



WARRINGTON

Borough Council

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
House of Commons
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Councillor R Bowden
Leader of the Council

Leader's office
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Our Ref: RB/LG/CO

6 October 2020

Dear Chancellor of the Exchequer

Covid-19 has been a blow to British businesses, with numerous sectors brought to their knees over the last six months. Some industries have managed to adapt and recover thanks to Government assistance and consumers shopping locally, which we applaud.

Acknowledging that the situation is ever-changing, our collective responsibility is to do the right thing at the right time. We are aligned with the Government's efforts to find the right balance between fighting the virus and keeping the economy moving. The knock-on effect of enhanced restrictions in the North West has resulted in our local pubs, bars and restaurants experiencing drops in trade of up to 80%.

Local restrictions require proper financial support for the businesses that are being adversely affected. Without this, a whole ecosystem will be wiped out - the impact goes beyond pubs and restaurants; it is also the brewers and wholesalers, upholsterers and interior designers, security firms, advertising companies and beyond.

It is simply not good enough to describe these businesses - many with years of history in the town and now struggling through no fault of their own - as being "unviable". This issue goes beyond business - the very fabric of the town, woven through our communities for decades, is now at stake.

Warrington Borough Council has stepped up in these unprecedented times, processing business support grants at pace, providing round-the-clock advice and guidance, and repurposing our public realm to create outdoor dining space. We stand ready to assist the Government to support businesses further.

We value the hospitality sector and the contribution that it makes to our local economy, and equally understand that words will not help them pay their staff, suppliers and bills. After a decade of austerity that has realised >£150m in revenue budget cuts, we now face a further £45m+ "Covid blackhole" in our finances. The Government must now step forward with the appropriate financial

support for those sectors that are worst affected by the new measures, in order to protect thousands of livelihoods here in Warrington and across the region.

Anything short of this will simply deepen the recession as more businesses close, unemployment rises, and entrepreneurs are left to rebuild. We urge you to act now and commit the Government to supporting businesses in their fight to survive during these enhanced restrictions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russ Bowden', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Russ Bowden
Leader, Warrington Borough Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Jennings', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Tom Jennings
Chair, Supporting the Local Economy Policy Committee