariness, the basis on which the tax is levied needs to be updated to current property values and then regularly updated thereafter. This is “revaluation”. In turn, revaluation opens up the possibility of changing the structure of the tax: crudely, the difference between what a bigger place and a smaller place pay in council tax. This is “reform”. Other features of the tax, such as the single person discount and the empty homes premium, can also be reviewed as part of reform.

3. Council tax benefit gave households receiving means-tested state support full relief from council tax. In doing so, it made the whole council tax system fairer. CTB’s abolition in 2013 for those of working-age strengthens the case for council tax reform.

4. Cutbacks in local government funding since 2011 and changes to local government responsibilities mean that council tax is now equal to about half the spending which councils fully control. Further cutbacks will increase it further. This makes the link between truly local spending and locally-raised tax stronger than for many decades.

5. Local democracy will wither if councils stop using council tax as a source of extra money. To stay in office, councils will have to engage with local citizens to explain why the tax is going up. Even small amounts of extra money shape how services develop. If council tax does not provide it, local provision will change in response to the wishes of businesses, property developers and others. An arbitrary tax that asks too much of some and too little of others is a barrier to democratic engagement.

**Why local authorities should decide**

6. The decision to reform should be taken locally rather than nationally. The outcome of revaluation is too uncertain for central government to risk it. It is also impossible get any intuitive sense of what is fair between, say, a flat in Barnet, a semi in Barnsley or a terrace in Bath. By contrast, the likely outcome of local reform and whether it is fair is much easier to grasp.

7. Central government’s role is to set out a framework within which these decisions can be made. The question is how tightly this should be drawn. The cautious proposal here is that the regularity at the heart of the current system, between bands B and F, should be extended, downward and upward, by splitting bands A, G and H.

8. Council tax support should be reformed on the same basis. CTS is an integral part of the council tax system, of primary importance to low incomes households. Central government should specify limits on CTS schemes so as to check the race to the bottom now taking place and stop the poorest residents facing tax rises.
2. The problem at the heart of council tax reform

However unpopular council tax may be, a tax that brings in £23bn a year (2013/14) is not going to be abolished. New taxes may come in but if so, they will be in addition to the council tax not instead of it. The choice for council tax lies between leaving it as it is and reforming it.

This paper has been written to help clarify the options for reform. It takes account of three recent developments including: the replacement of council tax benefit (CTB) by council tax support (CTS) in 2013; the proposed introduction of universal credit; and the London Finance Commission’s call for devolution of council tax and other local property taxes.

But it is also essential to recall some older history. In 2001, the Labour government passed legislation for a council tax revaluation in England to take effect in 2007, 14 years after it came into effect. This triggered a series of detailed studies, by local government and later central government, into whether and how the tax might be reformed at the same time. Yet soon after the 2005 election, the revaluation was abandoned and the legislation repealed.

Why was this? Party political calculations played their part. But to leave it at that is to miss what it is about the tax itself that make changing it so easy on paper and so difficult in practice. Council tax was born as a response to the complex challenge that faced the Major government as it struggled to replace the community charge. To cope with that complexity, council tax emerged as a flexible thing, full of “variables” which could be set at will. In particular, mediated via an arbitrary set of council tax bands and tax “multipliers”, the link between the underlying property value and the tax due could be carefully controlled.

This flexibility makes reform on paper easy, allowing government a lot of choice about the distribution of the council tax burden both within and between local authority areas. Yet this self-same flexibility is what makes it so difficult for a government minister to explain and justify any reform. For one thing, the effect can be counter-intuitive: what might sound like bad news – a house going up a band – could still mean that household pays less tax. Unless central government takes complete control, local government can undermine what it intends.

Most important of all, the tax lacks a coherent foundation. Calculated according to the notional value of the dwelling occupied means council tax is like a wealth tax. But a wealth tax ought to be levied on the person who owns the property not the person living in it. What occupiers should be taxed on is the value of the housing services they are enjoying, a value which is well measured by market rent. To be coherent, a council tax levied on occupiers would be based not on property value but rental value.

The first challenge of council tax reform is therefore how to explain, justify and secure support for it. This paper argues that the way to meet this challenge is to make reform a local decision, with local impacts only. The question for national government is how far it should limit a local area’s options in the matter. That division, between national standards and local discretion, lies at the heart of this paper.
3. Why reform?

If the choice is between reforming the tax and leaving it to languish, why reform? The basic answer is that the strength of local democracy itself depends on it. Council tax is the biggest source of revenue over which local government has control. A vigorous local democracy, capable of taking local decisions to meet local needs, must be able to raise money via a tax that enjoys broad public acceptance. The council tax as currently structured cannot do that.

The cutbacks in local government funding since 2011 and the changes to local government responsibilities are increasing the importance of council tax to local democracy. Although total local government spending has been around £160bn per year since 2010, the spending that local government now has control over is around one third of that total (£51bn in 2013/14). This “net controllable expenditure” is projected to fall further, to £44bn, by 2019/20 (Independent Commission on Local Government Finance). At that point, council tax will bring in nearly two thirds of that money. This is a far stronger link between truly local spending and truly local tax raising than has been the case for many decades.

Over the next five years, this link, and importance of locally determined taxes to locally controlled expenditure, will strengthen further. Net controllable expenditure is already dominated by adult and child social care (42% in 2013/14). Although the total is due to fall to £44bn by 2019/20, social care spending is projected to rise. As a result, spending on all services other than social care, waste management, street cleaning and concessionary fares is projected to fall from £21bn to £10bn in 2019/20 (ICLGF). This estimate of the squeeze on other service pre-dates the announcement of the National Living Wage which is expected to have a big impact on care. In this situation, even small changes in the revenue from council tax will make a big difference to the money available for the spending on other services, including highways and transport, economic development, recreation, youth services, libraries, environmental services and planning.

An argument for reform based on the structure of the tax

The argument for reform comes in two varieties, a more modest one based on a view of the tax’s structure and a more ambitious one based on its impacts.

The argument based on the structure of the tax starts by noting that the regularity exhibited by all the bands between B and F slows down above that (G is in effect a double band) and then stop altogether at the top of H and the bottom of A. This modest version then contents itself with arguing that the proportionality in both band values and multipliers seen in B to F should be extended upwards and downwards. G should be split into two; H (and for that matter A) should be split into as many bands as necessary to ensure that the pattern in the middle continues without interruption in both directions.

This argument seems to be the basis now of most calls for reform. Its effect would be to increase the extent to which council tax bills within any area vary. New bands at the top, attracting a higher rate of tax, will obviously do this. This is what would happen in many parts of London. But it is also true for those areas, especially in the north of England, where most
properties at the moment are in A. Here, splitting the bottom band will mean a lower rate of tax for some households presently in that band.

**An argument for reform based on the impact of the tax**

The more ambitious version of the case for reform looks at the impact of council tax. Its centrepiece is the claim that council tax is sharply regressive. By this is meant that as household’s income goes up, so the proportion of it devoted to the council tax goes down. On average, this is indeed so: for example, in 2012/13, the poorest fifth of households devoted 5.6% of their gross income to council tax whereas the top fifth devoted just 1.8%.

But there’s a problem here. For one thing, all taxes – including VAT – look regressive when expressed as a percentage of income. So council tax cannot be condemned for this reason without also condemning all taxes apart from a proportional or progressive income tax.

A better way is to gauge council tax is to show it as a share of expenditure. This is what the graph below does. On this basis, VAT is almost exactly flat (about 8% for each income quintile). It is also not unreasonable to think of council tax as a kind of consumption or expenditure tax, related to the value of the home, rather than the income coming into it.

**How regressive is council tax?**

*Council tax (and NI rates) as a percentage of household expenditure, by income quintile, for different levels of CTB/CTS: UK, 2012/13*

As a share of expenditure, council tax with full pre-April 2013 CTB is only regressive in the upper part of the income distribution – households in each of the lowest three fifths of the income distribution each paying an average of 4%. As CTB weakens, however, regressivity rises sharply across the income distribution.

*Source: ONS: the Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income, 2012/13, tables 3 and 14A.*
The box shows that when council tax is calculated this way, it appears neutral in the lower and middle part of the income distribution (4% of expenditure), only dropping away as a share of expenditure – and therefore becoming regressive – at the top. The case for reform is therefore more about unfairness at the top than unfairness at the bottom.

Or rather “was”. For this result, it should be noted, assumes that the system of council tax support is at it was under the old council tax benefit system prior to April 2013. The graph also shows what happens when that support is weakened. Without any CTB or CTS, council tax would be very regressive, not just at the top, as now, but at the bottom too. CTB hasn’t disappeared of course – but the levels of support on offer in England are moving it in that direction. The third line in the graph, showing CTB reduced by 20% is a fair approximation to where things now stand. Post April 2013, the case for reform is no longer confined to the top of the income distribution.
4. Why revalue?

Council tax reform needs a legitimate valuation of properties as its base. Since homes in England have not been valued for council tax purposes since 1991, a revaluation, to bring the basis of the tax up-to-date, might seem obvious.

The fact that property is banded in relation to its actual (or in the case of homes built since then) notional 1991 values is a problem in the case of two things that have happened since. The first is that some homes will have lost or gained value relative to the average through individual factors specific to them, for example, through the building of an extension. Although its value has increased, the band it is in remains the same.

Without a comprehensive revaluation, especially in areas where property prices have risen a lot, the anomalies will become ever more striking, thereby undermining the legitimacy of council tax. In appendix one, we have included some examples of such anomalies.

The second reason why basing properties on 1991 is a problem is that there have been some general shifts in property values since then. The graph below which shows this is in two parts, first by region, second by property type. On average across England as a whole, prices were 4.3 times higher in 2014 than in 1991. The rise was greatest in London, followed by the two regions adjacent to it. By dwelling type, the average price of flats rose the most (a five fold increase) and detached houses the least (three and a half fold).

How did house prices change: 1991 to 2014?

Over 23 years, house prices across England rose more than four-fold. Prices rose most in London which in turn pulled the East and South East above the other regions. Looked at by dwelling type, detached houses rose the least and flats the most.

The individual region/dwelling type statistics shows that while there is still a London effect (all types have gone up more than average), a part of the reason for London’s higher growth is a composition effect – that is, many more flats (and terraces) in the mix than elsewhere.
This point about the average price of flats going up by more than the average price of detached houses is one sign that revaluation alone will not necessarily shift the burden of tax from smaller, cheaper properties to larger, more expensive ones. Just because house prices have gone up does not mean that more expensive ones will face an increase in council tax. While larger, detached houses would still pay more tax in absolute terms, the faster rise in value of flats could mean that they see a bigger increase in their tax.

There are too many factors at play here to be able to draw reliable conclusions from the published summary statistics on the average house price in an area (the mean), the price of the average house in the area (the median) and the price of the house one quarter of the way up the distribution (the lower quartile). On their own, we don’t know how far changes in the ratios between them (1996 up to 2013) reflects changes in relative prices (e.g. cheaper places going up in price more than average ones) as opposed to changes in the mix of properties (more homes with average values being built in the area).

Even so, there is enough information in these statistics to suggest that the outcome of revaluation might not always be what is expected. For example, most of the 12 local authority areas where the gap between the low and middle house prices has narrowed furthest are poorer areas, in east London (Barking, Newham) Essex (Thurrock), the Midlands (Stoke) and the North West (Manchester, Hyndburn). It is possible at least that revaluation here could see those cheaper properties having to pay more council tax. By contrast, the nine where it has widened furthest (on the same measure, namely, a change of eight percentage points or more) include Christchurch, Tonbridge, Stratford-on-Avon, Malvern, and Derbyshire Dales. It is here that those in the cheaper properties could expect to see council tax falling.

All this underlines how unpredictable and even unexpected the effects of revaluation are likely to be. The idea of a nationwide revaluation, with uniform, one-size-fits-all, national bands and multipliers, not only looks perilous but is, arguably, wrong in principle. For the only thing that the council tax system alone determines, that is, the bands, multipliers and single person discount, is the balance of taxation within a local authority area. The balance between areas (whether local authority or region) is influenced by other factors. An argument for revaluation and reform must therefore really be a local argument. Given how much local authority areas differ, a national argument about the effects is impossible to make. The argument for revaluation and reform can therefore only be a local one.
5. How to reform council tax

Council tax reform on the Coalition model

There are two fundamental choices to be made about how council tax should be reformed.

- Should reform be something that central government decides will happen? Not “might” or “could” but “will”?
- If not, that is, if central government enables reform but leaves a decision about whether to implement to a local or possibly regional decision, how much of the design of the new system should central government impose?

The whole argument of this paper is that the first route, centrally mandated reform, is a non-starter. The history of 2001 to 2007 is against it. The cost benefit analysis for central government – likely substantial political cost for a footling sum of money (which it can get other ways more easily) – is strongly against.

By contrast, the second route is in effect the one pioneered by the Coalition in bringing in CTS. Councils have to design their own schemes. They can decide to stick with what they had prior to reform (which about 1 in 8 still have) or they can bring in something that they believe suits local conditions.

Leaving a decision about whether to implement reform – by undertaking a revaluation – to the local level also goes with the growing current in favour of local decision making, whether in the Northern Powerhouse, the City Deals, or other examples of regional devolution.

More importantly, by leaving the decision to the local level, people are at last able to grasp the implications of the decision they are being asked to make. “Do I pay too much or too little tax in relation to council house residents in Barking or Victorian terrace dwellers in Bradford” is an impossible question to answer. “Do I pay too much or too little tax compared with the people living over the shops on the high street – or in the very large houses on the other side of the railway?” – these questions are comprehensible.

It should be stressed, however, that local people – whether councillors or residents – can only reasonably be expected to grasp the consequences of reform if its effects are confined to the local area only. That will only be the case if the amount of central government grant received by the local authority remains the same whether reform is undertaken or not.

For the first ten years of the council tax, the amount of central government grant received by an authority depended pretty much directly on the amount of money that it could raise under a nationally specified council tax. The proposal here, to decouple grant from the council tax system, would therefore have represented a rupture.

In the last ten years or so, however, the link between the two has become much weaker, both more opaque and – for many authorities – with the prospect of the grant disappearing altogether in just a few years’ time. In practice, the rupture has now largely happened. Furthermore, extra funding (localised business rates, new homes bonus) is very insecure.
With growing independence, there will inevitably be growing demand for new financial powers, reform of council tax and more control and stability in funding.

This paper is not the place to make the argument for a new central grant system (although it is acknowledged that such a new system is essential to allow some level of equalisation in the resources available within rich and poor areas). What matters for the argument here is that any such new system be independent of a local authority’s decision on whether to reform council tax in its area or not.

**A national framework for local decision**

But a local decision about whether to revalue and introduce reform is not the same as local decision-making over all the details of the reform. Up to a point, the reform itself should be specified by central government. The question is where that point lies.

There are two reasons for wondering how much discretion local authorities should have in designing a new scheme. One is to do with the legitimacy that they possess in the eyes of the public to design a tax. The other is that too much variation would undermine the idea that local taxes were on a common basis; for example, if a council were free to go for a one band system that would mean the return of the poll tax by a different name. The main elements of a national framework are as follows.

- The council tax bands. In line with the case for reform based on the structure of the tax, the natural reform would be to extend the regularity in the central bands B to F (where the value at the top of a band is about 30% above the value at the bottom), both upward and downward, without the current floor and ceiling. Although this 30% rule-of-thumb is itself arbitrary, it is well-established. Extending it upwards and downwards without limit would remove the arbitrary floor and ceiling in the present system. If central government mandated the size of a council tax band, councils be left with the choice of where exactly to set the bands in their area and how many they need.

- The council tax multipliers. At present, a home in any of bands B to F worth 30% more than the one next door is in one band higher and pays between a sixth and an eighth more tax as a result. Applying this rule to the new banding structure would be consistent with the extension of the bands themselves. A regular percentage, step up in tax paid from one band to the next is desirable but, unlike the band limits themselves, local authorities could have some choice about how big that step should be. For example, a more progressive option – say the tax rising by 20% from one band to the next – and a less progressive one – say 10% – could also be offered.

- Local authorities could also be allowed discretion over the size of the single person discount. Such a proposal was made in the House of Lords as part of the Welfare Reform Bill that brought in CTS, but was ultimately defeated.

- The Empty Property Premium which allows local authorities to raise charges on properties which have been empty over two years, could be open to local variation
and could be extended to allow council tax to be raised on empty land which has an existing planning permission to encourage development to take place.

- Local authorities could also decide on transitional arrangements and whether to restrict themselves to a “no net increase in tax” in the first or even later years.

Given the national framework, containing some limited and specific choices, local authorities would decide whether to go ahead with reform and therefore a revaluation in their area. If so, they would use the new system of bands and multipliers (selecting here from among several options). The revaluation should be done through the district valuers and its cost met nationally. Central government could choose to require that once a revaluation had taken place, it should be repeated on a regular basis, say every five years.

**How should a local decision be taken?**

There’s one more question: who takes this “local” decision? Just councillors – or should they do no more than make a recommendation to their electorate?

Currently there is a two per cent ceiling on annual council tax increases. Anything above this requires approval via a referendum. This use of a referendum has been criticised. How much to put the tax up is routine council business, year in year out. No principle is at stake. Local electorates who don’t like what their council has done can throw them out. Although it is not the main point of this paper, these restrictions should be removed if devolution is to be meaningful. This is a recommendation of the ICLFG.

However, a decision about the structure of the tax, which creates winners and losers, is a much graver matter than one about the level of the tax which usually affects everybody uniformly.

The ICLFG recommended that the government should introduce place-based budgets for sub-national areas that are willing and able to take on this reform and that these should be given the power to determine the number and value of council tax bands and when properties should be revalued. A clause to this effect could be included in the Cities Bill. This would be welcome although it would limit reform to those areas that central government considers ready for reform.

To complement this top-down route to legitimacy over the decision, there needs to be a local, bottom up route where the residents in an area agree with the Council that council tax reform is required. Local support could be demonstrated either by reform being part of a local manifesto at a local election or through a local referendum. A referendum need not be a shackle: if the issue is important enough, it is an opportunity for a vigorous engagement between politicians and residents. To win one on council tax, local political leaders would have to find enthusiastic public support not just for a better tax but also for the role of local government.

The prize is considerable: not just a better tax but one that commands a degree of public acceptance. And not just the tax but as a result of a lively campaign, a renewed interest in, and public support for, the role of local government.
6. How to reform CTS

From CTB to CTS

Since April 2013, the rules governing council tax rebates have been set by English local authorities. Although about 1 in 8 have elected to continue with the former CTB scheme, most have taken the opportunity, under the pressure of funding cuts, to introduce their own. In all cases, these CTS schemes have provided less support than CTB.

There is much that can be said about these schemes. For example:

• The replacement of CTB by CTS is a genuine reform. All 326 local authorities introduced it on time, demonstrating a competence for implementation that is much less evident in central government.

• Central government laid down certain rules, in particular, that pensioners should continue to receive full protection (i.e. the old scheme would still apply to them).

• The key feature of CTS compared with CTB is the introduction of a minimum payment. Under CTB, anyone getting JSA, IS or ESA got their council tax paid in full. Under CTS that is not so. One consequence of this is that the only people in a local authority who have seen an increase in their council tax over the last two years are the very poorest. This minimum payment, rather than the taper on the support as income rises, is the main issue.

• As we approach the third year of CTS, there is every sign that the minimum payments are going to go up again: 20% of the normal liability is increasingly looking like the norm.

• 20% of the normal liability, however little money that a person has, was one of the two defining principles of the poll tax. In April 2014, there was absolutely no discernible difference between the pattern of minimum payment introduced by Tory run authorities and Labour run ones.

• The payment itself is only the beginning of the problem. Non-payment often brings a magistrate’s summons and further costs (the size of which are being challenged in the courts). This reflects the application of a system designed to deter “won’t payers” being applied to people who can’t pay. The muddling of the two is a long term threat to the integrity of local government finance.

The key difference here with the council tax proper is that decisions about such schemes are already taken locally.

A national framework for local decision

For the foreseeable future, proposals for reform of CTS that involve a return to a nationally designed system seem unlikely to find allies. But calling upon central government to reconsider the conditions imposed upon local authorities’ schemes may be more realistic. It
is line with what is being proposed above for council tax reform, that is, local discretion within a centrally-defined framework. Some changes to those conditions could include:

- A relaxation of the rule exempting pensioners from the provisions of CTS (keeping the old scheme). There is no principled reason for separate treatment. If local authorities were forbidden to discriminate on the basis of age, it might be that they would decide to restore full support to all so as to avoid the political pain of trying to collect council tax from poor pensioners.

- Specification of the maximum size of minimum payments. In the run-up to the introduction of CTS, central government decided rather late in the day to offer transitional support to any authority whose scheme met certain conditions including a minimum payment no greater than 8.5%. This is the precedent – and given the upward drift in minimum payment sizes, a cap needs to be placed. An 8.5% (or similar) cap would not only represent relief but by limiting the amount of tax that could be charged, reduce the incentive for local authorities to charge anything.

- The operation of the tax and the consequence for people in arrears could also be the subject of a national standard.

While all of this falls short of a return to a national system of CTB, it goes with the flow, started by the Coalition but taken up by many city authorities, for a new division of responsibility between local and central government as far as taxation is concerned. Both these proposals for new national standards for CTS, as well as the proposal to leave the decision about whether to reform council tax (but not how) to local authorities, goes with that flow. If council tax reform is to come back from the dead, this seems the best way to go.
Appendix: Council Tax anomalies in the London Borough of Camden

Key Points

The photos and evidence show:

- How a band D flat (paying half the council tax of a band H house) is worth a fraction of the capital value of the house.

- Only 4,435 properties in Camden are in band H, 4.2% of the stock. Many of these houses are worth over £5m. Witenhurst will be worth over £100m.

- How band G properties vary (at least) from houses which are 1,260 sq ft to 2,500 sq ft and from around £1.5m to around £2.25m. There are 12,022 properties in band G in Camden, 11.3% of the housing stock.

- New property which has been valued recently will usually be in a much higher band than old property.

- Some of the older property has been refurbished but not revalued leading to significant anomalies. Two houses in the same street can have capital value difference of over £300,000 since one has been extended and the other hasn’t but they remain in the same band having never been revalued.

- Flats tend to be in higher bands than houses given their comparative capital values and space available. Older council property is often in Band D because of generous floorspace provision but the value of the property is relatively low. Thus council tenants are often facing relatively high council tax charges.

- How Camden is not fully benefiting from some of the new development which comprises student housing and housing for the elderly despite the increased demand for services that flows from this type of accommodation.
**Band B (11% of properties paying £1,040 p.a.)**

Band B includes one bedroom council housing and the new very small studio flats for students in Kings Cross. The Council gets no council tax from the studio flats, which are let out at £399 per week, since students are exempt from the tax.

### Maiden Lane Estate

A one bedroom maisonette with first floor access was recently on the market for £200,000. A similar property was advertised for rent last year at £845 per month (£195 per week). It had a double bedroom, access to a shared balcony, reception room with space for dining, kitchen, bathroom and storage. Another sold for £247,000 in June 2014 and is also in Band B. All these flats have higher space standards than recently built property.

### The New Urbanest Student house in Kings Cross

Camden gets no council tax since all the residents can claim the student discount. The self-contained studios in band B rented out at £399 a week to £499 a week. The block has good amenities: underfloor heating, fast speed broadband, communal rooms and staff support.
Band D (24% of properties paying £1,337 p.a.)

Properties range from £650,000 to £326,000 and from 885 sq ft to 585 sq ft.

**Converted flats and maisonettes**

2 bed maisonette of 885 sq ft offered for sale at £649,950

Semi-basement one bedroom flat with small patio offered for £550,000

Maiden Lane Estate: 2 bed flat estimated by Zoopla to be worth £326,538
Band F (11% of properties paying £1,931 p.a.)

NOTE: the new flat only offers 36% of the floor-space of the house and is worth half the capital value of the house but, because the flat is new and recently valued and refurbishment of the house is post 1991, the two are in the same band.

**Converted flats and small houses**

1 bedroom flat, 484 sq ft near Regents Park on market for £725,000.

A three storey family home with patio garden and roof terrace with approx. 1,350 square feet of accommodation on market for £1,450,000. The house was extensively refurbished approximately nine years ago. The 22’3 double reception room leads down to a contemporary kitchen/dining room with direct access to a private patio garden. There are three double bedrooms, two bathrooms, a utility room and a roof terrace.
**Band G (11% of properties paying £2,208 p.a.)**

NOTE: Three properties in Band G varying in value from £1.55m to £2.250m and in size from 1260 sq ft to 2500 sq ft. There are many Band G properties worth over £2m.

### Houses

- **A four storey period house with 76.8ft garden and 3 bedrooms.** The house provides 1,260sq ft of accommodation and 111sq ft additional storage. Asking price £1,550,000

- **A five bedroom Victorian family home arranged over four floors with 2500 square feet of accommodation and garden.** Asking price £1.9m

- **A three bedroom, 2,020 sq ft house with small patio garden in a gated development alongside a railway line.** Asking price £2,250,000.
Band H (4% of properties paying £2,674 p.a.)

NOTE Council Tax is capped at £2673.62, twice the Band D payment, despite the fact that houses in this band are now almost all worth over £2m and are many times the value and size of a Band D flat or house. There are empty properties that pay no council tax for two years.

True mansions

Grade 2* John Nash designed home near Regents Park. The house measures 3,570sq ft and has a kitchen, formal dining room, study, reception room, drawing room, master bedroom suite and four further bedrooms including a tower room on the third floor. The house has secure off street private parking behind electric gates for two vehicles and an extensive south facing tiered garden recently featured in Country Life magazine. £8.25m

Self-styled mansion at top of Highgate Hill. 65 rooms including 25 bedrooms, 12 bathrooms and a ballroom. For many years Camden would have received no council tax because it was empty. The Council is now allowed to charge 50% premium for houses that have been empty for two years so the charge would be £4,010.

[Image courtesy of Daily Mail]