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| Rt Hon. Greg Clark MP  Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government  Department for Communities and Local Government  2 Marsham Street  London SW1P 4DF  11th May 2015 | 1st Floor  Millbank Tower  21-24 Millbank  London SW1P 4QP  020 8233 0081  graeme.mcdonald@solace.org.uk  [www.solace.org.uk](http://www.solace.org.uk) |

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (Solace), I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

As you know well, over the last Parliament Local Government played a significant part in delivering the Coalition's agenda of economic recovery, public service reform and deficit reduction. Chief executives and senior managers across the UK's councils now look ahead to taking on a critical role in the successful delivery of many aspects of the new Government’s programme over the next five years. Across a range of priority area such as public funding reform, housing growth, health and social care integration and, crucially, fiscal and policy devolution, local authorities will play an important role in making a positive difference to communities and individuals. In all this important work we will be focused on ensuring that implementation and impact is tailored to the needs of our communities and proves to be both effective and sustainable.

As the representative body for over 1300 Chief Executives and Senior Offices, our members play an invaluable role to play in advising both national and local politicians on the practical delivery of their political manifestos. Consequently, we have a shared imperative to work together to ensure the best outcomes for our local communities.

There are some key areas that we need to address and progress quickly and upon which early discussions would prove productive. These include:

* delivering more radical devolution deals relating to fiscal powers, economic growth and public service reform to help drive further improvements to local communities
* reviewing local government finance to strengthen positive incentives to drive faster growth, accelerating house building across all tenures, and ensuring council finances are both fair and accountable
* ramping up the integration of health and social care systems
* ensuring a rigorous response to tackling child sexual exploitation

We would also want to share our plans to develop the professional leadership of local councils and provide greater support to councils and their senior staff to improve the sector and protect against organisational failure.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss how we might take forward these areas and the other reforms required across local public services. Solace has a team of spokespeople, covering the full range of policy areas with experience across a wide range of local authorities, all of whom will be able to bring important insights and advice to Westminster and Whitehall.

We look forward to working closely with you in the future.

Kind regards,



Mark Rogers

President of Solace and Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council