



South East England Councils  
Room 215 County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston  
Surrey  
KT1 2DN

30 October 2019

020 541 7553

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Jenrick,

I have seen the quote attributed to you about the Government's aim to promote growth in the North and Midlands

*Robert Jenrick commented: "We want to drive economic growth outside London and the South East. Our new development corporations will empower local areas to come forward with ideas for new towns that deliver jobs, houses and economic growth – creating the future Canary Wharfs of the North and Milton Keynes's of the Midlands."*

As Chair of South East England Councils, I can confirm that councils across the South East support you in any endeavour to promote growth in those regions.

However I hope this aim is not to imply the Government will neglect the South East. Whilst it is laudable to reduce economic inequality between the regions this must not be achieved by holding the South East back.

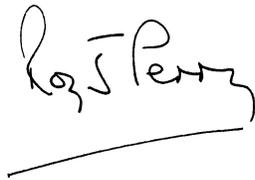
There is a significant infrastructure deficit in the South East which needs to be addressed - be it in highways, rail, broadband and mobile coverage, health and education. Infrastructure investment is lagging behind in all these sectors and others. Our rate of economic growth is slowing (see summary economic analysis attached – the detailed report can be found on our website)

The South East is one of just 3 regions in the UK that makes a positive net contribution to the national exchequer. Not so long ago the South East's net contribution to the exchequer exceeded that of London. Not anymore. Too often national spokespeople speak as if London and the South East are one and the same. I really hope you will not be taken down that route.

The South East has a distinct economy from that of London which must not be forgotten. It also has a higher proportion of elderly people which means the pressures on local services especially in health and social care will increase dramatically. The South East takes a large proportion of the housing growth the nation needs but for that rate of development to be acceptable to local residents it needs infrastructure investment not least in roads, water, and education

As the UK faces a future outside the EU it is crucial that all regions achieve their fullest potential, not least the South East. Please do not reduce regional inequalities by neglecting the currently successful South East. We would like to know how the Government will give tangible and appropriate support to South East councils in their aim and efforts for economic success in this region as well as to continue our positive contribution to the Treasury.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Perry', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Councillor Roy Perry**  
**Chair, South East England Councils**  
**Former Leader Hampshire County Council**