LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM LESLEY KERR

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed removal of business rates relief for mainstream independent schools. There are a number of reasons for my concern about this bill, some of which include;

The pressure it will put onto public schools. If the proposed removal of the business rates goes through, a lot of parents will have no choice but to pull their children out of independent schools and put them into local schools. The school I work in charges roughly £15,000 a year per child, which collectively is over £1.3 million a year, this is £1.3 million a year the council are not having to pay for children to be in education. It would also put huge pressure on teachers as class sizes would increase dramatically.

St Mary’s school is just one of many independent schools who would be affected by this bill. Even though we are a smaller school educating nearly 200 pupils, there are over 50 members of staff; the biggest employer in the town we are situated in. The school also helps many businesses, privately and council run; such as hiring tennis coaches and using the local pool and sports centre, all being paid for by the school. It also holds events for the public such as the annual ‘Bang Goes the Borders’ science festival where the public can come, free of charge, and enjoy a filled day of learning and fun. We also holds sports events for schools, independent and local authority. The pupils in the school are always eager to help others and the environment, raising fund for charities and doing clean up’s around the borders.

I would like to raise these concerns and object to the proposal of the removal of the business rates relief for mainstream independent schools.