

**Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP**

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

09 September 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of South East Councils (SEC) we would like to congratulate you on your promotion as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and wish you well.

South East Councils is the voice of local authorities across the South East of England as a representative body of 45 councils. We are a cross-party membership association, and we campaign to ensure that the South East is a great place to work, live and do business.

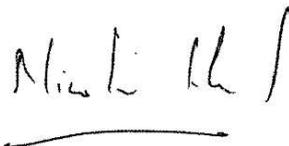
For the past year, much of our focus has been on securing investment for the region in the context of the levelling up agenda. A recent report by the APPG for the South East, chaired by Sally-Ann Hart MP, of which SEC acts as the Secretariat, demonstrates that many parts of the South East are as much in need of levelling up as regions in the North and Midlands, particularly coastal areas and airport towns, which were disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.

The South East is one of only two regions in the UK that continues to make a net contribution to the Treasury meaning levelling up the South East is a vital part of levelling up the country as a whole. Devolution of powers, including finance, would allow the South East to invest in its future rather than lobby Whitehall to get our own taxpayers' money back.

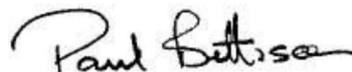
Local government needs the freedom to ensure adequate infrastructure and public services provision to make the South East region attractive as a place to live, work and do business. A new funding model is needed to help harness additional local powers and new funding mechanisms together to empower locally elected representatives to deliver for the communities they serve.

The South East is the UK's gateway to the world and with more control over its destiny, the region can do more, support more and deliver more for the UK. We look forward to working with you to ensure this happens.

Yours sincerely,



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