

Simon Hoare MP

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

14 November 2023

Dear Minister,

On behalf of South East Councils (SEC), we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the Local Government Minister at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

We know as a former Cabinet Member at West Oxfordshire District Council and councillor at Oxfordshire County Council, both in the South East, you will have a strong appreciation of the issues in our region.

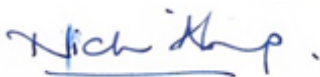
As a representative body of 44 member councils, SEC is the voice of most local authorities across the South East of England. We are a cross-party association that campaigns to ensure that the South East is a great place to work, live and do business.

The *APPG for the South East, chaired by Sally-Ann Hart MP with SEC serving as secretariat*, highlighted the challenges faced by local government and the potential benefits of devolving powers to the local level in the in its inquiry into levelling up. Whilst our Summit of the South East (SOTSE), co-hosted by SEC, Localis thinktank and the MJ, also brought together place leaders with the Local Government Minister at the time, Paul Scully MP, to discuss shared challenges and structures of local government.

Our proposed South East Finance Commission (SEFC) will be considering fiscal levers for financial devolution in the South East, with an aim to undertake an investigation akin to the London Finance Commission. It is expected to report early next year.

We look forward to working with you and once again congratulate you on your new role.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Nick Adams-King
Chair, South East Councils
Deputy Leader of Test Valley Borough Council
Conservative Party



Cllr Jason Brock
Deputy Chair, South East Councils
Leader of Reading Borough Council
Labour Party



Cllr Keith House
Deputy Chair, South East Councils
Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council
Liberal Democrats



Cllr Hannah Dalton
Deputy Chair, South East Councils
Leader of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Independent Group