LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ADELINE CRUISE

The bill includes the proposal to make independent schools “ineligible for reduction or remission of rates”. This is despite a majority of respondents to the formal consultation, including the OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) itself, opposing a move which created a two-tier system of charitable relief. No other charities have been subjected to either collective public service measures or measures of the Barclay Review, on 56 schools from 24,000 registered bodies in Scotland.

In the financial memorandum the impact on schools would be more than £7 million per year, rather than the £5 million proposed by the Barclay Review and then put to public consultation. Every child removed from independent school if fees rise, will be an additional cost and space and increased class sizes for local authorities to deal with yet this is not addressed. It has been calculated that the loss of 1 in 30 pupils from the independent sector – either to the state sector or boarding pupils locating elsewhere – would cost the Scottish taxpayer more than the entire rate increase proposed by the Bill. There is no mention of public benefits either through widening access or the sporting facilities offered for community use.

It creates separation in the education system with differing rules for special needs schools or independent schools where all students are selected on special ability such as music. Where is parity in education? The same must be said of the proposals regarding relief to private profit making providers of nursery provision but not standalone independent school nurseries. Neither the size of school in respect of numbers or site size is given consideration.