

STEPHEN McPARTLAND MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt.Hon. Matt Hancock  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Matt,

Thank you for working so hard to protect the public during this national health crisis.

It is clear that big decisions have to be made at pace, with the information available to you at the time. However, we can learn from the impact of these decisions and continue to evolve our response to this pandemic.

We agree with the District Council Network 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 is that in most cases County boundaries laid down in 1066 lack the granularity to reflect local circumstances and fail to win instinctive public support and acceptance - the key to Covid compliance.”

Hertfordshire has a population of over 1.3 million people and is very diverse, with Watford inside the M25 and Royston on the edge of Cambridgeshire. The county is made up of a collection of small and medium sized towns with large rural areas and very little interaction between vast amounts of the population due to the geographic size and transport routes being London focused.

We would like the Tier system to be based on a district level approach and are formally requesting Stevenage and North Hertfordshire are decoupled from the Tier 2 county wide restrictions. The populations of Stevenage and North Hertfordshire combined are over 220,000 which is larger than Luton, Slough, York or Oxford for example.

Our two areas are served by the East and North Herts Hospital Trust and border Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex. Local NHS capacity is available, infection rates per hundred thousand are similar and as of Friday were less than 100 per 100,000.

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Infection rates in over 60's are even lower than this and positive test rates are below 4%. If this area was any of the areas outlined above - we would be in Tier 1 restrictions.

At the forthcoming review on the 16<sup>th</sup> December, we urge you to consider Stevenage and North Hertfordshire as one area, instead of the county of Hertfordshire and place us under Tier 1 restrictions, instead of the current Tier 2.

We entered the national lockdown in Tier 1 and left it in Tier 2, despite our local figures being consistently at a Tier 1 level. We would also ask for the position of East Hertfordshire to be considered as its level of infection falls enough.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen".

Stephen

Stephen McPartland  
Member of Parliament for Stevenage

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Heald".

Oliver

Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald QC MP  
Member of Parliament for North East  
Hertfordshire