

26 February 2021

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State,

### **The London Plan and engagement with the wider South East**

South East England Councils (SEEC) and the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) have noted your correspondence, over recent months, with the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, in relation to his London Plan – which he will now publish on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

EELGA would like to reiterate thanks for your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in which you stated your desire for the Mayor to work in a more joined up way to deliver a strategy with authorities in the wider South East and that this strategy should inform the review of the London Plan.

SEEC and EELGA Members are engaged in an ongoing dialogue about areas of mutual priority and concern in relation to planning and infrastructure.

We have two key points we would like to raise at this stage, in anticipation of further refinement of the London Plan and policy in relation to spatial planning more broadly and nationally:

#### **1. The Mayor of London engaging with neighbouring Local Authorities**

In your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to the Mayor of London, within which you confirmed you were content for the Mayor to formally publish his London Plan, you again asked the Mayor to “*work closely with those authorities that surround London*”, with a view to developing “*a strategy to help alleviate the housing pressure that is faced both inside and immediately outside the capital.*”

SEEC and EELGA members are aware that you made the point on a strategy in your exchange of correspondence, over several months, with the Mayor. However, as we have not been approached by the Mayor of London on the matter, we are now keen to understand how you envisage that strategy to alleviate housing pressure being initiated and developed.

#### **2. Changed circumstances of material consequence to the London Plan**

Since the process for developing the new London Plan began, there have been several major developments that undoubtedly will impact some, if not most, of the main assumptions underpinning the London Plan.

- **Covid-19** has brought substantial changes to societal norms on work and social life, affecting requirements relating to places of work, housing need, transport patterns, including how patterns of commuting may now be fundamentally changed.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities and our society will experience an unequal distribution of the economic shock the pandemic has exerted, across our populations, and within specific groups in communities across our regions.
- In *building back better* we need to plan for, and position, housing that is: -
  - closer to existing and emerging economic opportunities
  - aligned to changed patterns of work and commuting
  - promoting health and wellbeing by design– e.g., via active travel, green spaces, smart technology, and carbon reduction
- **Brexit** has impacted the capital's trade & commerce and the workforce has been affected by a new approach to migration.
- **Climate Change** has initiated a seismic shift in how the environment is seen and is now a central consideration in policymaking.
- **MHCLG reforms** to the Planning system and potentially, of English local government are leading to speculation about future structures.

We would welcome, and appreciate, your views on these points. In time, we would hope that the Mayor of London will also share his thoughts on the same, especially as he will have to begin to consider the next version of a London Plan. We would also welcome the opportunity to shape the framework for the next iteration of the London Plan and our members are keen to see how this will take account of the factors above, as well as how the London Plan aligns with other spatial planning priorities and concerns of the adjacent regions.

SEEC and EELGA certainly wish to see good growth and future success for London as our nation's capital. However, that growth and success should also be beneficial to the South East and East of England regions; our economies are entwined, our businesses are interdependent, and planning & delivery of our key infrastructure relies on cooperation.

Growth and success for all can be achieved through practical collaboration across the wider South East and our members across the South East Region and East of England are keen to collaborate, and willing to engage to build a dialogue with you, the Mayor of London and any others who wish to plan together for a prosperous future for our country.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Roy Perry**  
 Chair, South East England Councils  
 South East England Councils  
 First Floor, Council Offices,  
 Argyle Road, Sevenoaks  
 Kent TN13 1HG  
[seanmckee@secouncils.gov.uk](mailto:seanmckee@secouncils.gov.uk)



**Cllr Linda Haysey**  
 Chair, East of England LGA  
 East of England LGA  
 West Suffolk House, Western Way  
 Bury St. Edmunds  
 Suffolk IP33 3YU  
[Adam.Thorp@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:Adam.Thorp@eelga.gov.uk)