

JOHN LEWIS
PARTNERSHIP

JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS WAITROSE & PARTNERS

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and
Local Government Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Partnership House
Carlisle Place
London SW1P 1BX

johnlewispartnership.co.uk

Date 14 January 2019

Dear Mr Betts

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee and present the views of the John Lewis Partnership on the future of the high street and the retail sector. The health of the high street is of great importance to society and the economy as it is for the John Lewis Partnership; I am therefore pleased that the Committee is examining the issues in some depth.

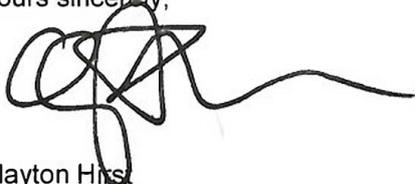
During the evidence session the Committee raised business taxation which is an important consideration. I outlined how much the John Lewis Partnership pays in Business Rates, Employer National Insurance Contributions and Corporation Tax. I also explained how the current taxation system weighs heavily on businesses that employ significant numbers of people and that occupy property. Given the role that people and 'place' play in making successful high streets, there is a case to review taxation in the round to ensure that it is up-to-date and creating the right incentives.

One suggestion that has been put forward is a new tax on online sales. I want to underline that, rather than helping the high street, this would actually have a detrimental effect. Our high streets need successful retailers with both a physical and online presence to meet consumer demand. At the John Lewis Partnership we believe that the two are complementary. For example, our online channels help to drive footfall to our shops and vice versa. Our strategy is based on blending the best of human and digital by offering differentiated products and services to our customers.

Rather than introducing a new tax on the sector, there is instead a need to review the broader taxation system - including Business Rates, Employer National Insurance and Corporation Tax - to ensure it is fair and fit for the future.

If you or any of the Committee would like to discuss this in further detail, then please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Clayton Hirst
Partner & Group Head of Corporate Affairs
cc: Tamsin Maddock, Committee Specialist