Local Government and Communities Committee
Planning (Scotland) Bill
Submission from Andrew Mackenzie

I would like to add my name and number to the many others who are urging the Scottish Government to adopt the Agent of Change principle and enshrine in it our legislation, as is made possible by the Planning (Scotland) Bill of 2017.

Sensibly already in place and in action in England and Wales, it seems like a necessary and basic safeguard against development that is unsympathetic to an environment it intends to disrupt. Notably, for instance, in situations where existing infrastructure includes places of leisure and entertainment where live or recorded music is habitually played.

It is absurd that we are behind our southern cousins in offering this bare minimum of protection to the purveyors and enablers of our musical culture, operating often at its tender grass roots.

The onus to smooth the way for a mutually acceptable joint occupation of a location must surely rest chiefly with the incoming developer and not - to the extent that it currently does - with the established venue on or adjacent to the site.

This shift of emphasis might be seen as vital in a country where the opportunity to play and see live music – such a crucial element of Scotland's cultural offering and indeed identity – should not be left to the whim of developers and market forces, at risk of random and piecemeal reduction, in the way that it presently is.