



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

24 November 2020

Léonie Cooper
London Assembly Member, Chair of the Economy Committee
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Léonie,

SUPPORTING LONDON BUSINESSES THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Thank you for your letter on September 23rd regarding supporting London businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, and for sharing the findings of the Economy Committee's investigation.

Throughout this crisis, our priority has been clear: to protect lives and livelihoods. The Prime Minister has announced new national restrictions that will prevent further spread of the virus. We know how worried people are – about their health, the health of their loved ones, their jobs, their businesses, and their financial security. And that's why the Government's economic priority remains the same: protecting jobs.

On Thursday 5 November I announced that we are extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of March 2021, which, as of 31st August, was supporting 557,400 jobs in London. The temporary 15% VAT cut for accommodation, eligible food and non-alcoholic beverages services and tourist attractions has also been extended, providing confidence while the sector adapts to a new trading environment. Additionally, businesses who deferred their VAT bills will be given more breathing space through the New Payment Scheme. And in certain cases, businesses in retail, hospitality and leisure sectors may further be eligible for a business rates holiday for the 2020-2021 tax year. We have also extended applications for the Government's coronavirus loan schemes, that are helping a million businesses, until the end of January 2021.

The cultural and creative industries are an important part of the capital's economy and recovery from the impacts of the virus. That is why the Government has announced a £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund to protect thousands of arts and cultural organisations. I have also extended the self-employed income support scheme grant (SEISS), which as of

30th September has supported 447,000 in the capital, ensuring that self-employed individuals will continue to be supported through to next year.

The Government has been consistently clear that it would keep its support under review to protect jobs, the economy and reflect the evolving circumstances – and I am very grateful to you for sharing your findings with me.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rishi Sunak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RISHI SUNAK