

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak
Chancellor of the Exchequer
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Sent by email: rishi.sunak.mp@parliament.uk

Tuesday 17 March 2019

Dear Rishi Sunak

We write as local representatives and business owners in Lambeth who are deeply concerned about the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on Lambeth businesses and residents.

While we welcome initial measures to offer some business rate relief in certain sectors, we believe the government must go much further. The scale of the outbreak and the unprecedented measures in response announced yesterday are insufficient and Government must go further in support of local economies.

Businesses in all sectors are deeply fearful that the outbreak will could force them to close permanently, causing major hardship for owners, workers and customers alike.

Businesses in Lambeth are already suffering from reduced footfall and booking numbers and yesterday's announcement will exacerbate that significantly. Announcing that people should not visit restaurants, pubs, bars, theatres and other venues but not enforcing mandatory closure means that many businesses will be left without financial protection.

We urge the Chancellor to mandate the closure of venues to enable them to claim the insurance needed to protect their businesses, as part of a wide package of measures to support businesses to survive. That includes funding business rates relief, hardship funds for local authorities to administer and a higher level of statutory sick pay to all workers forced to self-isolate.

Whilst the impact on high street and hospitality-based business is already clear, the impact on the business to business service sector is also a cause for major concern but currently less visible.

We also urge Government to consider the role that local authorities working in partnership with local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can play in response to the Covid-19 crises. BIDs provide a vital piece of business support infrastructure for Lambeth and across the UK. As a result of business hardship, some BIDs are now facing reduced BID levy income which could put their future at risk. To safeguard BIDs and equip them to support the economic recovery measures that will be

needed, we call on Government to work with the BID industry to ensure that BIDs can support all the businesses in their area.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jack Hopkins
Leader of Lambeth
Council

Michael Smith
Managing
Director
Brixton BID

Louise Abbotts
BID Manager
InStreatham

Nic Durston
Chief Executive
South Bank BID &
South Bank
Employers Group

**Charlotte
Ashworth**
BID Manager
Station to Station
BID

Jeremy Keates
BID Manager
This is Clapham

Bernard Collier
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