

The Bishop of St Albans, Rt Rev Dr Alan Smith, has responded on behalf of the Church of England to the announcement by Business Secretary Sajid Javid that a Commons amendment will be tabled to the Enterprise Bill to devolve the extension of Sunday trading hours.

Dr Smith said: "In its submission to the Government's consultation on extending Sunday opening hours, the Church of England voiced concern that changing the law would have a negative effect on community and family life, whilst delivering few, if any, additional benefits for the economy.

"Our current Sunday trading laws are built on a compromise, which a majority of the public still back. We have not seen any evidence that further liberalisation of Sunday trading will bring any tangible economic benefit, with the most likely outcome being the same money spent over a greater period of time. The experience of the 2012 Olympic Games is not persuasive, when the growth in business in large shops took place at the expense of smaller ones. It is estimated that 8,800 jobs will be lost from the convenience sector, which will not be fully offset by new jobs in other stores.

"We know that over half of shop workers in large stores already feel pressure to work on Sundays and an increase in opening hours will only lead to more people being pressured into spending Sunday apart from their children and families. This can only be damaging to community and family life and erode opportunities for shared time and activity, which is central to human flourishing and the common good.

"It is also disappointing that these measures will be introduced to Parliament in a Bill that has already been through the House of Lords. That means that the opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny and revision of these proposals will be severely restricted."

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Church of England's response to the Government consultation on Sunday Trading can be seen [here](#).

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