

16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Our Ref: SCC/NS/161120

Dear *Nicola*,

#### Level 4 Restrictions

Scottish Chambers of Commerce has consistently raised the increasing economic and social impact that the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on business communities across Scotland.

Our members and our local chamber network are working flat-out to reduce the risks being faced by business and to support the economy at this challenging time. Support for businesses has never been more critical, to protect both livelihoods and jobs and to keep our economy running. The support from the Scottish Government and the UK Government has helped many businesses through this crisis, however continued economic restrictions across the different Levels means businesses are facing unprecedented challenges.

The potential placing of large parts of Scotland, particularly West of Scotland, into Level 4, with restrictions beginning on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November will present bleak prospects for employers and employees. Our preference would be to allow businesses that can trade safely to continue to do so, particularly where the data shows that it is safe. We - and our members - have invested millions to ensure our businesses and workplaces are Covid-secure, demonstrating our priority to protect the lives and livelihoods of our customers and employees. The current stimulus packages do not go far enough to prevent job losses and business downturns in the face of stringent restrictions but if additional restrictions are to be placed, grants support should be allocated and distributed immediately and evidence to back up trading restrictions must also be published.

We also need to see the Scottish Government increase the investment of Test and Protect Systems with specific focus on increasing the number of tests, turnaround times for results and initiating plans to introduce the ability for businesses to test on premises to pre-clear employees, and customers quickly. This would go a long way to boost confidence in the system.

The Chambers of Commerce Network in Scotland, comprising 30 local Chamber offices, stand ready to work with you to support any discussions or efforts that aim to achieve our joint goal of protecting jobs, health and businesses through this economic crisis.

Best wishes,



Dr Liz Cameron OBE  
Director & Chief Executive  
Scottish Chambers of Commerce