

Open letter from Greater Manchester Hospitality and Cultural Sector Supporters

Lucy Powell MP
Chair of the Greater Manchester All Party Parliamentary Group
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

6th August 2020

Dear Lucy

SUPPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER'S HOSPITALITY AND CULTURAL SECTOR

Whilst we welcome the £1.57bn commitment from Government to support culture and the arts and five-stage roadmap for the return of performing arts, we want to bring to your attention the enormous impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on Greater Manchester's hospitality and cultural sector. The scale of the challenge ahead and the many thousands of jobs which are at risk are a major concern for all Greater Manchester MPs and businesses.

At the Greater Manchester APPG (GMAPPG) meeting on Covid-19 Recovery Sacha Lord, Greater Manchester's Night-Time Economy Advisor and Cllr Elise Wilson, GMCA Economy Portfolio Lead and Co-Chair of the Night-Time Economy Task Force, talked to Greater Manchester MPs about the many talented people across the sector who are self-employed, those who have missed out on Government support schemes and/or are in insecure employment and asked for clarity about when, and if, large parts of the sector will be able to return to 'business as usual'.

It is important for Government to recognise that the Greater Manchester's Visitor Economy is worth £2.6bn GVA per year and supports 105,000 jobs and the Creative Industries are worth £4.4bn GVA per year and support 78,500 jobs. These sectors play a vital role in our international reputation and are key to the vibrancy of our towns and city centres, contributing to the overall wellbeing of communities and the quality of life of our residents.

We believe it is essential that Greater Manchester's hospitality and cultural sector is given the help and support it needs to bounce back. We would ask you to urgently highlight to Government Greater Manchester's 5 key asks for action and recovery. These are the major issues for our businesses and employers which we believe the Government must address:

1. **Ensure the £1.5 billion culture and arts support package is spread fairly across the sector.** We are concerned that the support will not reach everyone who needs it and is simply not enough. We need to ensure it is spread fairly across sector, so those businesses like our local community theatres, galleries and those in the Night-Time Economy see their fair share of the pot. Our biggest worry is that it will be a London-centric package helping large and long-established institutions; not reaching the Northern regions and establishments that so desperately need it.

- 2. We need to extend furlough and support on a sector by sector basis.** The removal of furlough is making all operators think about redundancies, especially if the audience capacity remains at current levels. You will have seen the devastating news that the Royal Exchange has entered a period of consultation to make up to 65% of its staff redundant. The Royal Exchange is a beloved institution in Greater Manchester of national and international renown and the news has caused real sadness and concern for the people of Greater Manchester. With footfall almost non-existent, it is hard to imagine a way for these businesses to bounce back without further help. The Government should extend the furlough scheme and offer sector by sector support until the live performances and those operators are allowed to return.
- 3. Specific Government roadmaps need to be published for the cultural and hospitality industries that have been left behind.** The Night-Time Economy thrive-off a communal experience that is so hard to replicate with social distancing. Most hospitality businesses in Greater Manchester who have re-opened, have indicated they will still need financial support from Government moving forward or, they will be forced to close again. This is particularly true given the impact of Greater Manchester's emergency measures announced on 30th July. The Government needs to clarify the reasonable measures they intend to put in place, so venues can reopen and stay open; including guidance for events and festivals to ensure audiences feel safe.
- 4. Government must engage with Local Authorities to coordinate the response and support for the hospitality industry.** Throughout the pandemic, local government has demonstrated how and where they can fill in the gaps missed by central Government, resolving issues and helping their communities. Since lockdown began, the GMCA have prioritised support for GM cultural organisations to help them survive these challenging times including; advancing the first six month payments of culture fund grants, totalling £1.75m, with no expectation of delivery and issuing individual grants of £500; providing musicians, poets, illustrators, artists, writers and designers with vital funds. There is a need for further flexibility in the hospitality funding schemes, so our local authorities can help foster diversity in their visitor, creative and hospitality sectors and keep them going.
- 5. Government must recognise that culture includes live music venues, nightclubs and festivals.** In Greater Manchester we have heritage venues like the Lowry, who have also begun the formal consultation process for potential redundancies, and the Warehouse Project that has galvanised support from the local people, but now need the financial support and stability from Government. Culture, hospitality and events have become a way to drive economic growth not just in Greater Manchester, but across the UK, and absolutely need Government support.

We are concerned that without urgent intervention, at scale, from the Government the damage done to this sector will be irreversible and we will count the cost, to our economy and society, in decades to come. Given the pressing nature of this crisis, with many jobs lost and businesses likely to close, we urge you to raise our concerns with Government and seek the assurances that they will put in place the necessary safeguards and support.

We are writing to you as Chair of the GMAPPG, to raise our shared concerns with the Chancellor and Culture Secretary.

Yours sincerely

**Greater Manchester Hospitality
and Cultural Sector Supporters:**

Afzal Khan, **MP for Gorton**
Andrew Gwynne, **MP for Denton and Reddish**
Debbie Abrahams, **MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth**
Graham Stringer, **MP for Blackley and Broughton**
Jeff Smith, **MP for Manchester, Withington**
Rebecca Long-Bailey, **MP for Salford and Eccles**
Tony Lloyd, **MP for Rochdale**
Yasmin Qureshi, **MP for Bolton South East**
Yvonne Fovargue, **MP for Makerfield**
Lord Keith Bradley, **House of Lords**
Lord Leslie Turnberg, **House of Lords**
Cllr Elise Wilson, **Leader Stockport Council, GMCA Economy Brief**
Sacha Lord, **Greater Manchester Night Time Economy Adviser, Parklife, Warehouse Project**
Alison McKenzie-Folan, **Chief Executive Wigan Council, GM Culture Portfolio Lead**
Alistair Hudson, **Director of Manchester Art Gallery and The Whitworth Gallery**
Amanda Sutton, **Venture Arts**
Atul Bansal, **Sheila Bird Studio**
Bob Riley, **Manchester Camerata**
Cathy Bolton, **Manchester Literature Festival**
Charlie Morrison, **Walk The Plank**
Chris Paul, **Wythenshawe Community Media**
Cllr David Greenhalgh, **Leader Bolton Council, GM Culture Portfolio Lead**
Darren Grice, **Rochdale Borough Cultural Trust**
Dave Moutrey, **HOME, Director of Culture, Manchester City Council**
David Agnew, **So It Is**
Elizabeth Parsons, **Wigan Steam**
Jack Hale, **The Modernist Society**
Jane Dowler, **Evuna**
Jay Taylor, **Night & Day, Music Venues Trust**
John McGrath, **Manchester International Festival**
John Summers, **The Halle**
Jon Drape, **Engine No 4**
Leon Patel, **Global Grooves**
Liz O'Neil, **Z-Arts**
Mark Clinton, **Manchester Pride**
Maurice Carlin, **Rivca Rubin, Islington Mill**
Michael Kill, **Night Time Industries Association**
Mike Blackburn, **Greater Manchester LEP**
Paul Ludden, **MancMade**
Rachel Roger, **Reform Radio**
Rebecca Swarray, **RebeccaNeverBecky Collective**

Open letter from Greater Manchester Hospitality and Cultural Sector Supporters

Rick Walker, **Cartwheel Arts**

Sheena Wrigley, **Manchester Palace and Opera House**

Sheona Southern, Managing Director, **Marketing Manchester**

Simon Wood, **Wood Restaurants**

Steve Freeman, **Royal Exchange**

Steve Mead, **Manchester Jazz Festival**

Stuart Parsons, **Get It Loud In Libraries**

Susan Wildman, **Oldham Coliseum**

Thom Hetherington, **CEO of NRB and Manchester Art Fair**

Tom Besford, **English Folk Expo**

Victoria Robinson, **The Met, Bury**