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To the Catholics of our parishes in East Lothian

Removal of our Church Representative's Voting Rights

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

You may be aware that during the review of Standing Orders (the Council's rules of business) earlier in the year, a proposal was put forward by an Elected Member seeking a review of voting rights of non-elected representatives on the Education and Children's Services Committee. As a result, a consultation is being undertaken and the results will be reported back to the Council in December. If the outcome of this consultation suggest that voting rights should be removed, it would effectively remove from the Church the ability to influence the running and direction of our Catholic schools

As such, this proposal presents a serious threat to the identity and Catholicity of our schools in East Lothian, and is also, in all probability, just the first step in the process to remove faith education from schools in Scotland altogether.

To deprive the Church Representatives of voting rights on the Education and Children's Services Committee, where they sit on behalf of us, our children and our families, casts into serious doubt the commitment of some of our elected representatives to the future of Catholic schools.

The decision has not, however, been taken yet and there is still a small amount of time for you to influence your elected representatives, who are very sensitive to local opinion.

If you care about Catholic schools and if you want them to continue to flourish in the future, please write to your local councillor **as a matter of urgency** to ask him or her to vote against this proposal to remove the vote from the Church Representatives in East Lothian. To assist you, a draft letter is being supplied to parishes today, although if you write in your own words, it will be even more effective. Many thanks for your help with this important effort.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+Leo Cushley
Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh