

2 October 2020

By Email rishi.sunak.mp@parliament.uk
Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

By Email matt.hancock.mp@parliament.uk
Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Dear Chancellor / Secretary of State for Health,

Business Leaders across the North, call for Immediate Action to avoid catastrophic consequences for Visitor Economy.

The hospitality industry is under threat. The imposition of further restrictions upon conurbations in the North of England will result in a catastrophic impact on the entire sector if it is not given immediate support.

We welcome intervention of city leaders who have called upon the government to act. We also need to make people aware that our previously, slowly, recovering visitor economy is in real danger.

In fact, without an appropriate level of intervention, there will not be a hospitality sector as we know it. There are many businesses across the North that will soon close and others desperately seeking ways of continuing to trade.

The vast majority of businesses have shown incredible resilience and worked tirelessly to make themselves COVID secure for those visiting and working in them, making sense of what many regarded as confusing, unenforceable restrictions.

The imposition of the 10:00pm curfew is having a damaging impact on the sector and we would ask you to review it in the light of its effect on the hospitality industry and the resultant job losses.

In some areas of the North, a further and critical blow is about to be dealt to bars, restaurants and hotels.

The imposition of measures banning household mixing in indoor venues – and the potential for additional measures of societal restrictions – would leave our hospitality and retail sectors in the equivalent of a full lockdown situation leaving many unable to continue trading for the foreseeable future.

In March, the Job Retention Scheme was a lifeline for many businesses. But the future does not look promising and the discretionary grant

programmes will be insufficient to enable visitor economy and hospitality businesses to trade through the impending period of local restrictions. The substantial investment made by government to support businesses through the initial phase of this crisis must not be wasted by an unwillingness to now provide the necessary stimulus to overcome this immediate challenge.

Decisive and immediate action is required - listen to and support businesses and people on the ground and engage properly with local authorities to provide targeted economic support.

The restrictions will force the closure of successful restaurants, bars and hotels as well as the huge number of businesses which make up the supply chain. It will decimate the sector and will spill over into the wider business eco-system.

Innovative solutions to support the restart and recovery of our economies after the initial lockdown have been successful. The private and public sector came together for the safe re-opening of venues, footfall was boosted and we saw a glimpse of optimism for the future. It must not be for nothing.

We encourage the UK government take heed of the representations made by the leaders of our biggest Northern conurbations. An emergency package of support is essential to enable our visitor economy to sustain itself through this next economic shock and emerge in a position of relative strength in the post-COVID period.

The government is committed to levelling up the UK economy. A successful economic recovery is dependent upon the preservation of our existing economic base, of which leisure, hospitality and retail businesses play a substantial part.

Quite simply, for our visitor economy, it is now or never.

An Open Letter to National and Local Government on behalf of undersigned:

Bill Addy

Chief Executive
Liverpool BID

Vaughan Allen

Chief Executive
CityCo

Paul Askew

Owner
The Art School Restaurant Co Chair,
Liverpool Hospitality Association

Adrian Ellis,

GM The Lowry Hotel, Chair Manchester
Hoteliers' Association

Paul Cherpeau

Chief Executive
Liverpool and Sefton Chambers
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Clive Memmott,

Chief Executive
Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Frank McKenna

Chair
Downtown in Business

Dave Moutrey,

Director of Culture, Manchester CC;
Chief Executive
HOME arts centre

Jane Sharrocks,

Chair, Manchester BID,
GM Selfridges