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**Subject:** Re: Covid O on Monday - paper / plan etc

**OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

All,

Circulating a note of the 3pm meeting with Greater Manchester leaders. Also [here](#).

**Headlines:**

- SoS MHCLG summed up by stating there seems to be a lot of common ground, but not on financial support measures.
- GM leaders keen to discuss whether local grant funding could be given to GM to top up wages - which could be described as a 'hardship fund' without specific reference to JSS. SoS MHCLG re-affirmed that a 'hardship fund' is not an option tabled by HMG. Willing to discuss providing additional business support.
- Broad agreement on other topics including comprehensive cooperation on Test, Trace and Isolate; redoubling efforts on compliance and enforcement.

**Note:**

Robert Jenrick:

- Thank you everyone for engaging in constructive discussions.
- Conversations do now need to reach a conclusion in Greater Manchester, for sake of public health.
- If we can agree to a package of restrictions then we will achieve more than if we cannot.
- Feels like there is a high degree of common ground, including on
  - Support the most vulnerable and comms to the CEV
  - Test and trace - supported by the funding made available through the £8/head
  - For renewed working on compliance and enforcement
  - Commitment on our part to see if there are further powers that could be provided to you to support action to counter non-compliance.
- To have a clear strategy around exit strategy, we will work with you to design a set of measures that could trigger drop down from tier 3 to tier 2
- We can discuss whether pubs and bars could stay open if serving main meals. But closing 'wet only' pubs and bars.
- Closing betting shops and adult entertainment settings in scope.
- We recognise pressure on local authorities. We will ensure suitable funding provided to councils.

- The JSS is a national scheme and hope you will recognise that this is designed for the whole country, and will not be tailored for local areas. Won't be able to reach agreement on changing any such national schemes.
- We think this is a strong package including funds and measures around compliance / enforcement. Feels like it would be a great pity if we were not able to finesse this into an agreement.

Steve Barclay:

- £1bn local authority funding. Tranche of that will go to Manchester.
- Want to understand business impacts that are there in Manchester - consider further funding for business support.
- Infection control funding, and other various pots assigned.
- 'Topping-up' JSS would be an operational challenge as well as a matter of not making changes to a national scheme.

Andy Burnham:

- We want to move this situation forward, but it has to be done in a way that reflects where we are and what we think we need. We will always put health first, as we did in July when we were approached about going into in-effect-tier 2 restrictions. Having those restrictions has impacted on people's health, so we are in a different position to Lancashire and LCR. Plus, within Manchester are some of the communities that you have said need levelled-up.
- The broad set of what you have set out sounds like what we have been calling for, but we haven't received a package yet.
- We are seeking to stand up for the families that would be moved into tier 3 who have been in tier 2 for 3 months.
- We are clear that there are other ways to get to the 80% for wage support. We are talking about the people who have least. Non-negotiable that we need to protect those people at the same level that people were protected earlier in the year.
- Self-employed people are very badly affected and need support.
- Business support package also needed.
- Nothing about posturing or politics in this.
- If we accept the tier 3 lockdown on the back of 3 months of tier 2, those people would be subject to additional harm.
- Everything else you set out I agree with. But the three core elements I set out (around financial support) are where we need more.

Sir Ed Lister:

- We have got quite a bit of data about the likely rates of infection in GM. Our estimates are that GM areas are going to be in great trouble in 3 to 4 weeks. Time not on our side.

David Greenhalgh (Leader of Bolton Council):

- Huge progress made, particularly from meeting at 11am this morning.
- The last thing that I want is for an imposition of tier 3.
- Important point made by the mayor that GM has been in in-effect tier 2 for three months already.
- Extra hardship fund (above offers to other areas) needed
- Still disagree on hospitality closure (points to Bolton)
- We want our restaurants to remain open - that needs to be a given. We want to have discussions over gyms, beauticians, soft play centres. We can have meetings at whatever hour to go through that detail.

Sir Richard Leese (Leader of Manchester City Council):

- On the health figures, I've got figures in front of me showing that just under 30% of our ICU beds are occupied and suspected COVID cases. Total occupancy lower than usual for this time of year. We are in the process of adding extra beds. The modelling that has been done in GM doesn't quite match the stats that you have given us. But we are asking for updated modelling.
- We don't think we are in quite the same position that you have set out.
- I do think that there was a very positive discussion at 11am. But concern that since that meeting we might be moving backwards. But may be the shape of an agreement.

- Need to have a willingness to meet us half-way on what is required.

Sir Ed Lister:

- Looking at ICU occupancy at Manchester Uni Hospital - 28 bed capacity, which will be taken up in 2 to 3 weeks.
- Other hospitals in the area are pretty much full. In Stockport, no ICU beds would be available.

Richard Leese:

- Think that is misunderstanding how the network of hospitals in our area work.

Sir Ed Lister:

- Think if we had NHS on, they would confirm the view that in 3 to 4 weeks there wouldn't be any ICU beds left.
- You have 3 asks
  - Additional money into furlough scheme
  - Money for self-employed
  - Business support package
- Business support package we can probably find agreement on
- No way HMT would agree on changing furlough scheme or on self-employment scheme. I am not quite sure how we deal with those differences.

Robert Jenrick:

- We are very close on the substance of the matter, including on protecting the vulnerable and enforcement, and working on exit strategy. We could move forward on all these now.
- We are not going to be able to change the national measures e.g. JSS. Fundamental choice for you is that is that really for you non-negotiable? We need an answer from you today.

Emran Miah:

- Mayor's point earlier is that what is non-negotiable is the need to protect the wages of those on low pay at the level of 80%, and doesn't necessarily need to be through top-up to JSS, but instead could be through a business support scheme.

Andy Burnham:

- Your summary (RJ) didn't reflect what I had said. I thought there had been discussion of a hardship fund this morning, which you have not mentioned.
- Don't see how you could shut a business and fully protect the people who are employed by that business.
- Your summary seems to move us back again.
- What we want is a hardship fund. That is the space where we can strike a deal.
- We haven't as a group of leaders been provided with a set of figures.
- Felt to me that your summary was moving us in a direction which isn't really fair given what we have said. We understand that you don't want to reopen national schemes, but we want to achieve it (i.e. 80%) by other means.
- Clearly the case that there is pressure in our hospitals, but we don't want No10 to instil fear about NHS capacity.

Paul Dennett (Mayor of Salford):

- Want to share our economic and labour market understanding. Unemployment has doubled in Manchester. Increase in UC claimants between March and September. 400,000 have claimed furlough at some point - representing 22% of the workforce in Manchester, which will include many families with children. We have high levels of deprivation. There is only 1 local authority in GM that is above median when it comes to salaries.
- We don't come at this from a position of political rhetoric, but instead a position of wanting to protect people's lives and livelihoods.

Elise Wilson (Leader of Stockport Council):



- Haven't been contacted by anyone from the government over the last few days.
- Want to support what Andy and Paul have said.
- Came to this meeting today quite optimistic; much of what has been said is good, but we need details. Broad shape of what has been discussed has been positive.
- Feels like during this meeting we have stepped back / things have become a bit sour. My understanding that whilst the national schemes are national schemes, we need to find something to support people of GM who are in a particularly fragile state.
- Length of time around sunset clause and how long tier 3 would last is very important.
- Concerns around MH&W of residents.
- Asking you to remain positive that we can find a route through, and to continue with dialogue, and to include me in that.

Eammon O'Brien (Leader of Bury Council):

- Need to acknowledge that GM has been in additional restrictions since July and the impact that has had on businesses/residents - and then provide additional funding to help address this. Lancashire and Liverpool haven't been through that.

Robert Jenrick:

- Thank you all for your views. We will feed them back to PM and No 10. There does seem to be a lot of common ground. Doesn't seem to be common ground though on financial support measures. We have been clear I hope that route of support would be through business support.

Andy Burnham:

- Idea of a hardship fund was tabled this morning. Is that not the case any more?

Robert Jenrick:

- That's not the case. Was discussed earlier but wasn't tabled by us.

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