

## **Final Report of the Non-Metropolitan Commission**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

The Non-Metropolitan Commission chaired by Sir John Peace will issue its final report on 5 March 2015. In the absence of Sir John on other business, Sir Tony Hawkhead, the Chief Executive of Action for Children and a member of the Commission will attend the LGA Executive to brief members on the recommendations of the Commission and contribute to any subsequent debate.

### **Recommendation**

That the LGA Executive acknowledges the Non-Metropolitan Commission's report and support its findings.

### **Action**

Officers to be cognizant of Members' comments in taking forward the recommendations.

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### **Background**

1. The Non-Metropolitan Commission was established early last year and asked to seek ways to stimulate economic growth regionally, create new jobs and help people live their lives better. It published an interim report in November 2014.

### **The Commissioners**

2. The Commission was chaired by Sir John Peace, the Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank and the Burberry Group and also the Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. He has been joined on the Commission by:
  - 2.1. Penelope, Viscountess Cobham CBE, the Chairman of Visit England.
  - 2.2. Stephen Gifford, an independent economic advisor and Head of Economic Regulation at the Civil Aviation Authority.
  - 2.3. Sir Tony Hawkhead, Chief Executive of Action for Children.
  - 2.4. Professor Henry Overman, Professor of Economic Geography at the London School of Economics and Director of the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth.
  - 2.5. Jane Ramsey, Chair of the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
  - 2.6. Lord Teverson, Liberal Democrat spokesman for energy and climate change and Chair of the Rural Coalition.
  - 2.7. Grania Long, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, was an active participant in the work of the Commission until an appointment as Chief Executive of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the autumn meant that she was unable to continue.

### **The remit of the Non-Metropolitan Commission**

3. The Commission specifically undertook to:
  - 3.1. Review the economic, social and demographic trends facing non-metropolitan areas.
  - 3.2. Assess their strengths and challenges, and identify in particular where their most powerful potential for future economic prosperity lies.
  - 3.3. Review steps taken so far by businesses and the public sector to meet those challenges and promote growth.

- 3.4. Make recommendations about the most effective further steps which business and the public sector could take to promote growth, jobs, and improvements in people's lives.

### **The final report**

4. The interim report sent three clear messages:
  - 4.1. Non-metropolitan areas are the spearhead of England's global competitiveness and that advantage needs to be enhanced with devolved decision-making.
  - 4.2. Non-metropolitan areas have ground to make up in the way they take decisions and organise their public services.
  - 4.3. A handful of non-metropolitan areas are ready now for devolved decision making about public service and tax and more will be in the future. The country will benefit enormously from devolutionary deals for both cities and non-metropolitan areas.
5. The final report has built on these messages and will make seven clear recommendations around prosperity, infrastructure and governance, based on evidence received from a range of 56 organisations, including: councils; representative bodies; businesses; and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Commission has been clear that it only wanted to make recommendations that could realistically be translated into action and included in the first Queen's Speech of a new government and delivered early in its term.
6. The report will be launched on 5 March. In the absence of Sir John Peace on other business, Sir Tony Hawkhead will attend the LGA Executive to present the Commission's findings and contribute to any subsequent debate. Copies of the report will be available at the meeting and online.

### **What next?**

7. Commissioners intend to follow up the launch of the report with briefings to the media, business and other regional and local stakeholders as required, with Sir John writing to: Ministers in key Government Departments; Shadow Ministerial teams; manifesto teams; Chairs of key Parliamentary Groups; LGA Vice Presidents; and the Chairmen of a number of FTSE 100 Companies.
8. This is the third of three reports, and follows those delivering the findings of the RSA's City Growth and Finance Commissions. At the January LGA Executive, Members agreed that officers, in developing a vision of local governance and accountability in 2020, would bring together the conclusions from the three reports and define the principles (rather than prescriptive models) that underpin models of local accountability and governance. A draft of this report, which will also define how the vision supports the ambitions of communities and Central Government and how this strengthens English governance as a whole, will be considered by the City Regions and People and Places Boards later in March.

**Next steps**

9. The LGA Executive is asked to acknowledge the Non-Metropolitan Commission's report and support its findings.

**Financial Implications**

10. None.