


GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY


(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA191020-7722

9 December 2020

Dear 

I write further to my email of 22 October 2020 to provide you with our response to your request for information which we received on the 19 October 2020. In this, you resubmitted and clarified the information you were seeking under a previous request, and asked for the release of the following information:

Please can I resubmit my request and instead of "email" correspondence ask for "letter" correspondence to the most available date suitable for your team.

In your previous request, you had asked for:

.. all email correspondence between Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the year 2020 to the most available date –i.e. the date you receive this request. If you are unable to provide all email correspondence during that time period, then please could I narrow that down to all email correspondence about coronavirus’.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (the Act) and I can today confirm that our searches identified nine letters from the Mayor of London to the Prime Minister between the dates 17 March and 12 August 2020, and we can release these letters to you in full

Please accept my apologies for the short delay in providing you with our response. If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely


Information Governance Manager

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>

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 0AA

Date: 17 MAR 2020

Dear Boris,

It was useful to attend the COBR meeting yesterday and to be briefed on the latest action the Government is taking. It is absolutely right that the immediate priority is managing the health impacts of COVID-19. I would now expect the Mayor of London to be at all future COBR meetings, in light of the impact on our capital city and the disproportionate impact on London.

However, yesterday evening I convened a meeting of leaders from the business community and it was clear from what they said to me that much more rapid and ambitious action is required to support the economy. The action taken over the last week is welcome, including the measures set out in the Budget and the steps taken by the Bank of England, but without further immediate action in the coming days, we risk widespread job losses and business failures. Businesses of every size and from every sector are at risk as a result of this crisis.

Based on what businesses have said to me, I believe the next steps must include the following:

- A sub-group of COBR is convened urgently to coordinate cross government action to support business and the economy. Businesses told me that they are concerned that action across government is inconsistent and opportunities are being missed to act quickly. There needs to be a single Cabinet Minister responsible for dealing with the economic impacts of this crisis, and a single point of contact for business in Whitehall, rather than multiple points of engagement across many government departments. There needs to be a single portal that brings together advice for business, not just on the health aspects, but also on the legal, HR, insurance and banking implications of this crisis.
- Action is taken now to prevent widescale job losses and to keep people in work so they can support their families and maintain a decent quality of life. This will also be vital so businesses can recover quickly when the current crisis recedes. We can learn from international experience of support schemes to provide aid to businesses to help with payroll bills and to support workers who have to move to part or short time working. We need further extensions in support for statutory sick pay and benefits to ensure those who are unable to work, including the self-employed and freelancers, are able meet their living costs. Those working in the gig economy will also need special support from the Government.

MAYOR OF LONDON

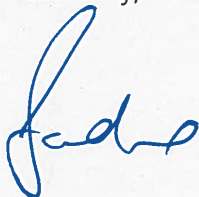
- Further action is needed to help businesses with their cashflow, particularly with many quarterly rent payments due next week. The Government needs to provide greater levels of assistance to businesses, large and small, which are facing financial difficulty. They need further help now, both through the tax system and in the form of cash grants. Later this week, councils will implement Direct Debit mandates for April business rate payments, so immediate action is needed if these are to be delayed to help with cashflow.
- The advice to avoid crowded places, such as pubs, clubs and theatres has left these businesses in limbo. Where insurance is in place to protect against loss of income, businesses are unable to claim on it, yet their doors are all but shut. The Government needs to make support available to cover the lost revenue as result of this advice.

London and the country are facing extraordinary challenges as a result of COVID-19. The Government needs to go much further in providing urgent aid and support to meet businesses critical needs if employers are to overcome that challenge. There must be a guarantee from the Government that no businesses, regardless of their size, will be allowed to fail.

I cannot stress enough the urgency of the need for these measures. There is no time to waste. We are facing not just a public health crisis but an economic one, and if the Government fails to act immediately, I fear thousands of businesses, and hundreds of thousands of jobs and livelihoods, may be lost, with severe and long-lasting social, economic and fiscal consequences.

If my officials and I can provide any further information, or help the Government's efforts in any way, please let me know immediately.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 22 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you privately, and in confidence.

As you will be aware, since the COVID-19 emergency began, my team at City Hall has worked closely as best as we can with officials across government. Despite representations, Monday was the first time I was allowed to attend the Cobra meeting. We have used our extensive social media channels and the TfL estate to amplify public health messaging. We have maintained seamless, joined-up messaging to the public across City Hall and government.

Given the scale of the crisis we face, I have put party politics to one side as I hope you and others in your government have also sought to do. I have used my media appearances to reinforce official government advice at every turn. This has been particularly important over recent days as the advice to the public changed to one of increased social distancing. I also declined to publicly comment when asked to do so on briefings to the media last week regarding London's lockdown, despite how damaging these mixed messages were to a confused public.

However, I feel I must again express to you in the strongest terms possible my serious concerns that the current approach, and the messaging to the public, is failing. As a result, the lives of thousands of people are being endangered.

I am hearing time and again that Londoners feel the messaging is either unclear, or they are simply choosing to ignore it. This weekend has demonstrated how government advice is not being heeded – local shopping areas were busy, many people were out and about, and too many were still using public transport. London needs specific public health messaging that acknowledges the COVID-19 situation in London is a few weeks ahead of the rest of the country and the unique nature of our major metropolitan area.

There needs to be an immediate strengthening of the public health messaging to London. Advice is being seen as something that can be ignored. I do not use the phrase lockdown lightly, but I believe Londoners must be told to stay home unless they are an essential worker, are buying food or collecting medication from pharmacists. Alongside this, there must be clear reassurances about the supply of food to avoid further stockpiling and panic buying.

The consequences of not acting now are unimaginable. Thousands more people will die as a result. Our NHS will be overwhelmed. We only have to look to Italy at the horrors that could lie ahead for London if we do not change course. That is why I urge you to act urgently, and in a clear and decisive manner.

MAYOR OF LONDON

I assure you that with any strengthening of the message to Londoners or its enforcement, I will support you completely.

But, alternatively, if you insist on continuing with the same course, I will be left with no choice but to speak directly to Londoners with a tougher message if it means thousands of people's lives could be saved.

I need to hear back from you on this as a matter of urgency this evening. I do not believe this matter can wait any longer. We must speak to Londoners immediately.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

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

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 0AA

Date: 30 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

It is by coming together – as a country and a society – that we will best tackle the unprecedented challenge posed by COVID-19. The measures you have already put in place to support employers, workers and the self-employed will help many people through this crisis.

However, it is clear that more support is needed for those who are the most vulnerable to the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, in particular those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and those on low incomes. That's why I am writing to make two specific asks that would ensure these groups do not fall through the net of provision we are all working to create and strengthen.

Across London, there are tens of thousands of residents with NRPF, including delivery drivers, cleaners and NHS staff. Sadly, as a result of this unprecedented crisis, we have already seen many lose their jobs.

Londoners with NRPF are at real risk of homelessness, have no way to access Universal Credit support when they lose their income, and their children are not eligible for support through free school meals. I am also particularly concerned about survivors of domestic violence with NRPF who will face additional challenges to fleeing abuse and seeking out support during this time. They are unable to access the welfare safety net they need, despite paying into the system through taxes. These are people who have lived in the UK for many years, often with children born and brought up here.

Whilst local authorities have received welcome additional support to deal with COVID-19, they are having to respond to a significant increase in demand for urgent help to avoid people going into destitution, which they simply do not have the capacity to accommodate or address.

The process for applying for removal of a NRPF condition can take up to six months. This has not been amended despite the national emergency we now face. I am therefore asking you to suspend the condition of NRPF. More than 30 human rights organisations, including Liberty and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, have called for this. Doing so would not only enable people to get the support they need, but, crucially, would help to stop the spread of COVID-19 by those still who feel they have no choice but to go out to work.

MAYOR OF LONDON

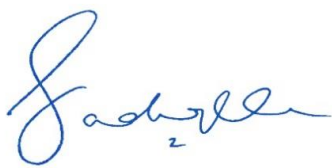
Secondly, given the impact of COVID-19, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Londoners claiming Universal Credit to support them through this crisis. Many people desperately need access to immediate financial help. Advance payments are available for new Universal Credit claimants, but too often the most vulnerable people in our society are being pushed into debt. In this moment of national crisis, I am therefore asking you to remove the five-week wait for support by introducing an automatic, non-repayable advance payment from day one.

It is vital that the Universal Credit system works for all. I welcome the reallocation of 10,000 Department for Work and Pensions staff to support new claims, but given the level of demand, more support is needed. So, I urge you to do everything necessary to ensure that those seeking support do not suffer further delays. This includes putting an identity verification process in place for those who are unable to afford, or do not possess, official documentation.

I support the vital steps you are taking to slow the spread of COVID-19 and the economic measures you have put in place that will go a large way to supporting families across London. But, now more than ever, the most vulnerable need additional help from the Government by removing the condition for NRPF and the five-week wait for Universal Credit. These are vital measures that would help many more people and their families through this unprecedented crisis.

I look forward to hearing from you and I also wish you a very quick recovery.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 0AA

Date: 29 May 2020

Dear Boris,

I am writing to you following your appearance at the House of Commons Liaison Committee.

In response to a question from London MP Stephen Timms about a family struggling during lockdown because of the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition, you rightly said that *'people who have worked hard for this country, who live and work here, should have support of one kind or another'*. You also committed to find out how many people are in this position and what your government can do to help.

I wrote to you about Londoners who are struggling with the NRPF condition on 30th March, and I wrote to the Home Secretary on 28th April urging a speedy response on this issue. I am writing again to reiterate the appalling situation many Londoners are finding themselves in.

Despite their contribution to London's society and economy, tens of thousands of Londoners struggle without support as a result of the NRPF condition, including key workers such as delivery drivers, cleaners, carers and NHS staff. Londoners with NRPF are facing homelessness, are denied access to Universal Credit support when they lose their income and their children are refused access to child-related benefits. Children are especially harmed, as highlighted in a recent legal challenge in which the policy was found to be unlawful. Survivors of domestic violence with NRPF face additional challenges to fleeing abuse and seeking out support during this time.

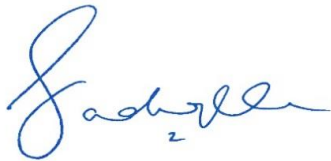
Across local government, there has been a collective call to suspend NRPF and wider immigration-based exclusions during this crisis to enable people to access the support they need and, crucially, to help stop the spread of COVID-19 among those who need to self-isolate safely without losing income. The GLA and local authorities have worked tirelessly to support rough sleepers to access safe accommodation, despite a lack of clarity from Ministers on how to support those with NRPF. Local authorities do not have the capacity to address the scale of need for support to people with NRPF, without a significant shift in policy from your government. It is crucial that the impact of immigration-based exclusions from welfare and homelessness assistance are reviewed urgently and that changes are made to adapt to these exceptional times.

MAYOR OF LONDON

You have an opportunity now to ameliorate the struggles of countless people facing destitution without access to the welfare safety net during these difficult times, and to end rough sleeping for good. During this pandemic, thousands have faced a cliff edge of destitution and timely action from you will ensure that more do not end up in this situation.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 5 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

This is a critical moment for our country as we enter the next phase of lifting the lockdown in response to Covid-19. I am deeply concerned that restrictions are being lifted too soon. This is a concern that I share with public health and medical professionals, including the British Medical Association and the Association of Directors of Public Health, and on evidence from the easing of restrictions in other countries.

The announcement on 10 May that lockdown measures would be loosened was taken when the daily number of positive cases was 3,923. While for other countries taking that decision numbers were much lower, with 1,193 in France and 2,486 in Germany on the day of their announcement. Over the past week at least 74 Londoners have lost their lives, while elsewhere around the world where lockdown has been relaxed there were much lower death rates. And that is why, with more people infected every day, it is too early to ease the lockdown. We cannot afford a second wave of this virus that has already damaged our economy to an extent that we have not seen since the Second World War and created social implications that will take years to fix. We must not be complacent – the country can't afford a second wave. Too many people are still dying every day.

Integral to any lifting of restrictions is both ensuring every person identified as infected self-isolates and having good information systems to prompt rapid action if the R rate starts to rise. Therefore, easing lockdown restrictions without a robust Test, Trace, Isolate (TTI) system puts lives at risk. I am concerned that the availability of a fully operational TTI system is not included in the Government's five tests. I ask for this to be reviewed and TTI to be included in your fourth test on operational delivery, alongside PPE. Further easing of lockdown restrictions must be dependent on clear evidence that an effective TTI system is fully operational.

Following this I have a number of specific concerns, particularly on the risk of fragmentation within the TTI system and the lack of a working digital solution.

First, to be able to respond in London most effectively, we need access to regional level data across all five tests for lifting lockdown, on the functioning of the TTI system and on the regional R rate. Only then can I be confident that the right decisions are being made for Londoners. Can you update me on when these regional data will be available?

MAYOR OF LONDON

Second, for TTI to work effectively, the time taken from requesting a test through receiving a test result to being contacted by a contact tracer needs to be as short as possible. This does not yet appear to be the case, with reports that return of home test results may take up to five days. So I can be assured that the system is operating effectively to prevent and control the virus, what is your target turnaround time for test request to result received and will you publish data to show whether this target is being met?

Third, it is concerning that a significant proportion of home test kits are not returned in London and the Department of Health and Social Care has not yet established the reasons for the low return rate. It is vital that testing is made accessible for all Londoners, including the high proportion of Londoners who do not have access to a car, older Londoners and our BAME communities. I would like further information on the reasons for the low return rate and assurance that action is being taken to address this in London.

Finally, the Government has repeatedly stressed the importance of the App in the overall programme. To ensure low income and digitally excluded Londoners have access to devices which the App can work on, I seek further clarity on how the Government is monitoring the progress of your DeviceDotNow campaign, and whether a far more comprehensive national investment needs to be planned. Local authorities and their teams are well placed to work directly with local communities to help you achieve this.

Getting satisfactory answers to the points raised above will be key for the effective working of the London Transition Board.

COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on London and Londoners – and Londoners lives must not be put at further risk from easing lockdown measures too soon, or from a second wave of this deadly virus.

Given the importance of these issues for Londoners' health, I would be grateful for an urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 18 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

There is an increasing body of evidence that the use of non-medical face coverings by the public can help reduce the spread of coronavirus. This includes recent modelling by scientists from Cambridge and Greenwich Universities. I welcome that face coverings have now, since 15 June, been made mandatory by the Government on public transport, after lobbying from me and others. We can see from the high levels of compliance already that Londoners are willing to wear them for the benefit of all.

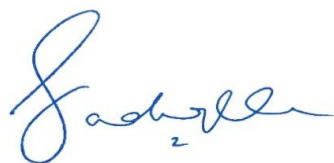
The use of face coverings will become increasingly important as lockdown restrictions are eased and as London and our nation's recovery gets underway. As we understand more about asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission it is vital that we use all available tools, from the NHS Test and Trace service to face coverings, to minimise the spread of the virus and, crucially, prevent a second wave.

I therefore urge you to make face coverings mandatory in a further range of busy public settings and not just public transport and hospitals. There are many places where people will struggle to maintain a safe distance from others, including when shopping. The World Health Organisation updated its guidance to recommend the use of face coverings in a wide range of public settings, including grocery stores, and many European countries - whose lead we have often later followed - have mandated their use in shops and other confined public spaces as part of their strategy for reopening, including Austria, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain. The reopening of non-essential retail in England this week, and plans for the further opening of the leisure and hospitality sectors, provide a clear opportunity to take prompt action and embed the behaviours that will prevent and control the virus. As with public transport, Londoners have already shown they are willing to take steps to protect their community and mandatory face coverings for customers in retail outlets and other spaces where it is impossible to keep a safe social distance, sends a direct message on action they can additionally take to stay, and keep others, safe.

Given the latest easing of restrictions this week and as people return to London's high streets, I would be grateful for an urgent response.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

Cc: Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 10 July 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I welcome this week's easing of lockdown and the reopening of London. Londoners are eager to support their local businesses and see their friends and family. As many businesses and venues begin to open their doors again to the public it is even more important that we do all we can to keep people safe.

The evidence is clear that wearing face coverings in enclosed public places can reduce the risk of spreading the coronavirus and I am disappointed and frustrated that the Government has not taken this opportunity to make face coverings mandatory in busy and enclosed public places. I simply don't understand why we wouldn't use all the tools at our disposal to try and stop the spread of this virus, so I am urging you to take more decisive action on this.

Since my last letter to you on 18 June, Scotland has announced they will make face coverings mandatory in shops from the 10 July. I have also been joined by the British Medical Association and the Royal Society in calling for the wider use of face coverings. Their intervention comes following yet more evidence and analysis of their impact from the DELVE initiative and the Royal Society's SET-C (Science in Emergencies Tasking – COVID 19) group. As the President of the Royal Society notes, we are already way behind other countries in providing clear policies and guidelines on face coverings to the public. I would ask you to heed the call of our medical and scientific experts.

We continue to learn more about coronavirus and how it is spread. Just this week 239 scientists in 32 countries wrote an open letter to the WHO outlining the evidence and calling on the medical community to recognise the potential for airborne transmission of the virus. We cannot afford to be complacent. We must respond quickly to new insights and take swift action to reduce risk wherever we can.

Face coverings are not only vital for public health. They could play an increasing role in supporting public confidence and our economic recovery. Businesses across the capital need to encourage customers back or they will not survive, and the widespread use of face coverings are a visible signal that Londoners are willing to take the steps needed to keep each other safe. They show how seriously, as a society, we are treating the threat of coronavirus and they are a physical reminder that the virus is still out there.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Making face coverings mandatory in enclosed public places where you can't keep your distance from others, like shops and hairdressers, will help us avoid a second wave, keep businesses open, and ultimately save lives.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

cc Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 0AA

Date: 3 August 2020

Dear Prime Minister

It is with great surprise that we read in the Sunday papers that Government held a critical exercise last week in which a major resurgence in Covid-19 infections in London was a central scenario. According to media reports, the plans included using the M25 as a quarantine ring – effectively sealing off the city.

Our surprise is that such far reaching contingency plans have been discussed and tested without the involvement or awareness of London's government. This is clearly totally unacceptable and an affront to London and Londoners.

We are accountable to nine million Londoners and have a duty to represent their views and best interests. We also know our communities and their needs far better than national Government. As Category 1 responders we have a legal duty towards our city and cannot do what is right for Londoners if we are excluded from key planning sessions in this way.

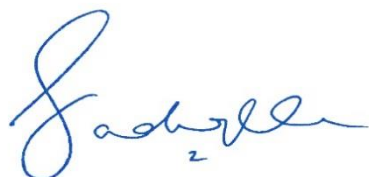
Transitional arrangements for London were established specifically so that all levels of Government and key partners were involved in ensuring coordination of planning and the response to Covid-19. This was to ensure the best outcome for our city. It is highly regrettable that these appear to have been ignored.

It is now 12 weeks since I, as Mayor, was last invited to COBR on behalf of London and its nine million citizens. Decisions continue to be taken without consultation with those who run and understand the country's biggest city. Some of these decisions – and the public messaging which flows from them – do not work for the unique nature of a major metropolitan area the size of London. The Government would better understand that, if London's government were treated properly, and brought into decision making.

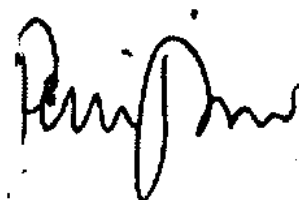
Time and again throughout this crisis, the Government has been slow to take decisions or has taken the wrong decisions – the confusion and delay over going into lockdown, the way Transport for London has been penalised despite doing everything ministers asked, a test and trace system that is not up to the standard required to contain outbreaks and the failure to deliver on promises that the Government will fully compensate local and regional government for the cost of tackling this virus.

This must stop. Riding roughshod over democratically elected representatives who understand their communities better than central government will lead to worse outcomes for Londoners, and the country as a whole.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



Cllr Peter John OBE
Chair, London Councils

Cc Paul Scully MP, Minister for London
Sir Edward Lister, 10 Downing Street

MAYOR OF LONDON

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 12 August 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

As you will be aware, businesses in Central London are facing a 'perfect storm' as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Home working, the shut down in domestic and international tourism, and a public transport system with severely constrained capacity mean that even businesses and cultural institutions that have reopened are unable to attract sufficient numbers of visitors to maintain the levels of revenue needed to stay afloat in the long term.

At the heart of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), visitors to London's West End are down 63% year on year for the same period. The New West End Company forecasts a loss of over £5 billion retail sales within the district this year and estimate that around one third of the retail and hospitality workforce will be made redundant by the end of this year - around 50,000 job losses.

London's CAZ is unique in the UK, both in terms of its contribution to the national economy, and its reliance on the movement of people into it by public transport (especially travel to work) which is incomparable with any other UK conurbation. The constraints on the use of public transport in particular have had an impact on the ability of this area to restore economic activity fully as lockdown restrictions have been eased. The ability of many businesses located in the CAZ to effectively operate with staff working from home has also significantly limited the numbers traveling into the centre.

Recent City Hall research shows that the biggest barrier to people returning to central London in numbers is fear of the virus – and the most important thing we can do to speed up recovery is to give Londoners and visitors confidence that the virus is under control. When asked what would encourage them to return to life as normal, the most common answers from Londoners highlight the problem: lower prevalence of the virus, smaller crowds and more people wearing face coverings.

As Mayor I will do my utmost to promote all that central London has to offer, both to Londoners and tourists. I am sure the Government will wish to do the same.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Key steps I am taking include:

- A £2.3 million Culture at Risk fund, which is helping some of London's most at risk creative and night time businesses, such as cinemas and music venues. Pay it Forward London, a platform created in partnership with Crowdfunder, to enable Londoners to support their favourite small businesses. I have recently created a £1 million match fund to provide further support up to £5000 for participating businesses.
- Supporting the London & Partners led 'Because I'm a Londoner' campaign, built around a London Alliance for consumer confidence.
- Relaunching the London Is Open campaign, highlighting the reopening of London's economy, with a particular focus on hospitality and retail.
- My Deputy Mayors and I urging London's major commercial landlords to provide rent relief – a practice which has been led by Transport for London across its significant commercial estate.
- Substantially expanding TfL's Streetspace programme to maximise capacity for cycling and walking into and across central London so people can get to attractions safely.

Although, along with my partners in London government and the business community, I am committed to promoting a safe return to central London for Londoners and tourists, it is clear that social distancing requirements will be in place for some time. Given the public concerns indicated by our research, we cannot therefore expect visitor numbers to return to their pre-pandemic levels in the foreseeable future, with international business and leisure tourism likely to remain very limited, and many major central London employers planning to continue home-working well into next year. Use of the public transport network at full capacity will remain impossible as long as social distancing is necessary.

The economic case for protecting these businesses is overwhelming. The combined output of the CAZ and Northern Isle of Dogs and their immediate surroundings was around £228bn in 2017, accounting for over half (53%) of London's output and over a tenth (13%) of UK output.

Above all, Central London needs targeted, financial and fiscal support from Government.

I am therefore calling on Government to:

- Confirm an extension to the business rates holiday which is due to end in March or a discount for businesses in the CAZ for the next year, guaranteed now. Many large retail, leisure and hospitality businesses will take important decisions for 2021/22 in the coming weeks, so certainty over the business rates holiday is urgently needed.
- Create a direct financial aid scheme for hospitality, retail, leisure and cultural businesses in the CAZ.
- Provide targeted support for jobs and the workforce extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for retail, hospitality, leisure, and creative businesses that will not be able to operate on a financially sustainable level under continued social distancing requirements.
- Extend support for freelancers and the self-employed. The cultural and creative industries that characterise central London are hugely dependent on these workers.

MAYOR OF LONDON

- Progress an overhaul of business rates, in particular one that creates a fair playing field between physical and online retail. A subsequent letter with more detail will be forthcoming.
- Introduce a support scheme for small and medium-sized businesses that are struggling to meet their rent bills due to coronavirus, which could help to facilitate negotiations between landlords and tenants in cases where rent is in arrears.
- Prioritise investment in NHS Test and Trace and more support for hospitality businesses to implement systems. It is now clear that we need to learn to live with the virus, and Test and Trace plays a large role in giving the public confidence.
- I would also encourage the Government to explore other measures which could increase public confidence and bring public health benefits, such as making face coverings compulsory in the busiest public spaces (as has been done in Paris), and commission further scientific research into the efficacy of such measures.

The challenge that central London is facing is stark and urgent. Damage to its prosperity will not just impact the capital, but undoubtedly the prosperity of the whole UK. As you know, the centre of London is the UK's economic and cultural powerhouse, and a gateway for global tourism and investment into the rest of the UK. It has contributed to the UK far more than it has taken out, and while I support efforts to grow the prosperity of all parts of the country, this will not happen if as a country we abandon our most dynamic and productive commercial hub to decline. This is what is at risk, and why the Government needs to come together with London Government and its business community to support it, before it is too late.

I urge you to consider the above proposals and look forward to hearing back from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

CC:

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

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

Paul Scully MP, Minister for London

Sir Edward Lister, 10 Downing Street