

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for**  
**Housing, Communities and Local Government**  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

19 July 2024

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

On behalf of South East Councils (SEC), we offer our congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

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

We listened closely to the King's Speech and welcome the commitment of devolving more powers to local leaders including greater control over local bus services and an English Devolution Bill.

It is understood that the establishment of a new Council of the Nations and Regions will include the Prime Minister, heads of devolved governments and mayors of combined authorities.

We welcome the devolution of powers to local authorities, as is outlined in our *Securing a Greater South East* agenda. We are however concerned that the South East of England would be at a disadvantage because, as membership of the new Council is currently being proposed, the South East would not have representation.

Considering that the South East has a population and economy larger than Scotland and Wales combined, it is imperative that we have a seat at the table.

In regions without a directly elected Mayor, we would suggest that the respective regional grouping of local authorities, in this case being South East Councils, is invited to take part.

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  
Leader of Hampshire County Council  
Conservative Party



**Cllr Mary Temperton**  
Deputy Chair, South East Councils  
Leader of Bracknell Forest 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