TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

11th March 2016

Dear Constituent,

RE: SUNDAY TRADING

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Sunday Trading.

As you know, the debate on this matter took place in the House of Commons earlier this week and I should clarify at the outset that I voted in favour of the Government's proposal contained in the *Enterprise Bill*.

I know that many constituents want safeguards in place to ensure that Sunday does not become like any other day, but it is important to recognise that current Sunday trading rules were established more than twenty years ago and have not kept pace with the way our world has changed. Now, the rise of the internet means shoppers can shop online twenty-four hours a day, which is why I agree that our outdated laws need a rethink – indeed, the biggest day for online shopping in the United Kingdom is a Sunday. Clearly, shops and retail outlets are disadvantaged, relative to their online competitors.

As someone who has been a longstanding supporter of the 'localism' agenda and urged the return of powers from central government to local authorities, I also believe it is right that locally elected councillors, who know their area best, can take appropriate decisions on behalf of their communities, and help support the local business community. That is why Ministers wanted to devolve this power to allow local authorities, on a case-by-case basis, to help rejuvenate their high streets, allow families to spend leisure time together in town centres, and create more jobs and security for working people.

For illustrative purposes, and by way of example, were this proposal to have become law, it would have allowed East Northamptonshire Council to extend Sunday trading at the Rushden Lakes development, once it is opened - something that both local people, and the local authority, might have perceived to be beneficial.

These proposals came forward on the back of a public consultation during which the majority of responses from local authorities, large and medium sized businesses, and business representative organisations, were in favour of devolving decision making on extending Sunday trading rules to the local level.

Furthermore, the proposed measures would not have been introduced at the expense of shop workers. Those who do not want to work on Sundays would not have had to. In fact, the Government proposed to strengthen the powers available for people to say no, by shortening the opt-out notice period and giving those who already work on Sundays a new right to prevent extra hours they do not want or need.

Ministers also proposed a reduction in the notice period that shop workers in large shops must give to their employer to opt out of Sunday working altogether, from three months to one month, and a new right to opt out of working longer hours than usual on Sundays, subject to a one month notice period at large shops, and three months' notice at small shops.

Alongside this, employers would have been duty bound to inform, advise, and clarify, these rights to workers at every step, and I welcomed the Government's commitment to be tough on those who do not comply.

I trust that this clarifies my reasoning for voting as I did in support of devolving this power to local authorities.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE