02 February 2016

Dear Minister for Employment,

I am disappointed to hear that you will not be able to travel to Edinburgh before the start of dissolution. I understand the pressures of parliamentary business. However, when we met in private on 1 October 2015 you committed to appearing before the Committee. That commitment was for a formal session, in Scotland, in public, in order for us to raise the issues which are important to our stakeholders and constituents.

As you may be aware our Standing Orders do not allow us to meet formally outside Scotland. As such a full Committee meeting in London is impossible. We have been clear that we wish to have a positive working relationship and as I have noted previously we view a public meeting in the Scottish Parliament as an important starting point to any future collaborations.

You mention in your letter that you will continue to work with Scottish Government officials. As you are aware, there is a distinction between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. I would therefore ask that you give the same respect to the Scottish Parliament and offer it the space and opportunity to exercise its democratic accountability in its own right.

I would urge you to reconsider and find some space in your diary to come to Edinburgh to meet with the full Committee, in public, as you had previously agreed.

You should be advised that I will be making this correspondence public.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Henry

HUGH HENRY MSP, CONVENER