

## **People and Places Board – report from Cllr David Hodge (Chairman)**

### **Introducing the new Board**

1. I was delighted to meet colleagues of the new People and Places Board at our inaugural meeting on 7 April 2014. The new Board allows us to reflect non-metropolitan areas alongside the new City Regions Board. Non-metropolitan areas account for about half of England's economy, which means that their economic contribution and growth potential are as significant for the nation as that of the cities - however their challenges and solutions are unique. We are pleased to be able to articulate the different communities we represent and work with the LGA on our wider agenda for the sector.
2. The People and Places Board will be developing greater clarity on the role of non-metropolitan authorities in enabling economic growth and public service reform for the long-term benefit of residents. The first Board meeting was an opportunity for members to develop a work programme, which will focus on housing; planning and infrastructure; broadband; employment, skills, and economic growth, and public service transformation. I look forward to bringing you more news as our work develops.

### **The evidence base for devolving of employment, skills and welfare**

3. It is the firm view of the People and Places Board and the City Regions Board that there is a compelling case for devolving responsibility to councils for employment, skills and welfare; enabling them to more effectively link provision to local regeneration and growth. It is for this reason that the People and Places Board, working with the Cities Region Board, has commissioned the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) to further develop the evidence base for this debate.
4. As part of this essential project, I, along with Cllr Sir Richard Leese, Chairman of the City Regions Board, have sent a joint letter to a range of authorities who have already considered innovative approaches to address this challenge to participate in the research. This includes county councils represented by the People and Places Board: Devon, Essex, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Surrey.
5. The first report will be presented at the LGA Annual Conference, and will map the growth ambitions and skills needs in these areas. I look forward to reporting back on the success of this project.

### **Launch of the Independent Commission on Economic Growth and the Future of Public Services in Non Metropolitan Areas**

6. I am delighted to announce that the independent Non-Metropolitan Commission was formally launched on the 27 May 2014. The Non-Metropolitan Commission, chaired by Sir John Peace, is undertaking a review of the future of economic growth and public services in non-metropolitan areas. The work of the Commission will feed directly into the People and Places Board's work programme.
7. We were pleased to welcome Sir John to the inaugural meeting of the People and Places Board in April. Sir John outlined his vision for the future work of the Commission, and members were pleased to hear that the Commission's review would look to foster

collaboration between both private and public sectors, and consider current best practice, as well as innovation for the future.

8. The review is gathering statements from business leaders, voluntary and faith groups and community and public service leaders via a call for evidence (which is open until 27 June 2014). Board members will use their networks to promote the review to key stakeholders at a local level. We are looking forward to receiving interim findings from the Commission on this important area of work in July.

**Contact officer:**

Carolyn Downs

**Position:**

Chief Executive

**Phone no:**

020 7664 3213

**E-mail:**

[carolyn.downs@local.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.downs@local.gov.uk)