

## **City Growth Commission - update**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

This paper provides an update on the activities of the RSA's City Growth Commission, which the LGA has sponsored. It also reports on the launch of two other independent commissions that the LGA is sponsoring: the Non-Metropolitan Commission and the Local Government Finance Commission.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the update.

### **Action**

Officers to take forward as directed by members.

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## City Growth Commission - update

1. This paper provides an update on the activities of the Commission in the last couple of months and opportunities for the Board to shape its final recommendations. It also reports on the launch of two other independent commissions to which the LGA is contributing, the Non-Metropolitan Commission and the local government finance commission.

### Gathering evidence

2. Since the Board last met, the Commission has been in the process of evidence-gathering, research and analysis. In May, the Commission held two further expert seminars on [housing](#) and [digital technology](#), with expert speakers in both sectors: Jennie Daly (Managing Director, Harrow Estates, Redrow Plc); Toby Lloyd (Head of Policy, Shelter); Rohan Silva (former No.10 Adviser and City Growth Commissioner) and Mark Barrett (Head of Leeds Data Mill).
3. The Commission also held its third and final formal evidence hearing in Newcastle on June 6, where they heard from a range of local leaders across the North East, including Cllr Nick Forbes, Leader of Newcastle City Council, and Cllr Paul Watson, Leader of Sunderland City Council. Key themes included the impact of demographics, skills, the resilience of governing institutions and graduate retention. A list of attendees and minutes from the hearing can be found [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.
4. Following the Board's steer, the RSA are holding a roundtable with Key Cities on June 27 to look at the contribution of smaller cities to national economic prosperity. Further engagement with cities is planned, including a seminar in Leeds with Jon Cruddas MP, Tom Riordan CEO Leeds City Council and other public and private sectors leaders from across the West Yorkshire Combined Authority area. The Commission has already had similar events in Nottingham with Cllr Jon Collins and his colleagues, and a seminar in Southampton with the Solent LEP on skills.
5. In the coming weeks, the Commission will be ramping up its engagement with other stakeholders including senior civil servants in Whitehall, national party politicians (e.g. Chuka Umunna, Greg Clark) and their special advisors, as well as a wide range of institutions and organisations associated with the agenda (e.g. CBI, EEF, Chambers of Commerce, housing associations and the Arts Council
6. The discussions from these sessions will be fed into the Commission's final recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.citygrowthcommission.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CGC-NE-Hearing-notes-of-proceedings.pdf>

## **Research and analysis**

7. The Commission has also been conducting further research and analysis on skills, infrastructure and fiscal devolution. Two new reports are planned for release in July:

- 7.1. *Human Capitals: Driving UK metro growth through workforce investment* on July 3:

This report looks at skills development and in-work progression as factors in raising productivity and contributing to city growth.

- 7.2. *Connected cities: the link to growth* on July 16: This report examines how underinvestment in infrastructure restricts UK cities' potential for growth. It investigates how a change in thinking around infrastructure and connectivity can help improve economic and social growth and productivity for the UK as a whole, and where metros best fit within that system.

8. The Commission have also started a new project with the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association and Universities UK on graduate retention and how to encourage students to apply their skills and entrepreneurial talent in the cities where they have studied.

## **Press coverage**

9. Media traction continues with national and regional coverage in the Telegraph, FT, City AM, the Guardian, Yorkshire Post and Public Finance magazine. All media articles can be found [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

## **Next steps**

10. The Commission's final report is due to be launched on October 30. In order to ensure that members have an opportunity to discuss and shape the final recommendations before the final report gets to an advance stage, we have arranged for lead members to attend the meeting of the full Commission on September 17. As the Commission will be attending the party conferences, this meeting will also be an opportunity for lead members to provide advice on which messages are likely to have greatest traction with national politicians.
11. We have also provisionally invited Jim O'Neill, Chair of the Commission, to attend the October 21 Board to discuss the findings and recommendations with all members. That meeting may also be an opportunity for the Board to consider how we can best build on the Commission's research and recommendations in our future lobbying and work programme.

## **Other commissions**

Non-metropolitan commission

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.citygrowthcommission.com/media-coverage/>

12. The LGA's People and Places Board is sponsoring the Independent Commission on Economic Growth and the Future of Public Services in Non-Metropolitan England (Non-Metropolitan Commission). It is chaired by Sir John Peace, Chairman of Standard Chartered PLC and Burberry, as well as Chairman of Nottinghamshire's local Growth Board. The Commission will explore the unique characteristics of non-metropolitan economies and their drivers, as well as what more can be done to free up their public services to promote growth and deliver better outcomes for residents. By the autumn, it will make recommendations for reform to shape the way economic growth and public service transformation are supported in the future.

#### Local government finance commission

13. The LGA and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy have established an independent commission tasked with making recommendations for the reform of local government finance and finding better ways to fund local services and promote economic growth in England. The finance commission, which launched on June 2, is chaired by Darra Singh, partner in the Government and Public Sector team at EY (formerly Ernst & Young). The Commission is expected to publish interim findings in the Autumn ahead of a final report in early 2015.
14. Further updates on the proceedings of these Commissions will be provided on an ongoing basis.