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Leaders of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist
Party, Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Green Party
and Scottish Liberal Democrats

06 October 2020

Dear colleagues

SCRUTINY OF CORONAVIRUS REGULATIONS

I am writing to invite you to nominate an MSP from your group to participate in urgent discussions about how we can provide the Scottish Parliament with an enhanced role in scrutinising coronavirus regulations.

The Scottish Government takes seriously the need to be held accountable to the Scottish Parliament for its response to Covid-19. This is reflected in the First Minister's regular statements to the Chamber to set out, and take question in relation to, the actions which the Scottish Government proposes to take. I and my colleagues have also appeared regularly in plenary and before committees of the Parliament, including over recess periods, to account for our actions. This activity is all representative of the Scottish Parliament's consistently rigorous approach to the scrutiny of Government legislation.

However, the Government recognises that Parliament wishes to consider additional steps to enhance further the scrutiny it undertakes. The First Minister committed at FMQs on 1 October to come back with proposals for discussion with the Parliament on how we enhance and strengthen parliamentary scrutiny, and on how that can take place wherever possible – recognising that there will be circumstances in which the Government has to move quickly.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with parties how we best give effect to the commitment given by the First Minister. I would be grateful if you would nominate a representative from your party to take part in a virtual discussion on what options are available to us, which I hope to convene either at the end of this week or the start of the next.

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I am copying this letter to the Presiding Officer, the conveners of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform and Covid-19 committees, and the chair of the Conveners Group.

MICHAEL RUSSELL

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