



**Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP**

Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury

**Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP**

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy

12 May 2020

Dear Mr Sunak and Mr Sharma,

**RE: Seven weeks to save the nation's high streets – it's time to #RaiseTheBar**

In light of the Prime Minister's address to the nation on 10 May, I am writing to you on behalf the #RaiseTheBar campaign and 100,000 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses across England and Wales that have been closed for over 50 days in order to support the need for the public to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. These businesses are still unsure as to how the Government will support them during a time of extended closure.

Since we first wrote to you on Tuesday 21 April, the #RaiseTheBar campaign has received significant cross-party support including that of 86 fellow Conservative MPs who issued a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday 1 May. The #RaiseTheBar campaign is further supported by industry leaders, 95 Business Improvement Districts with our Change.org petition securing over 12,000 signatures so far.

The retail, hospitality and leisure sectors contribute £635 billion to the national economy, employing over 5.3 million people in pubs, shops, restaurants, galleries, arts venues, cafes, clubs, bars and hotels. These businesses are equally as important within the supply chains they operate in. The threat to these businesses has an immediate, detrimental impact to the rest of the supply chain, placing other businesses and livelihoods at risk including food and drink suppliers, logistics, maintenance and cleansing services.

There is a deepening concern that tens of thousands of businesses within these sectors are teetering on the edge of the abyss with many expecting widespread permanent closures in the next seven weeks as we approach the next rent quarter on Wednesday 24 June.

There is a significant risk that these businesses, the lifeblood of our high streets and communities, will be unable to support the stimulation of the nation's economy without further intervention from Her Majesty's Treasury.

The Discretionary Fund of £617m to accommodate small businesses outside the scope of business grant funds does not go far enough to support those businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 or more and furthermore, relies upon the discretionary decision-making processes of each local authority with no guarantees of support.

We are calling on the Government to provide a lifeline to tens of thousands of businesses who must responsibly stay closed until at least 4 July by making the following amendment to the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant [RHLG]:

- **To expand the business rates threshold for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses from £51,000 to any business with a rateable value up to and including £150,000, allowing further businesses the opportunity to access the £25,000 grant**

The cost of offering this financial lifeline, assuming all 54,638 businesses applied for the grant is calculated at £1.365 billion.

In light of the serious economic damage to the economy, we urge Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak to honour, in full, the pledge made earlier this year on Tuesday 17 March:

*'Will not be overcome by a single package of measures or isolated interventions. It will be won through a collective national effort, every one of us doing all we can to protect family, neighbours, friends, jobs. This national effort will be underpinned by Government interventions in the economy on a scale unimaginable only a few weeks ago. I want to reassure every British citizen this Government will give you all the tools you need to get through this. I said whatever it takes, and I meant it.'*

We call upon Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock MP to honour his response to The Sheffield Star when asked about raising the business rates threshold on Monday 27 April at the daily Government media briefing.

We request that the First Secretary of State, Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab provide an update as to his discussions with HM Treasury on raising the threshold following concerns raised by his constituents.

The framework to support 54,638 businesses in England and Wales has already been formulated with the mechanism to issue these grants in place through the local authorities. Whether our request of funding forms part of an amendment to the first wave of funding, or within a second wave of funding, we respectfully ask that you consider our request to provide these businesses a lifeline.

Businesses across these three sectors are desperately looking for the Government to make the right decision and to support those left very much isolated and stranded from grant based schemes such as the RHLG.

In supporting our industries and the businesses that deliver within them, our economy will be far richer for it and far better prepared to support the economy as we navigate our way together through this crisis.

Yours sincerely



**Matthew Sims**  
Chief Executive  
Croydon BID



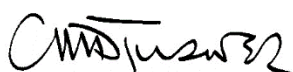
**Andy Taylor**  
Managing Director  
Cocktail Pub Company



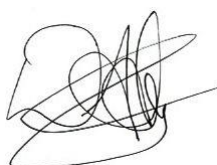
**Kate Nicholls**  
Chief Executive  
UKHospitality



**Ojay MacDonald**  
Chief Executive  
ATCM



**Chris Turner**  
Chief Executive  
British BIDs



**Bill Addy**  
Chair  
BID Foundation



**Mark Davyd**  
Chief Executive  
Music Venue Trust



**Leader Cllr Tony Newman**  
Croydon Council



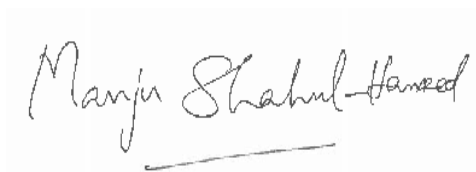
**Amy Lane**  
Night Czar  
Greater London Authority



**Emma McClarkin**  
Chief Executive  
British Beer & Pub Association



**Michael Kill**  
Chief Executive  
Night Time Industries Association



**Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed**  
Cabinet Member for Economy & Jobs  
Croydon Council



**James Lowman**  
Chief Executive  
Association of Convenience Stores

**Richard Burge**  
Chief Executive  
London Chamber of Commerce



**Greg Mulholland**  
Chair  
British Pub Confederation

**Supported independently by the following Business Improvement Districts:**

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Altrincham Unlimited  
Andover BID  
Angel London BID  
Baker Street Quarter  
Banbury BID  
Bath BID  
Be Richmond BID  
Better Bankside BID  
Blackpool BID  
Bournemouth Coastal BID  
Brackmills BID  
Bradford BID  
Bristol City Centre BID  
Brixton BID  
Broadmead Bristol BID  
Bromley BID  
Camden Town Unlimited  
Canterbury Connected  
Chester CH1  
Cheltenham BID  
Colmore BID  
Coventry BID  
Derby Cathedral BID  
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Essential Edinburgh  
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Fitzrovia Partnership  
FOR Cardiff  
Future Wood Green BID  
Go Southampton  
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Heart of London Business Alliance  
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Ilford BID  
Ilkley BID  
InExeter BID  
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Kingston First  
Leamington Spa BID  
Leeds BID  
Leicester BID  
Lincoln BID  
Liverpool BID  
Love Wimbledon BID  
Luton BID  
Make It Ealing  
Manchester City Co  
Manor Royal BID  
Marble Arch BID  
New Addington BID  
Newcastle NE1  
Newport Now  
North Notts BID  
Northampton Town Centre BID  
Norwich BID  
Nottingham BID  
Orpington First  
Oswestry BID  
Peterborough Positive BID  
Poole BID  
Positively Putney  
Preston BID  
Purley BID  
Reading BID  
Rediscover Peterhead  
Rochdale BID  
Rugby First BID  
Salisbury BID  
Sheffield BID  
South Bank BID  
Southend BID  
Southport BID  
Southside Birmingham BID  
St Peters Quarter BID  
Stoke-On-Trent BID  
Stratford Original  
Stratforward BID  
Stockport BID  
Successful Sutton BID  
Sunderland BID  
Swansea BID

Team London Bridge  
The Junction BID (Clapham Junction)  
Totally Stockport  
Vauxhall One  
Wandsworth BID  
Watford BID  
We Love Merthyr BID  
West Bromwich Town BID  
Westside BID  
Winchester BID  
York BID