# Economic pressures mount on Farsley businesses amid Chancellor Rachel Reeves' tax changes



Farsley, a vibrant and picturesque suburb near Leeds, renowned for its bustling high street filled with artisan bakeries, family butchers, and speciality shops, is currently facing significant economic challenges. The once thriving LS28 postcode, recently highlighted as one of the country’s coolest areas, is now grappling with the financial pressures resulting from recent government tax changes introduced by its local Member of Parliament, Chancellor Rachel Reeves.

While Reeves was recently in Washington negotiating trade deals for the UK, small business owners in her constituency have been contending with the immediate impact of her Budget measures, which are projected to cost British retailers £5 billion in the current financial year. These tax increases, which took effect this month, are already straining local businesses.

One such business feeling the squeeze is Arlington Interiors, a specialist company in upmarket kitchen design based in a converted mill in Farsley. The firm's joint owner and managing director, Nick Tindall, recalled a visit from Reeves in July 2023 during her tenure as MP for Leeds West and Pudsey. At the time, Reeves praised Arlington Interiors as "a wonderful example of a local company selling such high-quality products." However, Tindall now regards the commendation as hollow, given the financial burden that has since been imposed.

Due to cuts in business rate relief—from 75 per cent to 40 per cent—Arlington Interiors faces an additional annual bill of up to £80,000. Tindall explained the implications, saying, "Our kitchens are priced at up to £40,000. We'll have to sell a couple more of them to cover that extra cost alone." He also highlighted concerns over rising costs driven by increased National Insurance Contributions and a higher national minimum wage, anticipating that these will affect customers who are themselves business owners. "If their costs keep going up, they'll have to reconsider what they pay themselves and may think twice or delay home improvement projects," he said.

Tindall expressed scepticism about Reeves's prospects unless the economic situation improves soon, stating, "I'd be very interested in her coming to see us again now. I'd like to see her for a one-on-one!"

Elsewhere in Farsley, other business owners are also struggling to absorb rising expenses. Mark Cox, owner of a local hardware store, is preparing for a business rates increase of approximately £2,500 this year. Reflecting on government promises of "change and growth," Cox said, "Most people would say there's been change for the worse, which doesn't promote growth." He further assessed Reeves's performance by analogy: "At school, they used to mark you for effort and attainment. I'd say she is putting the effort in but her skills are low."

Farsley itself has previously been celebrated for its unique cultural scene. The Sunday Times, in a review of the area, noted its combination of micro-breweries, sourdough bakeries, and lively music venues, describing it as having "all the cultural catnip that hipster dads can't get enough of." Despite this, local retailers feel the pinch.

Among them is grocer Raymond Sutcliffe, who manages a family-run store and has owned the business for 42 years. Last year, Sutcliffe controversially threatened to bar Reeves from entering his shop due to frustrations over her policies. Reflecting on the current climate, he said, "I'm now in my 42nd year of running the shop and I've never been as worried as I am now. I've never felt like this – including when Labour were in before under Blair and Brown. She's near the bottom in terms of worst Chancellors."

The rising costs and tax burdens on businesses in Farsley, coupled with the mixed reception to Chancellor Rachel Reeves' economic policies, underscore the pressures faced by small enterprises in this once-thriving community. As government fiscal measures continue to take effect, the local response highlights the challenges encountered by high-street retailers in navigating a changing economic landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)