

Jim McMahon MP

Shadow Minister for English Devolution and Local Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

15 December 2023

Dear Shadow Minister,

On behalf of South East Councils (SEC), we offer our congratulations on your appointment as Shadow Minister for English Devolution and Local Government.

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.

Published twice a year in partnership with Savanta ComRes, our South East 1,000 regional monitor presents the largest and most authoritative regular survey of councillor, business and public opinion in the region. This includes *devolution*. Our most recent issue found that confidence in the decision-making of Councils (50%) was double that in central Government (25%). The main preference was for any devolution of powers for was to their town, city or borough level (39%).

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

Moving forward, SEC will be considering appropriate fiscal levers for financial devolution in the region in our proposed *South East Finance Commission (SEFC)*. It aims to undertake an investigation akin to the London Finance Commission and 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