



Correspondence address:

Paul Watkins, SEEC Secretary
c/o Leader's Office
Dover District Council
White Cliffs Business Park
Dover
Kent CT16 3PJ

t: 01304 872090 f: 01304 872377
e: paul.watkins@dover.gov.uk

Cllr Ian Carr
Chairman
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association
Civic Offices
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

2 August 2010

Dear *Ian,*

Thank you for your letter about the future of South East England Councils and the views expressed at your annual meeting.

SEEC held its own AGM on 14 July, which endorsed our earlier in-principle decision to maintain SEEC and develop a small team of officers to support us in making a joint case to central Government.

I recognise your concerns about cost and bureaucracy and believe that the SEEC decision this week shows we have taken these matters seriously. We are all facing difficult spending decisions, so SEEC has agreed to subsidise this year's member subscriptions with reserves expected from regional structures that are now being dismantled. We also have no wish to recreate the overblown bureaucracy of regionalism and will focus on a very small, member-led team with the minimum staff needed to deliver SEEC's business plan, working in collaboration with councils' own officers.

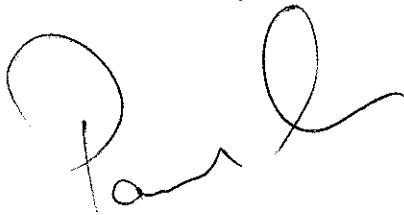
However, I do strongly believe that there is a role for this minimalistic team to help SEEC influence Government spending and policy on behalf of the whole South East. SEEC has discussed the appropriateness of the South East's geography but concluded that without a single voice we will be disadvantaged. For example, we need to work together to compete for infrastructure and investment against other areas of the country and to negotiate with powerful neighbours such as London.

As the engine room of the UK economy we all have much to lose if we are not able to argue with a single voice to influence policy and investment decisions.

I hope that rather than duplicating the work of your organisation, we can bring together the key issues of more local groupings – through SEEC – to influence Government on behalf of the South East as a whole.

I look forward to working with you and your Hampshire and Isle of Wight colleagues to ensure your views are represented within SEEC over the coming year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Carter', with a large, stylized initial 'P' and a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Paul Carter
Chairman, South East England Councils