



Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP
Secretary of State, Digital Culture Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
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11 March 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

I enclose correspondence from the Six Nations Council about the tender process for the UK media rights for the Six Nations Championship matches.

As you will see, my Committee is dissatisfied with the Six Nations Council's response to our questions. Specifically, we asked whether the Council had held discussions with the DCMS about moving Six Nations from Category B to Category A of listed sporting events, thereby ensuring that live coverage is made available to free-to-air channels.

The Council's response was, at best, only a partial answer, stating that it has "actively engaged with DCMS whenever the issue of listing and categorization of UK sporting events [...] has been reviewed."

Given the Council's failure to provide a clear answer, we would like to make a formal request to you that the Department consider the option of moving the Six Nations from Category B to Category A of listed sporting events.

Our request chimes with that made by the Lords Communications and Digital Committee, which recommended in its November 2019 report that you as Secretary of State should consult on "increasing modestly" the number of listed events. It would also be in line with arrangements in, for example, France, where the Six Nations is listed as one of 21 sports events defined as "of major importance" are guaranteed to be accessible to all viewers via main free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters.

I would appreciate receiving your response by Wednesday 18 March so that we can factor your answer into our lines of inquiry with you at our 25 March evidence session.

Yours sincerely,

JULIAN KNIGHT MP
CHAIR, DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT COMMITTEE