LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANGUS FORBES

I am writing to express my objection to the removal or reduction of rates relief for independent schools.

Anyone taking the view that these establishments are only for the privileged few does not have an understanding of their roles in the education of Scottish children and in many cases it is due to the hard work and commitment of many parents and support from the schools that allow children to attend. Many of these schools were founded to ensure more children could have access to education and it is becoming harder and harder to keep these establishments operating, any increase to the rates will just be another nail in their coffin. I am sure that by pressurising independent schools to increase their fees many will close and the children from less well-off families will no longer be able to attend. In some cases, children attend these schools as the provision of boarding is necessary for parents who work abroad or travel extensively in their jobs, removal of these schools will therefore force children to attend schools in England or abroad.

I also do not think the current state system would easily accommodate the potential influx of children if independent schools shut at some point in the future and in many cases certain children may find it a very difficult transition.