

Non-Metropolitan Commission: Final Report

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The Non-Metropolitan Commission, chaired by Sir John Peace, launched its final report on 5 March 2015. It made seven specific recommendations for reform around prosperity, infrastructure and governance that a new Government can take and implement early in its term.

This report was considered at the LGA Executive on 5 March 2015.

Recommendation

Members of the City Regions Board are asked to consider the findings of the report and the Chairman's feedback from the LGA Executive.

Action

Officers take note of Members' comments in taking forward the recommendations.

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Non-Metropolitan Commission: Final Report

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 and the final report, *Devolution to Non-Metropolitan England: Seven steps to growth and prosperity*, on 5 March. The report was presented to the Executive later that day.

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 was 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 her appointment as Chief Executive of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the autumn which 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; and
 - 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. Building on the interim report, the final report makes seven clear recommendations around three key factors:
 - 4.1. Prosperity
 - skills and
 - foreign direct investment
 - 4.2. Infrastructure
 - planning and transport,
 - housing,
 - digital connectivity and
 - investment in infrastructure); and
 - 4.3. Governance
5. These are based on evidence received from nearly 60 organisations, including councils, representative bodies, businesses and LEPs.
6. These seven recommendations for reform aim to shape the way economic growth and public service transformation are supported in the future. The report points out that the non-metropolitan areas are the most economically productive regions of the national economy, driving growth, foreign direct investment, competitiveness and employment. In drawing its conclusions, the Commission has been clear that it only wanted to make recommendations that a new government can take and implement early in its term in order to give the country a further boost along the road to economic recovery.
7. A copy of the report can be accessed via the following link:
<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/Devolution+to+Non-Metropolitan+England+-+Seven+steps+to+growth+and+prosperity.pdf/d2154c5b-230d-4680-905f-6c06b49e268c>

What next?

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 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. This work is currently being developed.

Next steps

9. Members are asked to:
 - 9.1. Consider the findings of the report and the Chairman's feedback from discussions in the Executive

Financial Implications

10. None.