LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM BARBARA MCKERRACHER

I strongly believe that the bill singles out independent schools from tens of thousands of other charities to pay non-domestic rates and it takes no cognisance of the school’s 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 our public benefit, and makes a false argument that state schools pay rates: they receive no money and do not pay out. No school should pay business rates and state schools should receive this money.

There is no understanding of the potential impact of this change on our school’s bursary provision which has and does benefit a sizeable number of children and that it is likely to 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. Additionally, it should be noted that our parents already pay their taxes but do not receive their educational allowance for their children as they do not use the State facilities. As such they are net donators to the State Sector already.