



One voice for
retail warehouse &
superstore property

Fiona Hyslop
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

22 May 2020

Dear Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture

Re: Scottish Government Covid19 Routemap - Reopening of Retail Park Space. Protecting Jobs and Businesses.

Following yesterday's announcement by the First Minister of the 'Routemap' and with Stage 1 being implemented from 28th May 2020, we are extremely concerned that retail warehouse businesses will not be allowed to reopen until stage 3 when 'large retail' will be permitted to re-open. We agree that public health is the paramount consideration however the Routemap appears to mean a further 6-8 weeks of shutdown for businesses that occupy premises which are ideally suited for social distancing and click and collect.

Accessible Retail represents leading out of town retail, leisure and supermarket operators, landlords and consultants. AR provides one voice for over 1100 members which includes British Land, Aberdeen Standard, Ediston, Legal and General, B&Q, Dreams, Costa Coffee, Wickes, Halfords, Currys, Carpetright, DFS and Harveys.

I am writing to you further to our letter of 22nd April 2020 in relation to 'Preventing Large Retail and Leisure Business Closures, protecting jobs and pensions' with a request to prioritize the reopening of retail warehouse locations as size and layout mean they are best suited for social distancing and click & collect. I can confirm that we received confirmation of receipt of this letter on 28th April 2020 advising that this matter would be looked into – to which we await a response.

I would like to highlight retail warehousing has the following social distancing advantages compared with other retail locations:

- Large outdoor spaces with minimal touchpoints
- Low density, simple to navigate layouts
- Safe distances between shop entrances
- Lack of crowding even at peak times of the year
- Plenty of room for orderly queuing
- Great click and collect locations within large single level car parks
- Ability for customers to wait in their cars for appointments with their families
- Units are large open format, large internal volumes not covered malls or small shops
- Many of these locations are part open already with DIY, Food, Pets and Home Retailers trading

Whilst there has been considerable support from Government already, most occupiers will face even more severe cash flow constraints at the next rent quarter date and beyond if they cannot reopen.

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The out of town retail, leisure and property community is responsible for sustaining hundreds of thousands of jobs and £billions in turnover. Out of town locations provide some of the best locations to safely trade whilst social distancing therefore I would be grateful if this matter could be urgently reviewed.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Whittle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ben Whittle, Chair, Accessible Retail