

# SUMMARY REPORT OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE POWERS OF THE TEES VALLEY MAYOR AND MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

## INTRODUCTION

1. The consultation was run by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) with the local involvement of the five Tees Valley authorities: Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. The consultation was about the specific powers and governance changes proposed in the Tees Valley Combined Authority governance review and scheme published alongside the consultation.

2. This report sets out the findings of that consultation. It analyses the responses received in as objective a manner as possible.

3. Some responses did not address the specific issues of the consultation. For example, many respondents used this consultation to express opposition to the principle of an elected mayor, notwithstanding that this was not something on which we were seeking views:

*“There should be no mayoral position – the people of Hartlepool rejected the idea of having a mayor 3 years ago, after having seen what a waste of time and money it was for the previous 10 years”..*

4. This quote summarises many views expressed that the position of Mayor may centralise power, be costly, and go against the previously expressed views of many people in local referenda / consultations.

5. Respondents went on to make reference about how the Mayoral Combined Authority should work, and the need for scrutiny, checks and balances:

*“The Mayor should work with the Combined Authority as much as possible, no one person should have overall power. The partnership between the local authorities is mature, based upon years of working together in the best interests of the Tees Valley. Although the partnership working has now been formalised through a Combined Authority with a devolution deal negotiated, the spirit of working by consensus ought not to change with the election of a Mayor”*

6. *“The Scheme seems eminently sensible and provides the required level of power whilst ensuring that reasonable scrutiny is applied to the Combined Authority”*

7. *“Obviously the important thing is to ensure that decisions are inclusive and built on improving our area and increasing the area’s profile”*

8. But there are concerns about ensuring that the Mayor, and Mayoral Combined Authority, add value and secure public support. This is illustrated by this response:

*“I feel this could end up being an additional tier of governance that will not achieve significant benefits over and above what is in place presently”*

9. The diversity of views, and the degree of concern about the powers and role of the elected mayor, reinforce the TVCA’s views that it is appropriate to ensure significant checks and balances, as set out in the governance review and scheme, if the principle of a mayor is to secure wider public support.

10. In the responses it is clear that individual communities emerge from the analysis with clear views. That is true of residents in individual local authority areas and also of specific interests such as business. Where this is relevant these views are pulled out in the analysis. However, these individual interests do not negate the overall conclusions which are drawn from the Tees Valley as a whole. We also believe that given that the powers being consulted on are devolved from central government rather than being centralised from local authorities, the proposals do not harm and should enhance local community powers and identity.

## **METHODOLOGY**

11. The questionnaire was agreed by the TVCA on 8<sup>th</sup> July and launched on 11<sup>th</sup> July, for 6 weeks until 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016.

It has been made widely available as follows:

- On TVCA website – on-line, as well as providing a phone number for paper copies
- On each of the 5 local authority web-sites, with paper copies available as above
- Various media releases to inform the public, businesses and stakeholders of the consultation
- Via Councils’ Resident Panels (typically 600 – 900 residents by locality)
- Via direct communications with many local stakeholders, residents, community groups etc,
- Word of mouth, via elected members and others
- Staff newsletter

- Direct mailings from the Chair of the TVCA to about 600 stakeholders in the region: businesses, public sector, representative bodies, trade unions, VCS, etc.
- In the case of Hartlepool, there was also door to door leaflet distribution

12. We made efforts to reach out to the business community and other key stakeholders and to seek their views. Within the 600 individual emails which were sent out, 194 were sent to education providers such as schools; 56 were sent to businesses in the Tees Valley; 23 were sent to business representative groups; 67 were sent to Voluntary and Community Organisations; and 28 were sent to Trade Unions.

13. The Institute for Local Governance at Durham University have assisted in the analysis of the responses to ensure that – given the immense diversity of responses – this summary report is as objective as is reasonably possible in the short timescales.

14. Their view, as set out in the attached letter, is that they are satisfied that the process was undertaken in a fair and objective manner.

## **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

15. In terms of the public sector equality duty, consultation regarding the proposals has taken place at the formative stage, prior to any final decision having been taken, and at a time when the decision can still be influenced by the outcome of the consultation. Detailed information explaining and supporting the proposals has been provided, in the form of the Governance Review and the Governance Scheme, and this documentation has been made widely available in a number of different ways and to a variety of consultees across the combined authority area, including the public, businesses and other stakeholders. The six weeks consultation period has also provided all interested persons with a reasonable amount of time to consider the proposals, request any clarification or additional details that they might need, and to submit their representations.

16. The proposed governance changes are to support and further develop the efficient work of the Tees Valley Combined Authority. The Combined Authority involves local authorities working collaboratively to improve outcomes for all, including protected groups under the Act and the less advantaged. There will therefore be positive outcomes and no adverse impact under the Equality Act from the proposals.

## **TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

17. This consultation was required by statute and the time constraints were set by Government. Given the nature of the questions and the level of responses, it is possible to draw the overall conclusions we draw in the report but it is not possible to draw conclusions which would suggest that the responses are statistically representative of the population of the Tees Valley as a whole.

18. The approach to the consultation was to make it as available as possible but using existing channels wherever possible so that the cost was minimised. The main elements of developing, running and analysing the consultation (other than the input of the ILG) were carried out internally also to minimise cost.

19. TVCA made strong efforts to ensure that the consultation was widely available and there are substantial responses from across the Tees Valley. Within a defined framework each local authority was given the opportunity to make its own decisions on the most appropriate way to engage its residents and stakeholders. Hartlepool decided to leaflet on a door to door basis and this alongside the relatively large number of members of Hartlepool's residents' panel could contribute to the large number of responses received from Hartlepool.

20. A substantial number of people who started the consultation failed to provide answers to the key questions, numbers 3 and 4. However, there were enough people who did answer the questions to be able to carry out an appropriate analysis. We have no reason to believe that people who did not complete the questionnaire had a particular view on the proposals and would therefore have changed the overall conclusions.

21. Within the Tees Valley there have been several recent relevant events in the consideration of a mayoral model. Middlesbrough Council have had a mayoral model since 2003. Hartlepool BC held a referendum and changed their form of administration away from the mayoral model in 2013. Darlington BC had a referendum on a mayoral model in 2013 and rejected it. Stockton BC held consultation and Redcar and Cleveland Council held a referendum in 2010 and the mayoral model was rejected.

## **QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

22. The questions were as follows:
- a. Question 1 asked about who the respondent was: resident, business, other.
  - b. Question 2 asked people to say where they were from – which of the five Boroughs, or other.

- c. Question 3 asked for views about the powers in the scheme and governance review, and was free text only.
- d. Question 4 asked about how the Mayor should work with the Combined Authority, and about checks and balances of the Mayor’s power. This was also free text only.

23. Responses to questions 3 and 4 delivered a wide variety of responses but there were some key themes:

- (1) many people have in effect answered a question, “Do you want an elected Mayor for the Tees Valley?” , with the vast majority opposing it;
- (2) others have expressed views about governance more generally, commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of individual councils, (largely negative) views on the former Cleveland County Council, whether councils should merge in future, concerns about potential unequal division of resources and what they see as “additional layers of bureaucracy”;
- (3) of those who directly answered the question some favoured greater control over mayoral powers; a smaller number favoured less control and the largest number generally in support of the level of control proposed.

26. Our analysis covers these themes, and others that have emerged from the responses, and then provides an overview of the views of respondents that did answer the questions in hand, about powers, and how the Mayor would work.

## ANALYSIS

27. The headline figures of those who identified themselves were as follows:

	Residents	Businesses	Other	Skipped	Total
Darlington	107	15	11		133
Hartlepool	501	4	5		510
Middlesbrough	124	2	9		135
Redcar & Cleveland	142	4	5		151
Stockton	187	4	5		196
Other	4	8	17*		29
Total	1067	38	52	3	1160

\*includes written comments in a different format from 5 representative organisations.

### Question 1: “Please tell us who you are”

28. The total number of responses by type of respondee was as follows:

- Resident 1067
- Business 38 plus three business representative organisations categorised within other (CBI, Federation of Small Businesses; North-East Chamber of Commerce);
- Other 52

**Question 2: “Please tell us which Local Authority area you are from”**

29. The total number of responses by Borough is:

- Darlington 133
- Hartlepool 510
- Middlesbrough 135
- Redcar & Cleveland 151
- Stockton-on-Tees 196
- Other 29

**Question 3: “What are your views on the specific powers and responsibilities set out in the scheme and governance review?”**

30. The analysis shows the following:

- Overall of the 1160 people who answered the consultation, 547 answered this question and 613 skipped it.
- Of those who responded 67 people used the question to give their view on an elected mayor, of whom over 90% opposed an elected mayor for the Tees Valley.
- Around 200 people referred to wider governance issues such as the risk of unnecessary bureaucracy, opposition to the former Cleveland County Council and whether the Tees Valley was an appropriate geo-political area.
- Around 220 people directly expressed views on the proposal of whom 160 were generally in support and 60 opposed them.
- The remainder of responses were varied in nature and included comments such as “no view either way”, along with references to party politics and Brexit, for example.

31. Within the individual boroughs, there was particular opposition in Hartlepool to an elected mayor; and the views around Tees Valley and Cleveland County Council were also particularly prominent in Hartlepool.

### Business and “Other” Responses

32. Responses from business organisations and other representative organisations were generally supportive. The CBI stresses the primary importance of improving skills in the region. On the principle of devolving power it states:

*“our members are clear that the government’s devolution agenda can deliver real benefits for business, the economy and society if implemented effectively, with a long term focus on economic growth”.*

### **Question 4: What are your views on how the Tees Valley Mayor should work within the Tees Valley Combined Authority, including checks and balances, and effective scrutiny and democratic oversight, as proposed in the governance review?**

33. The analysis shows the following:

- Of the 1160 people who responded to the consultation, 535 answered this question and 625 skipped it.
- 133 responses focused on whether or not there should be a Tees Valley elected mayor and the vast majority were negative. This was particularly the case in Hartlepool.
- Around 90 responses expressed views on wider governance issues, such as whether there should be a Tees Valley Combined Authority, concerns over how resources would be distributed and an additional layer of bureaucracy.
- Around 170 answered the question directly and were generally supportive, with a theme of comments around the need for transparency and to ensure that there were adequate checks and balances on the power of a mayor and adequate scrutiny of decisions taken by the Mayoral Combined Authority.
- As with Question 3, the remainder of responses were varied in nature and included comments such as “no view either way”, along with references to party politics and Brexit, for example.

## Business and “Other” Responses

34. The Federation of Small Businesses, CBI and North East Chamber of Commerce all supported the need for checks and balances. They stressed that the Combined Authority should consider a role for private sector members in the scrutiny of the Combined Authority’s work. The CBI agreed that the proposed governance structures are appropriate:

*“We are encouraged by the steps the combined authority have taken to create dynamic local governance that responds to local economic needs”.*

## **CONCLUSION**

35. The nature of the consultation and the diversity of the views expressed mean that it is not possible to draw a simple statistical conclusion from the consultation. Where there are clear views expressed which do not directly refer to the consultation, for example the views opposing a Tees Valley mayor, these have been noted in the report.

36. However, of those people who gave views on the consultation questions, a majority overall supported the proposals.

37. Many mentioned the need for checks and balances on the Tees Valley mayor’s powers and this emphasises the importance of the measures in the governance review and scheme.