

Dear SOUTH EAST MP



Unique data shows risks to South East's future economic success

We have pleasure in enclosing the latest South East England Councils' (SEEC) [Data Dashboard](#), illustrating major issues facing local residents, businesses and councils in your constituency and throughout the South East.

SEEC brings together local authorities from all tiers and parties to address shared concerns. Our unique Dashboard highlights essential information on South East successes and challenges in the economy, skills, housing, infrastructure, public finances and demography.

Too often it is assumed by other regions and sometimes even by the Government that the South East needs no assistance eg. the Stronger Towns Fund has allocated £281million to the North West and just £37m to the South East; but the Dashboard shows that action is needed to address a number of challenges that risk undermining the South East's current and future success.

Your help in raising the profile of these challenges is important to help avoid the South East being taken for granted. For example, the new Spring 2019 Dashboard shows:

- From 2000/01 to 2015/16, the South East made highest total net tax contribution to Treasury at £154bn. This was £28bn more than London, but since 2013/14 London's returns have started to overtake the South East.
- There are 80,585 South East residents claiming unemployment benefits (Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit with a requirement to look for work). This is higher than East, East Midlands, North East and South West. The South East saw this unemployment claimant count rise by 23% in the year to October 2018, more than the national 20% increase.
- The South East has 287,800 people with no qualifications – more than the East, East Midlands, North East and the South West.
- Research by Local Government Futures shows the South East faces an estimated £15.4bn infrastructure investment gap by 2030. This will restrict economic growth and harm public services if not addressed.

Investment in South East infrastructure and skills could help address these challenges, but changes are needed to achieve this. We want to ask for your support in calling on Government to:

- Allow greater flexibilities for councils to raise funding for infrastructure that will support economic and housing growth. SEEC would welcome your support for a package of proposals to reform Compulsory Purchase Orders, allow councils to set up Strategic Infrastructure Tariffs and localise an element of Stamp Duty and other tax receipts to fund community infrastructure. More details of these proposals are set out in SEEC's [letter to James Brokenshire MP at MHCLG](#).
- Give local authorities more direct influence and control of skills budgets to better target funding at improving capacity and skills needed by our businesses and public services.

I hope you find the Dashboard helpful and we would be pleased to discuss any of the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Roy Perry in black ink.

Cllr Roy Perry
Chairman, South East England Councils

Handwritten signature of Ralph Bagge in black ink.

Cllr Ralph Bagge
Deputy Chairman, South East England Councils

Correspondence address:

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

e: communications@secouncils.gov.uk

t: 020 8541 8740

w: www.secouncils.gov.uk