LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM MARK DAVIDSON

I strongly believe that this bill singles out independent schools from tens of thousands of other charities to pay non-domestic rates and it takes no cognisance of the schools charitable purpose that has been ratified by OSCR and is core to the values and actions taken by the school and Board of Governors at Hutchesons Grammar School. The Barclay Report and the proposed Bill does not accept the public benefit that this and other schools deliver to their local communities.

There is no understanding of the potential impact of this change on the bursary provision of Hutchesons Grammar school and many others which have and do benefit a sizeable number of children across Scotland and that will in no doubt drive children from independent into State schooling due to the impact of increased fees associated with independent schooling having to meet this rates charge. The State sector is already over-stretched and under-funded.

We and other parents already happily pay taxes, as expected by society, but we do not receive any direct benefit from the taxes with regards to education for our children as we do not use the State facilities. As such they are net donators to the State education sector. This mis-guided step risks makes both those in state and private schooling sectors worse off. I would urge the committee to not proceed with this bill.

Kind regards

Mark Davidson