

Emma Best AM
Londonwide Assembly Member

City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London E16 1ZE
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Web: www.london.gov.uk

3 February 2022

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

Dear Sadiq

We are writing to you in the light of the discussion at Mayor's Question Time on the 20 January 2022 regarding 'TfL Business Tenants'. We are immeasurably concerned for TfL tenants who, due to the pandemic, are fighting to save previously successful businesses.

The points raised at Mayor's Questions were not put forward in the context of political point-scoring, but to help small businessmen and women who are deeply concerned for their future.

To that end it is vital that you meet with TfL's in-station retail tenants and GOTA Community Leaders to hear their struggles first-hand. We are hopeful you will agree to this request as it is only by understanding what is happening on the ground that you will be able to save small business tenants from despair.

To that end, we also ask that you provide full answers to the following questions:

1. How and when will the promised support for TfL tenants be delivered, given that evidence suggests the existing delivery team is at breaking point?
(Enclosed is a confidential timetable, shared with you in trust by GOTA Leadership, showing target dates which fall below reasonable expectations, especially given the moratorium legal action on rent arrear debt is fast approaching in March 2022).
2. What is your 5-year plan for tenant support, given you are on record stating it will take half a decade for London footfall to return to normal?
3. (i) As many businesses entered the pandemic already in crisis due to the mismanagement of the estate over past decades, will you commit to sensitively supporting tenants who were already facing unreasonable rent demands to repay?
(ii) Will you look at case-by-case debt write-off in order to move forward?
(iii) Will you permit lease renewals where these have expired to allow tenants to repay any old debt in a forward payment plan?
4. Will you cease the immoral and unethical practice of demanding tenants who wish to surrender leases in locations that are no longer viable due to lack of footfall (or disrepair of premises) misrepresent the challenges being experienced to secure an incoming small business to take on the commercial space?

5. Will you commit to supporting independent SMEs, who have been loyal and longstanding tenants of your estate, by repairing and refurbishing their units where minor capex is required in order to recover their revenue and footfall? There are unique cases where tenants have suffered such a significant revenue loss that they are unable to make usually standard tenant remedial work to keep units safe and attractive to the mutual customers of businesses and TfL.
6. (i) Will you refurbish and renovate units that are no longer of an acceptable tenable standard (including Net Zero Carbon requirements)?
(ii) Can existing tenants be permitted to return to their unit or be given first refusal for re-occupation of this space on the same tenancy rights as previously held once refurbished, given their loyalty?

As you can imagine, this whole period has been incredibly stressful for TfL's tenants, as it has been for many others.

We are also acutely aware of the strain that your own Commercial Development Team have been under and wish to raise your awareness to the deep appreciation and gratitude felt by Guardians of the Arches and the tenants within the arches' estate for the dedication and personal commitment shown by individuals within this team. Guardians of the Arches wish to specifically recognise and thank Siobhan Jared, Jo Fisher, Tom Atkinson and Inderpal Matharu for their intuitive response to customers' needs during the pandemic and their continued drive to create a TfL Property Estate that is commercially sound, ethical and moral while fostering a culture of mutual responsibility, integrity and shared profitability.

We hope you are swiftly able to answer these questions to enable TfL's tenants to have certainty that they will receive the help they need to ensure their businesses survive and thrive.

Enclosed are confidential documents shared by Guardians of the Arches, who meet regularly with TFL property management, to aid your response. Please advise if you require any other supporting evidence to points raised above as we have a full library of tenant correspondence and data with consent to share upon request.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Emma Best
Londonwide Assembly Member
Emma.best@london.gov.uk



Eleni Jane Jones
Managing Director, Guardians of the Arches
contact@guardiansofthearches.org.uk

Encls

