UKHOSPITALITY

The Public Bill Committee on English Devolution and
Community Empowerment Bill
House of Commons
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Dear Public Bill Committee,

UKHospitality submission to the Public Bill Committee on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

Following my evidence to the Committee on 16 September, I am pleased to submit UKHospitality's formal position on the Bill. We represent more than 100,000 hospitality businesses across the UK, and we view this legislation as a vital opportunity to strengthen local economies, revitalise high streets, and deliver growth.

We welcome the Government's commitment to banning Upward-Only Rent Review (UORR) clauses. These clauses distort the market by locking rents at artificially high levels, preventing them from adjusting to local economic conditions. They also inflate business rates valuations, creating a cycle of rising costs that threatens the viability of high street businesses. In hospitality, rent averages 10% of turnover, rising to over 12% for high street venues. This is increasingly unsustainable. Evidence from the pubs sector, where UORRs have already been prohibited, shows that banning them increases tenancy stability without harming landlords.

We therefore urge the Committee to support the inclusion of the UORR ban in the Bill and to recognise the wider benefits for regeneration, business survival and job creation.

More broadly, we support the Bill's focus on local growth plans and welcome its emphasis on empowering local communities to define and deliver their own growth strategies. We recommend that:

- **Local growth plans explicitly recognise hospitality** as a key driver of economic success, both directly through job creation and visitor spending, and indirectly by making places more attractive for other sectors.
- **Strategic authorities align planning, licensing, transport and regeneration powers** to deliver coherent, thriving high streets. London's approach to licensing, with Mayoral oversight, provides a positive model that could be replicated elsewhere.
- **Sustainable funding is provided for destination marketing and place branding.** The closure of Visit Kent highlights the vulnerability of these functions. Local areas need resources to market themselves effectively.

- **Planning and change-of-use processes are streamlined** so that vacant properties can be repurposed quickly.
- **Mandatory tourist taxes are avoided.** At a time when the sector is facing significant cost pressures, adding compulsory visitor levies risks deterring domestic and international visitors, undermining growth. Where local authorities wish to introduce such schemes, they should be voluntary and developed in partnership with business.

High streets are a cornerstone of community life. They generate jobs and investment, support local suppliers, and create places where people come together. A Bill that removes UORRs and gives local leaders the tools to regenerate their town and city centres will help deliver vibrant, safe and successful high streets across England.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee’s work on this important Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Allen Simpson
Chief Executive
UKHospitality