

Iain Stewart MP
Transport Committee Chair
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

07 December 2022

Dear Mr Stewart,

On behalf of South East Councils (SEC), as the MP for Milton Keynes South, a constituency in the South East, we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Transport Committee.

As a representative body of 45 member councils, SEC is the voice of most local authorities across the South East of England. We are a cross-party association that campaigns to ensure that the South East is a great place to work, live and do business.

It may be of interest to note that your predecessor, now Rail and HS2 Minister, Huw Merriman MP, was a Vice-Chair of the *South East APPG*. Chaired by Sally-Ann Hart MP, SEC serves as its secretariat. Its next major piece of work is an inquiry on transport infrastructure in the region, to be launched shortly.

We were also pleased to hear the Government recommit to *East West Rail* in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement to link Oxford and Cambridge for both economic growth and quality of life across the area.

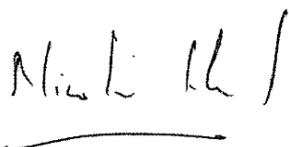
A recent inquiry by the *South East APPG* received submissions from major transport organisations including *Associated British Ports*, *Gatwick Airport*, *Railfuture LSE*, and *Transport for the South East*. It brought light to major challenges faced by local authorities, businesses, and residents in the South East on transport, as well as housing, skills, pockets of deprivation, and post-pandemic growth, showcasing that parts of the South East are as in much need of levelling up as areas in the North and the Midlands.

In September 2022, SEC also contributed to *Transport for the South East's consultation on its draft Strategic Investment Plan*. Central to our submission was the recognition that the South East requires a significantly improved transport system, with a focus on stronger connectivity between places outside of London in order to lift barriers and obstacles to both economic growth and decarbonisation.

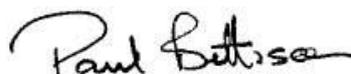
The South East is one of only three regions to make a net contribution to the Exchequer. Investing here is a vital part of levelling up the country as a whole. We need a reset – an opportunity to allow the South East region's inherent economic strengths to shine and drive the country's growth.

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

Yours sincerely,



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