



Jonathan Djanogly MP
Member of Parliament for Huntingdon
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our Ref: ZA37285

15 December 2020

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Huntingdonshire's Tier Status

Dealing with Covid-19 has shown that in many cases local solutions to the crisis can offer much better outcomes at considerably lower cost than national programs.

What the 'lockdown tiers' debate of the last couple of weeks has shown is that the public instinctively recognise that 'localness' should be grounded on a human scale that residents recognise and relate to. A scale with sufficient granularity to ensure that business can respond to local circumstances and be free to rebuild our economy. A scale where one family's sacrifice can be seen to contribute to a local solution.

The 'tiers' debate has shown that in most cases county boundaries lack the granularity to reflect local circumstances and fail to win instinctive public support and acceptance - the key to Covid compliance.

In Cambridgeshire district councils should become the default geography for emerging from tier-based restrictions, particularly in Huntingdonshire which is almost entirely served by one A&E hospital. This would optimise the need to address local NHS health pressures with the imperative to help our economy and recovery and incentivise good behaviour and respect personal liberties.

Huntingdonshire has consistently maintained one of the lowest levels of infection in the entire country and yet finds itself in a higher tier than it was in before the second national lockdown. Cases continue to remain low with just 45 per 100,000 of the population as of Friday 11 December and yet because of higher numbers in the urban parts of the wider county Huntingdonshire's residents and businesses suffer from harsher restrictions.

These restrictions have extraordinary costs, especially for the hospitality industry, and I do not think it is feasible for us to live with such restrictions for months to come. There is no doubt that Covid is a deadly disease to many and it is vital that we control its spread effectively. But I believe we must give equal regard to other lethal killers like cancer, dementia and heart disease, to people's mental health, and all the health implications of poverty and falling GDP. Implications that I am growing increasingly concerned about.

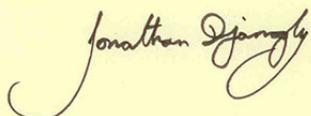
I continue to hear from many local businesses who say that they are unlikely to survive the continuation of Tier 2 restrictions for very much longer. I also hear from constituents on a daily basis who describe to me the horrendous impact that ongoing restrictions are having on them and their families.

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Huntingdonshire currently has one of the lowest rates of coronavirus cases in the entire country, and with Hinchingsbrooke Hospital seeing only a handful of Covid related cases at any one time it is hard to justify these greater restrictions being imposed on us. The approach of tying Huntingdonshire's tier status to other distant parts of the county fails to recognise the hard work and diligence of my constituents who have been doing everything they can to help successfully reduce transmission rates.

I would welcome your support for decoupling Huntingdonshire from the urban areas of the wider county when making a decision on our tier status, and I would encourage you to consider moving Huntingdonshire from Tier 2 to Tier 1 at the earliest opportunity.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Djanogly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jonathan Djanogly MP