

Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister

Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer



20th December 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Give a #BusinessBooster to save our high streets, towns and city centres from extinction

We are writing to you on behalf of over 100 destinations across the UK and 100,000 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses to urge Government to provide a #BusinessBooster and urgent assurances that financial support will be provided to these sectors.

It is imperative that the Government acts quickly by offering financial assistance and other necessary interventions to those experiencing disruption following rising cases of the Omicron variant and the impact of "Plan B" measures. With consumer confidence expected to drop below its current level of -15 amid growing speculation of an impending lockdown, the time for action is now.

There is clearly growing concern of a lockdown following the announcement of Plan B restrictions on 8th December 2021 which must be reviewed on 29th December 2021, two days prior to New Year's Eve. Businesses need certainty with many holding on to the glimmer of hope that New Year may bring.

The critical Christmas trading period is in tatters leaving businesses, particularly those within the hospitality, retail and leisure sector teetering on the brink of financial ruin and set to lose £4bn in sales. While we appreciate risks to health due to the Omicron variant, we cannot and should not forget the businesses who have had all but been shut down and want to continue trading safely.

Hospitality is the UK's third largest sector, employing 3.2million people [10% of the UK workforce] and produces £130 billion of economic activity. These sectors are vital to our economic recovery and the current measures in place aren't working and here is why:

Current package	Why it isn't working	What is needed
Business Rate Relief of 25%	Businesses are now paying full rent whilst experiencing mass cancellations in what has been dubbed by the sector as a "stealth lockdown" with a more detrimental impact than previous tiered restrictions.	We are calling for 100% business rate relief for the first three months of 2022 up to 31 st March 2022. [no cap] After which, we are asking for the Government to put in place 50% Business Rate Relief from 1 st April 2022 through to 30 th June 2022 [no cap]. The current package of 25% Business Rate Relief was designed for an open economy, post Covid. The rise

		of the Omicron variant, increased restrictions and their impact on hospitality, leisure and retail require a response from Government that mirrors lockdown support.
Reduced rate of VAT at 12.5%	Businesses need to achieve cost savings wherever possible, and many operators need VAT to remain low to ensure the increased cost isn't passed onto the consumer as the economy begins to recover again in Spring 2022.	The VAT reduction should be extended through to the 31 March 2023 at 12.5% to allow the hospitality, retail and leisure sector to respond and support the re-emergence of the UK economy.
£250 million unspent in grants with local authorities. [Additional Restrictions Grant etc]	Each local authority across the UK will have varying levels of funding and grant residue remaining. The inconsistencies in level of grant would place disproportionate pressure on businesses simply because of their location. This means vast swathes of businesses would not receive a penny.	We are calling on the Government to introduce grants up to £15,000 by rateable value to businesses within the hospitality, retail and leisure sector to enable them to survive in light of a festive trading period in tatters, a bleak outlook for the new Year and the impending rent quarter date of 25 th December 2021.

In addition to the measures recommended, we are seriously concerned that the freelance and self-employed community which upends the hospitality, retail and leisure sectors have so far during the pandemic been largely overlooked. We therefore propose the introduction of a Discretionary Grant Fund of up to £7,500 per claim that will ensure this community is appropriately supported.

We represent one of the largest networks of businesses across the United Kingdom. Business improvement Districts alongside our partners including UKHospitality, British Beer and Pub Association and Night Time Industries Association are clear that action must come forward now to prevent a catastrophic chain reaction to the future of our economy.

We would urge you, your Government, MPs from all sides of the aisle to consider carefully the impact and potential loss to the economy if no action is taken to prevent the crisis we now all face economically.

We understand that business groups are being invited to share insights to Government, and proposed this is extended to the Business Improvement District industry. This will provide you with the opportunity to learn of the challenges town and city centres are currently facing, and work collaboratively together on suitable solutions during this challenging time.

In doing so, we hope this will provide greater clarity and the need to consider how the Government might support these sectors further.

We appreciate the pressures facing Government economically but failing to act not only see thousands of businesses go to the wall but the real prospect that billions of previously allocated Government funds going to waste simply because we did not act to save our economy.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

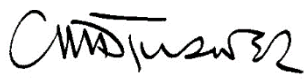
Yours sincerely



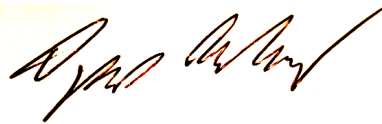
Matthew Sims

Chief Executive

Croydon BID and Co-Founder of #RaiseTheBar and #BusinessBooster



Christopher Turner
CEO, British BIDs



Ojay MacDonald
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Bill Addy
CEO, Liverpool BID
Chair, BID Foundation



Amy Lane
Night Czar, Greater London Authority



Michael Kill
CEO, Night Time Industries Association



Emma McClarkin
CEO, British Beer & Pub Association



Andrew Taylor
Managing Director, Bart & Taylor



Jace Tyrrell
CEO, New West End Company
Chair, Association International Retail

Business Improvement Districts and town centre management partners:

Croydon BID
New West End Company
City Co Manchester
Manchester BID
Sheffield BID
Norwich BID
Liverpool BID
GO! Southampton BID
Destination Bristol
Bristol City Centre BID
Bournemouth Coastal BID
Love Hastings
Chester BID
Manor Royal BID
Winchester BID
Sunderland BID
Salisbury BID
Heart of London
Bath BID
We Are Waterloo BID
Angel BID
Preston BID
Edmonton Green Limited
Colmore BID
Positively Putney BID
Hull BID
Uxbridge BID
Jewellery Quarter BID
My Milton Keynes BID
Bilston BID
Purley BID
New Addington BID
Reading Central BID
Reading Abbey Quarter BID
Kippa BID
Your Eastbourne BID
Yorkshire Coast BID
Stoke on Trent City Centre BID
Brixton BID
Stockton BID
Camden Town Unlimited
Bromley BID
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Booksellers Association of UK and Ireland
Kingston First
Marble Arch London BID
Paddington Now BID
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