



# Spatial Economics Research Centre

Monday, 24 November 2014

## The Non-Met Commission

[Posted by Prof Henry G. Overman]

I've spent a lot of time over the last seven years (since SERC was founded) thinking about how urban economics can help improve urban policy. As part of that, I've helped specific cities and LEPs develop their evidence base and think about policy implementation (particularly Manchester, but also North East LEP, Birmingham, Great Cambridge / Greater Peterborough). I've also provided advice to BIS and Cabinet Office on the implementation of City Deals.

Recently, however, I've had an opportunity to move beyond this urban focus to think about the challenges facing the 'non-mets': the places outside our metropolitan areas that produce roughly half of England's GDP. The challenges these places face, and some of the potential solutions, are discussed in the [interim report of the Independent Commission on Economic Growth and the Future of Public Services in Non-Metropolitan England](#) (I'm one of the commissioners).

We're working on refining our recommendations over the next couple of months. As the report makes clear - there are some big questions still to answer - not least about how we might reform the relationship between central and (non-metropolitan) local government. I know that many people would like to see wholesale reform in this area. But there's also the possibility of an 'earned autonomy' model for non-mets that would parallel the process that has seen Manchester the first of the mets to be handed stronger powers (with Leeds, Sheffield and perhaps others to follow). I imagine many heated debates to come as we try to resolve this and a range of other crucial questions. Do get in touch with the commission [[nonmet\\_commission@local.gov.uk](mailto:nonmet_commission@local.gov.uk)] if you like to know how you can contribute to those discussions.

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