

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA031120-9286

4 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 3 November 2020. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested:

I was just wondering if you could advise where I would be able to find a copy of the letter sent by Sadiq Khan and London Councils to Robert Jenrick requesting an extension to the business rates holiday for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses as per City AMs article: <https://www.cityam.com/sadiq-khan-pushes-for-extension-on-business-rates-holiday-for-retail-leisure-and-hospitality-businesses/>

Please find attached the information we hold within the scope of your request.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA031120-9286.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:
<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Email: mayor@london.gov.uk

London Councils
59½ Southwark Street
London SE1 0AL
Switchboard: 020 7934 9999
Email: info@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Date: 1 November 2020

Dear Robert,

We are grateful for the offer that you have made to have further discussions with the Leaders of London Government on the implications for the capital of the national lockdown commencing on Thursday. None of us want to be in this position but we accept the new national restrictions are necessary to protect the NHS and save lives. Working with you we will do all we can to help Londoners support one another through this second wave and the very challenging weeks and months that lie ahead.

There are however four broad areas of specific concern that we would like to discuss with you and the Chancellor at the earliest opportunity. These are set out below.

Support for London's economy and businesses

Businesses have done the right thing throughout the pandemic, adapting and changing to fast moving circumstances. They are our allies in battling this pandemic and will be through recovery. We therefore welcome the Chancellor's announcement yesterday that the furlough scheme will be extended to 2 December. The retention of flexibility is also welcome. Hundreds of thousands of jobs remain at risk across the capital and it is right that the Government is taking action to provide people and businesses with financial support through this scheme.

Whilst we are conscious that further measures on additional support for business is something you will be considering, we wanted to make clear our determination to work with you on a series of key issues that would help businesses to survive this crisis and aid the UK's recovery that we are all working toward. They include:

- An extension to the business rates holiday for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, that was due to end in March 2021. This would provide a life line to businesses in London's Central Activities Zone (CAZ) that have been hit particularly hard following the dramatic reduction in tourism. Many businesses, particularly in the CAZ, are taking their investment decisions for 2021/22 now and certainty about business rates will help support businesses to stay.

- Help for the self-employed, including a return to the 80 per cent grant but with the cap staying at the current higher level (£3,750).
- Support via Local Restrictions Support Grant and Discretionary Grants, including specifically for hardest hit economic sectors, and for this to be tailored to take specific account of rental and rateable values in London that are much higher than the national average.
- Support to enable employers to be reimbursed the full pay of workers who have to self-isolate, as opposed a regime based on Statutory Sick Pay. We must control this virus and workers who are required to self-isolate must feel financially comfortable to do so.
- It is also vital that the Government move swiftly on deployment of all guidance and allocations for support schemes, so businesses are not left waiting for additional support both during lockdown and beyond.

Local Government support

Councils will now need urgent certainty about the additional funding that will need to be made available during this period of extended restriction and beyond. London's boroughs are, of course, already facing large deficits from the first wave of the virus and it is vital that boroughs have the confidence that the necessary resources to support communities, the vulnerable and local businesses through this next phase will be available.

Boroughs are working together on the sorts of steps that they will need to take. We would very much welcome the opportunity of talking to you about:

- Greater support for local authorities enforcement role with stronger and easier to use powers, especially around compliance.
- Guidance and increasing support for the Extremely Clinical Vulnerable. We would welcome a discussion on the support package that will be made available to allow local authorities to support those most in need.
- A housing package that allows us to protect rough sleepers and the homeless throughout the winter and renews the previous ban on evictions.
- We would also welcome clear guidance and arrangements to support self-isolation for multi-generational families, overcrowded households and Houses of Multiple Occupation

Support for the Vulnerable

London was hit particularly hard during the first wave with many of our communities, and particularly the BAME community, suffering disproportionately. The capital has a set of unique circumstances that must be reflected in the approach and support provided.

We would therefore welcome a discussion with you on the level of support that will be provided to councils to address issues such as food poverty, mental health services and extra support for London's diverse communities. In addition, we believe that the No Recourse to Public Funds provisions should be suspended for a further period so that those facing hardship have the support they require.

Test and Trace

Following the Prime Minister's commitment yesterday regarding the roll out of mass testing we would also welcome a discussion on how we can assist with this and with the deployment of a vaccine when one becomes available.

Whilst testing capacity for London has increased significantly over the past three weeks, it remains below the national average. We wish to explore the potential for local councils to direct testing in their area and funding for a staged transition to more local testing, including greater control over Mobile Testing Units.

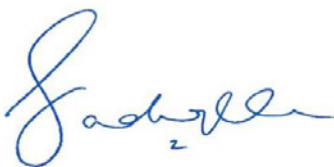
In addition, the Test and Trace Support Payment must be enough to support Londoners to follow the new guidance and be more widely available. Local authorities should have increased resource to provide discretionary support and the weekly Statutory Sick Pay rate should be increased to the equivalent of the London Living Wage. The lower earnings threshold should also be removed to ensure that low-paid workers who are ineligible for benefits have the support they need to self-isolate.

We have set out some broad items above. Clearly, there is a more detailed set of issues being developed, including through the SCG, but we hope that this letter reflects the spirit of London wanting to work closely with you to secure the sort of resource necessary to protect our communities and businesses through this extremely challenging period, particularly as winter approaches.

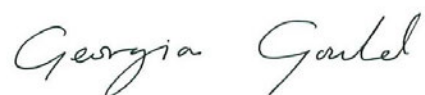
It will, of course, also be very important that we work with you on mitigating the medium and longer-term damage of a national lockdown in London. We are sure that we would have a clear shared commitment to seek to provide a clear road map of how London can de-escalate from these restrictions when the circumstances allow and providing Londoners and London businesses with a sense of how we will seek to balance all interests in tackling this health crisis, getting the virus under control and protecting London's economy.

We look forward to discussing this with you in more detail shortly.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



Cllr Georgia Gould
Chair, London Councils

cc Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Paul Scully MP, Minister for London
Sir Edward Lister, 10 Downing Street