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Support for Pubs and a cut to Beer Duty

I wholeheartedly believe that pubs are at the heart of the communities across the UK, including across St. Helens and Knowsley and that pubs continue to play an important role in our local and national economy. Indeed, I am aware that the sector supports 900,000 jobs (including over 1,400 in St. Helens South and Whiston), generates £23 billion in economic value and provides £13 billion in tax revenues. In addition, I know that 30 million adults visit the pub every month. We must do what we can to support them, especially the 86 pubs and one Brewery in my Constituency.

I am aware that pubs face a range of tax pressures, including beer duty, business rates and VAT. Even before the pandemic, pubs were under severe threat, with a 15% fall in their number from 2010 to 2020.

I note that Long Live the Local have been campaigning on these issues and have proposed tax reforms that I hope the Government will give proper consideration. I know that in response to this, the Government has so far simply stated that it “keeps all taxes under review and any changes made will be announced at the next fiscal event.”

On beer duty, last year the Government published a call for evidence for a review of alcohol duties. It says this review aims to make the current system simpler and more economically rational and will have to consider how to balance various factors, such as supporting public health, protecting tax revenues and providing a fair deal for all parts of industry. I can assure you that I will continue to monitor developments on this issue.

On business rates, I believe we should freeze rates next year to increase the threshold for small business relief, giving small and medium-sized businesses in all sectors a discount. But in the longer term, I believe we need to scrap the current system and replace it with one that is fairer and provides a level playing field for the high street businesses that do so much to enrich our lives.

A fundamental review of the business rates system was scheduled to conclude earlier this year but has been pushed back to the autumn. Given the number of jobs depending on our pubs and the threat those jobs face, I believe this review must not be delayed any longer than necessary and must lead to wholesale reform. An overhaul of business rates is long overdue and must be part of a real plan to help our hospitality industry thrive.

I continue to believe that pubs are an essential feature of our national life and I am committed to giving our pubs the support necessary for them to thrive and grow. I can assure you that I will continue to press the Government on this important issue at every opportunity, as I have previously in a debate on Taxation and Beer Duty in Westminster Hall, I spoke up for local pubs to highlight their importance to local people and our local economy, you can watch my contribution [here](#) or read my speech [here](#).

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