



Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Councillor Rachel Robathan
Leader of the Council

17th Floor
Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street, Westminster,
London SW1E 6QP

23 November 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

As the country prepares to come out of lockdown on 2 December, I would like to reiterate Westminster City Council's stance, as I specified in my letter of 12 October to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that the 10pm curfew imposed upon hospitality businesses should be removed or amended. I welcome press reports in recent days which indicate that Government is minded to amend the curfew and our alternative proposals are set out in the briefing accompanying this letter. These include making 10pm last orders for food and drink, prohibiting sale of alcohol after 10pm and staggering closing times based on different types of venue.

While the City Council fully supports the Government's efforts to ensure safety within the hospitality sector and curtail the transmission of COVID-19, I am highly concerned that the curfew has a disproportionate impact on business. I am particularly concerned that the curfew may lead to other problems such as overcrowding and street drinking which may actually contribute to increased transmission. The briefing accompanying this letter sets out our evidence of the curfew creating pinch points and groups of people gathering on the streets.

The briefing note also evidences the catastrophic effect the curfew has had upon our businesses as well as detailing the impact it has had upon public safety. For your information, an appendix is also included which provides accounts from our local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and businesses on how the curfew has affected them.

Some of our businesses are reporting that they have had up to 90% drops in sales and are close to collapse as a result of this curfew, Westminster City Council would welcome the removal of this measure altogether. Public protection and the survival of our local businesses have been threatened by the implementation of the 10pm curfew, and we believe the curfew has exacerbated the risk to public health. We are therefore asking Government to seriously reconsider continuing with the curfew following the lifting of lockdown restrictions on 2 December.

I would welcome a conversation at your earliest convenience to discuss these matters further and provide a local view on how effective alternative measures could be

implemented. Please do get in contact for any further clarification on aspects of the briefing note.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Rachel Robathan,
Leader of the Council
Westminster City Council

Copied to :

Rt. Hon. Matthew Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government