

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick
Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities and
Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Philip Glanville, Mayor of Hackney
London Borough of Hackney
Town Hall
Mare Street
London E8 1EA

philip.glanville@hackney.gov.uk

11 June 2020

Dear Robert,

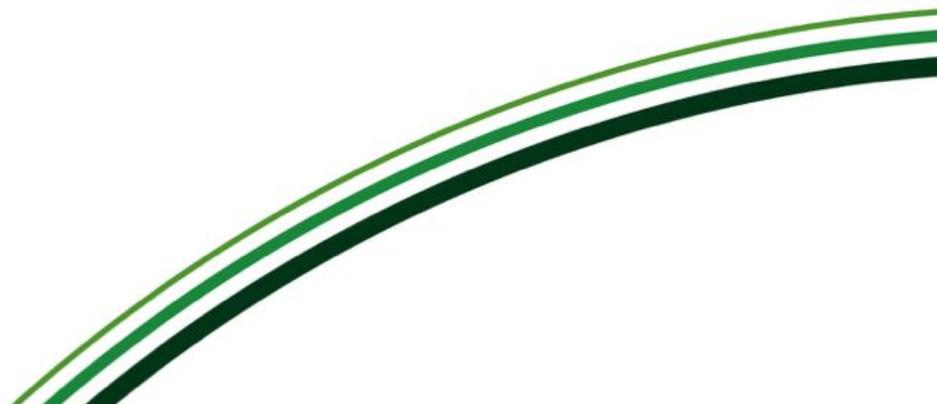
Your Government and your Department has placed great emphasis on localism and the right of local communities to decide what is best for their area.

I was hugely concerned to read in *The Sunday Times* that the Prime Minister is planning to announce a series of measures to ease the lockdown, including relaxing planning, licensing and civic ceremony rules. As Mayor of Hackney, a borough that has already seen significant challenges with outdoor drinking and antisocial behaviour during the last two months, I was particularly alarmed to read of plans to 'fast-track' outdoor food and drink trading, bypassing consultation with local residents, and the suggestion that planning decisions could be passed from councils to a government-led quango.

This is an additionally disturbing power grab from Whitehall for a borough that has already been faced with the already immensely challenging task of balancing unprecedented economic growth and change over the past two decades with the need for genuinely affordable housing, creating a more inclusive economy and recognising the needs of our diverse communities.

None of these measures were discussed in your department's call with Mayors, leaders and chief executives on Thursday. It has become an extremely worrying trend throughout the coronavirus pandemic that the views of local authorities and councillors – who know their communities and local needs best – are disregarded by this Government.

I want to be clear that any attempt to ride roughshod over the views of our residents and businesses will be unacceptable. Decisions made in Whitehall – and trailed in the weekend papers – will not bring our country together and bridge the inequality gap that this pandemic has exposed. Done badly, and without sufficient notice, they also risk the infection rate rising again, more pressure on finite public space, the commercialisation of the space that we do



have – whether it is our streets or parks – and then a linked rise in community tensions. Already councils have imperfect powers to regulate these competing demands, without having those that we do have being removed by the Government.

It has been widely recognised that earlier, greater input from councils' public health teams would have led to a better, quicker and functioning NHS Test and Trace service. I would urge you not to make the same mistake again as you seek to restart the economy and ease restrictions in the coming months.

Local councils stand ready to support the Government's efforts to safely reopen the economy in a collaborative, transparent way. I look forward to your department setting out how it will engage and consult with London Councils and the Local Government Association, and also directly with local authorities like Hackney before any decisions are made.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Glanville". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney

