

Thursday, 11 August 2011

Richard Livingstone
Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Community Safety
Southwark Council

Dear Richard

Support for Small Businesses in Southwark

Following the recent criminal activities involving damage to property and looting that have occurred in the borough over the past week many small businesses have been affected. As you know the majority of businesses in Southwark are SMEs and a large proportion are BME owned. Could you confirm what additional steps Southwark are taking to provide help and support?

Specific initiatives which I believe Southwark, under its powers of wellbeing, should be offering include:

- **interest-free short term loans to small businesses**
this could provide valuable business continuity while SMEs are awaiting for settlement of insurance claims, and facilitate the cash-flow repairs and stock replacement
- **a temporary relaxation of rent collection where the Council is the landlord**
this could be limited to small businesses that can demonstrate loss through damage, looting or loss of business due to precautionary closures
- **officer support with business continuity, insurance claims etc**
clearly the economic development team have resources, skills and experience that could assist small businesses who are facing a new and unprecedented series of challenges
- **relaxation of planning control in regard to shutters**
many small businesses will wish to fit secure shutters to their shop-fronts, and Southwark as the LPA could relax the planning regime in this regard.

Clearly whilst larger national chains suffered much of the damage, and could be expected to manage within their own resources the vast majority of Southwark's small businesses do not have the resources and cash-flow to cope with the aftermath of the rioting. Clearly Southwark Council has both the powers and the responsibility to offer these SMEs support.

I would therefore ask that you consider the actions outlined above, and respond to me to let me know what you are personally doing to assist our small businesses.

Kind regards

Tim

Cllr Tim McNally
Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Housing Investment
Liberal Democrat Member for Chaucer Ward
LibDem Chief Whip