

The Rt Hon John Healey MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
Via email: john.healey.mp@parliament.uk

Enquiries to: Richard Millard
Direct line: 01730 234108
Email: Richard.Millard@easthants.gov.uk
Date: Friday 7th August 2026

Dear Chancellor,

Please help us save our businesses from the brink

Earlier this year, I wrote to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves to outline the potentially crippling impact the 3-yearly business rate revaluation will have on local businesses.

In particular, businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors have been disproportionately affected given very challenging operating conditions, rising costs and market uncertainty. Increased business rate bills represent a further blow, undermining business confidence and long-term viability.

I welcome the introduction of the 15% relief announce for pubs and live music venues in 2026-27 on top of transitional rate relief arrangements. I also acknowledge the recent announcement of a 20% relief for businesses in this sector starting in 2027-28 that will go some way to mitigating the impact.

However, given the acute nature of the challenges faced by pubs and live music venues I would urge you to bring forward the 20% rate relief to apply from 2026-27 in addition to the 15% already announced. A business rate reduction of 35% over the next 3 years will go some way to saving businesses from the brink.

I also fully support the current national campaign to reduce hospitality VAT from 20% to 10% and ask you to implement this change urgently to ensure the industry is taxed fairly and in line with Europe.

These measures should be seen as a start. Much more needs to be done to reduce the financial burden on local businesses and to create stable conditions for business investment and economic growth. This is critical for the sustainability of our small business community and for UK Plc.

Yours Sincerely,



Councillor Richard Millard
Leader of East Hampshire District Council