

## **Independent Commission on Economic Growth and the Future of Public Service in Non-Metropolitan England (Non-Metropolitan Commission)**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and information.

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on the activities being undertaken by the Non-Metropolitan Commission. It also provides further information on the Call for Evidence (CfE) and commissioned research.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note and discuss the activities of the Commission and promote the call for evidence in their local areas.

### **Action**

Officers to progress the project as directed by the board.

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## Independent Commission on Economic Growth and the Future of Public Service in Non-Metropolitan England (Non-Metropolitan Commission)

### Purpose of the Commission

1. The Commission is undertaking a review of economic growth and the future of public services in non-metropolitan areas. The Commission will aim to gather evidence (via a call for evidence and research), produce an interim report by the summer of 2014 and make recommendations in a final report by the autumn.
2. The Commission's review will feed into the work programme of the People and Places Board.

### Commission membership

3. The Commissioners are:

Commissioner	Organisation
Sir John Peace (Chair)	Chairman of Standard Chartered PLC
Viscountess Cobham	Chair of Visit England
Sir Tony Hawkhead	Chief Executive of Action for Children
Stephen Gifford	Independent economic expert
Grainia Long	Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing
Professor Henry Overman	Professor of Economic Geography of London School of Economics (LSE)
Jane Ramsey	Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Lord Teverson	Chairman of the Rural Alliance; Liberal Democrat Spokesman for Energy and Climate Change in the House of Lords

### First Non-Metropolitan Commission Meeting

4. The first Commission meeting was on the 28 April 2014. Commissioners reviewed and finalised the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Call for Evidence (attached as **Annex A**).
5. Commissioners also took evidence from key witnesses, enabling them to hear about the most important issues faced at a local level regarding economic growth in non-metropolitan areas. Three witnesses gave evidence:
  - 5.1 Lancashire: Cllr Jenny Mein, Leader of Lancashire Council
  - 5.2 Hinckley and Bosworth: Steve Atkinson, Chief Executive of Hinckley and Bosworth Council
  - 5.3 Cambridgeshire: Graham Hughes, Executive Director for Economy, Transport and Environment

6. The evidence provided highlighted some of the key issues that helped to stimulate growth, including a strong focus on effective partnership working and collaboration. Barriers to growth were also acknowledge, which included access to high speed broadband, the development of effective infrastructure, educational attainment and funding.
7. Commissioners consider the witness statements to be highly insightful; they noted that the evidence highlighted the importance of recognising the cost to the public purse imposed by bidding process for funding, and agreed to explore this in the Commission's work.
8. The evidence provided helped Commissioners to shape the ToR and the Call for Evidence so that the most important issues in non-metropolitan areas are examined.

### **Formal launch of the Non-Metropolitan Commission**

9. The Commission was formally launched on the 27 May 2014; a press release was issued on the LGA website (attached as **Annex B**).
10. The launch of the Commission received press coverage in both the Municipal Journal (MJ) and the Local Government Chronicle (LGC). We anticipate national press coverage with the publication of interim and final reports.
11. The District Councils Network (DCN) and the County Councils Network (CCN) were both involved in the launch of the Commission, and are working to promote the Commission's Call for Evidence among their members.

### **Communications from the Non-Metropolitan Commission**

12. A media strategy has been developed for the Commission and aims to provide a strategic communications plan over the life course of the Commission.
13. The Commission's webpage will contain updates on all the Commission's activities:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/non-met-commission>

### **Call for Evidence**

14. The Call for Evidence was launched simultaneously alongside the Commission on 27 May 2014. The Call for Evidence is seeking evidence from businesses leaders and business organisations, the voluntary and faith sector, and public service leaders.
15. The deadline for submissions is 27 June 2014, and respondents can submit via e-form or a web based form.
16. The Call for Evidence is being promoted in the following ways:
  - 16.1 Commissioners have been encouraged to promote it via their professional networks

- 16.2 LGA bulletins and networks
- 16.3 Via social media, including Twitter and LinkedIn
- 16.4 Via the trade press

- 17. The Commission would encourage Board Members to promote the Call for Evidence among leaders from all sectors in their local area.

#### **Non-Metropolitan Commission: Research Specification**

- 18. The Commission has commissioned the first phase of independent research to complement the evidence gathered, which will examine the economy of non-metropolitan areas and challenges and opportunities for growth.
- 19. It is proposed that the research would consist of three phases: a quantitative analysis of the economy of non-metropolitan areas, mapping of funding streams available and case studies to identify best practice in relation to growth.
- 20. Experian's research and strategy team are undertaking the first phase of the Commission's research. This aims to:
  - 20.1 Examine quantitatively, the economy and unique characteristics of non-metropolitan areas, including examining past trends and forecasts.
  - 20.2 Compare the economies of non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas, and explore any differences and interdependences.
  - 20.3 Identify high growth industries and the potential value these industries add to non-metropolitan areas.
  - 20.4 Examine the factors that drive growth in non-metropolitan areas.
- 21. Initial outputs from the research are expected in early June for review, with the aim of publishing research findings at the LGA's annual conference.

#### **Future Non-Metropolitan Commission meeting**

- 22. The next Commission meeting is scheduled on the 30 June. Further meetings are scheduled for the end of July and the beginning of September.
- 23. The Terms of Reference require that the Commission report to the Board, and the Board will be given a preview of the final report.