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Our ref: N10#2021/05985

15 March 2021

Dear Sam,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 January regarding the concerns of your constituents, Sarah de Courcy Rolls and Cyril Bekoe and the review of the Business Rates System. I am replying on behalf of the Department.

As you have already noted, the Government announced a review of Business Rates in March 2020. The Government is currently considering the responses to the Call for Evidence and HMT will publish the Interim Report of the Fundamental Review on March 23. This will set out a Summary of Responses received to the Call for Evidence. Further policy development and engagement will take place over the coming months with the Final Report setting out the conclusions of the Review.

In light of the on-going and wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic, a delay in the Review's conclusion will enable the Government to take decisions about matters of longer-term reform with the greatest level of clarity. Working to an Autumn timetable will allow Government to consider the important choices surrounding the business rates system, including on the long-term state of the economy and public finances.

The Government does not anticipate that any delays in publishing the final conclusions will create additional uncertainty for business. As set out by the Financial Secretary in a recent Ministerial Statement, the Chancellor will set out the next phase of the Government's plans to tackle the virus, protect jobs and support business, at the Budget. Furthermore, we have already provided clarity for business by confirming a freeze in the business rates multiplier in 2021-22, saving businesses in England over £575m over the next 5 years.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on this important and urgent issue, and I hope that the above helps to alleviate Ms Lewis' concerns.

Yours ever,

**AMANDA SOLLOWAY MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – Minister for Science, Research and Innovation