



Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP
Leader of the Labour Party
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

20 December 2022

Dear Sir Keir,

We welcomed the report of the *Commission on the UK's Future – A New Britain: Renewing our Democracy and Rebuilding our Economy* as the basis for further discussion and debate on devolution.

South East Councils (SEC) - a cross-party association of 45 member councils, looks forward to making a submission in the consultation that will follow the publication of the Commission's report. As the voice of most councils across the South East of England, SEC campaigns to ensure that the South East is a great place to work, live and do business.

Central to informing our work is the *South East 1,000 Biannual Regional Monitor* – an indexing of the views, expectations and concerns of people across the region. Published twice a year, it is the largest and the most authoritative regular survey of public, business, and civic opinion in the South East.

- **We are delighted to enclose a copy of the latest (autumn) edition of our South East 1,000 Biannual Regional Monitor.**

SEC is also Secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the South East with Labour Vice-Chairs including Shadow Rail Minister Tan Dhesi MP and Shadow Schools Minister Stephen Morgan MP. The APPG's recent inquiry: "*Financing the future – what does levelling up mean for South East England?*" highlighted challenges for local government leaders including pockets of deprivation and the higher-than-average cost of living in the South East, underscoring the need for levelling up within the region as much as in deprived parts of the North and Midlands.

On 19th October 2022 we hosted *Tomorrow's South East – Summit of the South East* with Localis and The MJ, bringing together regional council and business leaders to discuss shared challenges and preferred structures of local government and a DLUHC Minister of State.

With appropriate fiscal decentralisation the South East can do - and deliver - more for the whole UK.

We would therefore request the opportunity to meet with you and your Shadow Cabinet colleagues to discuss these important issues.

Yours sincerely,

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CC:

Lisa Nandy MP – Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, Communities & Local Government
Dr Anneliese Dodds MP – Chair of the Labour Party and Labour Policy Review