

SOUTH EAST FIRST

The Newsletter of South East England Councils

February 2020



Region of the future - South East can be one of the very best in Europe

FDI magazine, published by the Financial Times, has unveiled Europe's top cities and regions of the future. The South East is ranked as the 5th best overall Large European Region of the Future.

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Maximising the potential

The potential to be one of the best is something to celebrate but also something not to risk. South East England Councils has written to the new Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the Housing Minister, highlighting actions that will help the South East achieve its full potential.

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Sustainable Homes for the Future

South East England Councils responded to the Government's Future Homes Standard consultation, on plans to ensure new homes are future-proofed with low carbon heating and high energy efficiency.

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Inequality and Affordability

Two new studies show the extent of income inequality within the South East and the affordability of housing.

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News Roundup

MJ on-line

Article in MJ 6 February 2020 (p2) – PM told: Don't ignore the South East. Report of South East England Councils' All-Member meeting 29 January 2020.

Stay informed...and spread the word

South East England Councils is an open and transparent body led by its membership to champion the economy and quality of life in the South East. We want more people to know about our work. As a start we are aiming for a substantial increase in the number of subscribers to our newsletter. Please forward this newsletter to a fellow Councillor, a work colleague, a partner organisation or anyone with an interest in the South East. They can then subscribe to the service [here](#).

More information

For more information about South East England Councils see our [website](#) or contact the Director, David Covill, email address below.

Dates

20 March - South East England Councils' Executive
12th June - South East England Councils' AGM &
All Member Meeting.

Contacts

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The Region of the Future - South East can be one of the very best in Europe

FDI magazine, published by the Financial Times, has unveiled Europe's top cities and regions of the future. The South East is ranked as the 5th best overall Large European Region of the Future. It was ranked 1st in two categories - Human Capital and Lifestyle, and Business Friendliness.

505 locations are assessed using five criteria: Economic Potential, Human Capital and Lifestyle, Cost Effectiveness, Connectivity and Business Friendliness. These are categorised by size of cities and regions.

The international competitiveness of the South East is going to be even more important post Brexit.

Maximising Potential

The potential of the South East to be one of the best in Europe and to support growth across the UK is something to celebrate but also something not to risk. South East England Councils has therefore written to the new Chancellor of the Exchequer and Housing Minister, highlighting actions that will help the South East achieve its full potential.

The South East plays a key role underpinning national economic success and the international competitiveness of the UK as a whole, as set out in our [letter to the Chancellor Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP](#). However, this is being jeopardised by lack of support from Government to improve South East productivity and tackle long-standing issues such as under-investment in infrastructure or areas of deprivation.

With public expenditure per head of population in the South East already the lowest in the country, South East England Councils called on the Chancellor to reaffirm in the Budget that the Government recognises the needs of the South East as well as London and other regions, to help the area play a full part in national economic success.

Our [letter to the new Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP](#) highlighted that whilst the South East has delivered the most homes in England (117,000 homes over the last three years), barriers still exist for councils

trying to deliver sustainable communities.

The letter calls for Government action to help tackle 5 key issues, including: tackling the South East's growing backlog of unimplemented permissions; reviewing the Government's standard methodology for assessing housing need to take account of local circumstances; increasing funding for affordable/social housing; reviewing permitted development rights to tackle unintended consequences; and providing supporting infrastructure before new homes are built.

Sustainable Homes for the Future

South East England Councils responded to the Government's Future Homes Standard consultation, on plans to ensure new homes are future-proofed with low carbon heating and high energy efficiency.

The South East has the highest levels of housing growth in England, and it is therefore particularly important to ensure new build homes meet energy efficiency standards that will contribute towards achieving the national 2050 net-zero target. The response focused on three main areas:

- Maintaining councils' power to set locally appropriate and ambitious standards which help achieve national climate change targets as swiftly as possible.
- Ensuring effective transition and delivery, including funding for the skills and training needed by builders/engineers.
- Ensuring effective information and affordable running-costs for homeowners.

The full response can be found [here](#)

Inequality and Affordability

Two recent [studies](#) have highlighted challenges facing the South East.

The MJ published research by the University of Sheffield which analyses economic imbalance within travel to work areas. The South East provided 9 out of 20 of the most unequal areas under two methods of calculation. The third method showed that generally poorer areas in the South East are not clustered together which may be the reason why some policy makers don't recognise the level of deprivation that does exist, and is why South East England Councils must continue to press this point.

Move IQ identified the 10 least affordable places to live on the basis of average housing price and average salary. 7 out of 10 are the South East (Oxford, Winchester, Brighton, Chichester, Woking, Guilford and Crawley). Other studies on the same subject reveal similar results.

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