

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

**Date:** 22 November 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

This week, we came together as the London Covid Business Forum to discuss what can and must be done by London government, central government and the business community to support the safe and full re-opening of London's economy and help more of the capital's businesses to survive and recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have committed to doing everything in our power to support businesses to survive this crisis and to ensure that London maintains its global pre-eminence as a centre for international business, culture and tourism.

Collectively we are working to a shared and evolving roadmap for economic recovery and have attached a version with this letter. But there are several necessary actions that can only be taken by the Government.

We therefore urge you to immediately prioritise the following five urgent steps:

1. Provide clear communications and a transparent strategy on the management of the pandemic which provides businesses with adequate notice and clear guidance in advance of changes to restrictions and tiers. This must include forward guidance on what to expect on and from 3 December, alongside a clear explanation of the evidence underpinning the restrictions and a formal review timetable.
2. Work with business and London government on the rapid roll out of mass testing and any applicable vaccination programmes with the working-age population, with regular updates on the mass testing pilots, and plan for involving businesses in these programmes.
3. Rule out reinstating the hospitality curfew within the tier-based system after the current period of national lockdown.
4. Confirm an extension to the business rates holiday for retail, leisure, childcare, and hospitality businesses, that was due to end in March 2021 and extend the reduced 5% VAT rate for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions, currently due to end 31 March 2021. These steps need to be taken urgently to help businesses plan for the coming year.

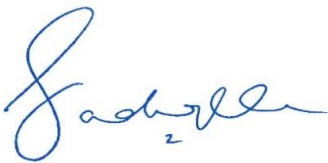
# MAYOR OF LONDON

5. Reverse your plans to end the VAT Retail Export Scheme at the close of this year. While much of tax-free shopping is done in London, the negative impact will also be felt across the UK with over 20% of the annual £3.5 billion tax free sales usually made outside London.

The future of our capital city as a global centre of business, culture and tourism is vital to our country's economy. Damage to London's global competitiveness will not just be felt in the capital but will impact the whole of the UK.

We all stand ready to work alongside the Government to ensure that London, as well as the rest of the country, once again returns to pre-pandemic levels of prosperity.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**

Mayor of London

**CLlr Georgia Gould**

Chair, London Councils & Co-Chair, Recovery Board

**Angus Knowles-Cutler**

Co-Deputy Chair, Local Enterprise Partnership for London

**Bernard Donoghue**

Director, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions

**Caroline Norbury MBE**

Chief Executive, Creative Industries Federation & Chief Executive, Creative England

**Catherine McGuinness**

Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, City of London Corporation

**Baroness Deborah Bull**

Vice President & Vice-Principal (London) & Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture, King's College London

**Jasmine Whitbread**

Chief Executive, London First

**Michael Kill**

Chief Executive Officer, Night Time Industries Association

**Ojay McDonald**

Chief Executive, Association of Town & City Management

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Sir Peter Rogers**

Chairman, New West End Company

**Richard Burge**

Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Simon Pitkeathley**

Chief Executive Officer, Camden Town Unlimited & Chair, Transition Board Business Reopening Strategy Group

**Kate Nicholls,**

Chief Executive, UKHospitality

**Asma Khan**

Founder & Owner, Darjeeling Express

**David Stringer-Lamarre**

Chairman, Institute of Directors, London Region

**Rowena Howie**

Policy Chair, FSB London

**Julie Brown**

Chief Operating & Financial Officer, Burberry