

Thompson demands rejection of UK Government's 'attack on devolution'

Owen Thompson MP called for Scottish politicians from all parties to reject the Internal Market Bill which he says will undermine decisions of the Scottish Parliament and the devolution settlement.

Mr Thompson was speaking during the first Committee Stage debate of the Internal Markets Bill which the UK Government has already admitted breaches International Law by overriding the Northern Ireland Protocol in the Withdrawal Agreement, an International Treaty signed just last year.

He says the 'flawed Bill' gives the UK Government sweeping powers to set aside decisions of the Scottish Government across devolved areas, including introducing an unelected body, the 'Office of the Internal Market' which will oversee and veto decisions taken by elected representatives at Holyrood.

Mr Thompson said: "Make no mistake, this Bill is a political move to curb the powers of the devolved administrations by a party that can't get elected here.

"One of the many appalling aspects of this law-breaking Bill is the handing of powers to an unelected body of bureaucrats,

the 'Office of the Internal Market' to monitor and rule on every decision taken by the Scottish Parliament.

"This strips power from Scotland's transparent, democratic decision-making processes and puts it in the hands of a panel appointed by UK Ministers. "As the Royal Society of Edinburgh said, the use of this authority against the wishes of the devolved Administrations constitutes a failure of intergovernmental relations. What happened to the respect agenda? We were told we were in a Union of equals and that we were to "lead not leave". Where has that gone?

"Let us make this simple: scrutiny of Bills passed at Holyrood should be undertaken in Holyrood. There is no need for the creation of a new body that could scupper much of the excellent evidence-based policy work that has served Scotland so well.

"Devolution was designed to respect localised democracy and better meet differing priorities in different parts of the United Kingdom. Instead, under this Bill, the centralising tendencies of this unequal Union are being put into overdrive.

"The Bill is a blatant political move to scupper those rebellious Scots who just do not seem to fall for the Prime Minister's charms. Boris Johnson is throwing his toys out of the pram, taking a huff and saying, "It's ma baw and ye cannae have it."

"I would urge a rethink and the scrapping of this appalling Bill which is nothing less than an attack on democracy."