

21st December 2020

Open letter from Oxted Business Improvement District to Claire Coutinho, MP; Tandridge District Councillors for Oxted North & Tandridge and Limpsfield: Councillors Blackwell, Davies, Sayer, Stamp and Wren as well as Tandridge District Council Chief Executive Jackie King.

Support for Businesses in Oxted following the announcement of Tier 4 restrictions

I am writing to you as the BID Manager of the Oxted Business Improvement District (BID), Love Oxted, following the latest government announcement to move Surrey into Tier 4. The measures have been taken to protect public health, but going into Tier 4 less than a week before Christmas is devastating for businesses in Oxted. There are over 180 businesses in the BID area in Oxted ranging from retail, health and beauty, leisure, restaurants and service businesses and many had hoped that Christmas would be an opportunity for them to recoup some of their losses from earlier this year. However, the lockdown in November and now the short notice of this enforced closure mean this is an incredibly worrying time for many. We are concerned that, without further financial support, businesses may be unable to survive with damaging economic consequences locally.

Business owners in Oxted are incredibly adaptable and many have invested in their business to sell online, offer deliveries or click and collect as well as purchasing PPE, training staff and putting in measures to make their businesses safe. While the grants to date have provided some support and enabled businesses to make these changes, the current grants do not cover businesses' fixed costs. For example, many landlords are insisting that rent must be paid in full but the Local Restrictions Support Grant is not enough to cover rent for most businesses. Suppliers are demanding payment for stock businesses are unable to sell but the criteria for the Additional Restrictions Grant means that many businesses who are struggling are unable to apply for this grant.

We are concerned that businesses may not be able to survive for much longer and we are therefore requesting the following financial support for local businesses:

- Increased funding for the Local Restrictions Grant to reflect the fixed costs involved in running a business.
- More flexibility for the Additional Restrictions Grants to support all sectors who have suffered financially.
- 100% Business Rate rebate in 2021/22 for businesses unable to open or trade fully in 2020.
- 100% BID levy rebate for all businesses in 2021/22 to enable the BID to continue to provide essential support to businesses.

We are aware that this a very busy time for you all but we are requesting your support in this matter to help our town survive and hopefully prosper once again.

Yours sincerely



Tracey Shrimpton, BID Manager, Love Oxted