

Tim Loughton M.P.  
East Worthing and Shoreham



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Louise Goldsmith  
Leader West Sussex County Council  
Leader's Office  
County Hall  
Chichester  
West Sussex PO19 1RQ

26<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Dear Louise

### **Café seating licences**

We are writing to express our deep concern about the recent announcement on the disproportionate increase in licence fees for cafes and restaurants using outdoor seating. This will have a significant impact on businesses in Adur and especially Worthing where the 'café culture' which has done much to enhance the town is amongst the most concentrated in West Sussex. We are also very concerned about the way the announcement was made 'out of the blue' and with no consultation with us. Many local business owners and business organisations have expressed their fears about the impact these increases will have on their establishments and we share those concerns.

We do not object to the principle of charging for outdoor seating and this has been an effective tool for controlling the expansion of street furniture. What we object to is the level of the increase and the absence of any sliding scale actually reflecting the size of the space utilised. You are proposing the current 'second year' charge of £200 should be increased to a flat rate of £520 for each and every year, representing a hefty 260% increase. Whilst the County Council has claimed that this has been 'benchmarked' with similar local authorities we have yet to see the evidence.

In East Sussex for example, businesses are charged £260 a year for licences whilst Brighton and Hove operate a sliding scale from £176 for smaller cafes to £360 for larger ones. There is clearly a substantial difference with what is being proposed for West Sussex and so we would be interested to know where these 'benchmarking' comparisons come from.

We understand that West Sussex County Council is having to find savings at the moment, but we would respectfully suggest that penalising small businesses with disproportionate increases without any additional benefits to them is not the way to go about it. We hope therefore that it will be possible to revisit these proposals and come up with a fairer and more sustainable alternative and would be happy to work with you on this in any way possible.

We look forward to hearing from you urgently and will be notifying local businesses about the approach we have taken.

Yours sincerely

**Tim Loughton MP**  
**East Worthing & Shoreham**

**Councillor Dan Humphreys**  
**Leader Worthing Borough Council**

**Sir Peter Bottomley MP**  
**West Worthing**

**Councillor Neil Parkin**  
**Leader Adur District Council**

[www.timloughton.com](http://www.timloughton.com) [loughtont@parliament.uk](mailto:loughtont@parliament.uk)

The East Worthing and Shoreham Constituency includes

Coombes, Fishersgate, Kingston Buci, Lancing, Shoreham, Sompting, Southwick,  
and the eastern wards of Worthing: Broadwater, Gaisford, Offington and Selden.