



City of Westminster

Rt, Hon. Rishi Sunak MP,
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Her Majesty's Treasury
1 Horse Guards Rd
Westminster, London
SW1A 2HQ

Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street,
London SW1E 6QP

Cllr Rachael Robathan
Leader of the Council

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

19 March 2020
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Dear Chancellor,

Following your presentation of the budget on 12 March, I wrote to you requesting support for Westminster's business community in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. I was, therefore, pleased to note the additional measures that were announced as part of the COVID-19 briefing on Tuesday 17 March 2020. In particular I welcome:

- The one-year business rates holiday in 2020/21 for all businesses within the retail category, which includes hospitality and leisure.
- Cash grants for retail, hospitality and leisure of up to £25k, if they have a rateable value of £51k or less.
- Cash grants of £10k for businesses with a rateable value of under £15k and which are entitled to Small Business Rate Relief.
- The loan guarantee scheme of £330bn for businesses across the country.
- A three-month mortgage holiday for individuals experiencing financial difficulties resulting from COVID-19.
- Additional financial support for those out of work as a result of the coronavirus.

The City of Westminster sits at the very heart of Central London, which is the powerhouse of the national economy. Westminster generates £53bn in Gross Value Added every year, equating to 3% of the UK's economy output and generates approximately 10% of the business



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rates income nationally. Underpinning this huge economic output, Westminster has around 39,000 business rate properties.

Whilst the Council recognises that the government is taking huge steps to support businesses across the country in these unprecedented times, there remains no financial assistance for any Non-Retail properties with a rateable value above £15k. In Westminster this amounts to over 20,000 businesses – over half of our business community and equates to gross business rates of £1.4bn.

I would therefore ask that the Government reviews the potential support that could be provided to these businesses who are an absolutely vital element of our economy and provides timely relief to help cope in these challenging circumstances.

Finally, I would also request that further details are published on:

- The announced £500m local authority “hardship fund” so that we can start supporting our most vulnerable residents.
- The £10k and £25k cash grants for business, so we can begin to issue guidance to our local business, many of whom will be eligible for these payments.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the above with you further. The Council and its officers are always ready and willing to work with you and your team to help inform decisions on how we can best support businesses and individual by mitigating the long-term economic impact of this global pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Rachael Robathan
Leader of the Council
Westminster City Council