

Dear

As one of your constituents I felt compelled to write to you to express my concerns regarding the possible implications of the government consultation into the relationship between pub companies and their licensees. The consultation is biased in its structure, and there is a grave danger that it could lead to ill-considered legislation that will alter the industry and therefore lead to the accelerated closure of pubs.

I have worked in this industry for over 25 years starting with my very own brewery owned tenancy ) pre the government beer orders. I now currently work as a Business Development Manager for Admiral Taverns, they own 1,050 pubs across England and Wales, and they were recently given the prestigious award of Leased and Tenanted Pub Company of the year by the Publican's Morning Advertiser trade newspaper. In my opinion this award recognised the views of our licensees, as I understand it these views were gathered confidentially by an independent market research company, I feel sure that the vast majority of licensees stated that they would recommend us to another licensee as a good business to work with. This endorsement of our business by our licensees seems to be the total opposite of the points made in the consultation document, which in my view holds many inaccuracies and favours the views of a relatively small but loud minority.

I do understand and indeed have been part of issues between the larger pub companies and their licensees in the past but through hard work and with certain values in mind, huge progress has been made through a voluntary structure. This voluntary approach provides meaningful checks and balances, with companies held to account. In my opinion, I am convinced that statutory intervention is inappropriate and unnecessary until such time as the voluntary framework has been given the proper time to be fully understood and implemented. We as a business have never had a licensee complain about us to the independent self-regulatory adjudicator and neither have we had any rents appealed for external arbitration or adjudication, so we do not understand why BIS seems to be targeting us for such action.

Apart from the recommendation of a statutory code various other recommendations that have been made could pose a serious threat to the longevity of some of my pubs, and change the nature of the relationship that I have with my licensees – from one of partnership and support to that of commercial landlord and tenant. I do not believe that this would be in the interests of my licensees or the wider pub sector, which is already in trouble from over regulation and taxation, although the recent small beer duty reduction was of course very welcome.

I urge you to speak with your colleagues and ensure that the consultation process is more balanced, focusing on the facts and real evidence, instead of hearsay, and the opinions of a relatively small and unrepresentative group.

I would be very happy to meet with you at one of our pubs, with one of our licensees, to outline our concerns and to discuss my mine and many others concerns in the consultation process.