

**AGENDA ITEM 9****REPORT TO THE TEES VALLEY  
COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET****15 MARCH 2019****REPORT OF THE TEES VALLEY MAYOR****SCRUTINY STUDY: DIVERSITY IN THE TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY  
MEMBERSHIP****SUMMARY**

This report updates Cabinet on the progress of a Scrutiny Study requested by Cabinet into a perceived lack of diversity in gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity in the membership of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet and Committee membership at its Annual General Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018.

This study, including recommendations, is now complete but due to inqorate meetings it has not been possible for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to formally approve it for submission to Cabinet within statutory timeframes.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Cabinet is asked to:

- i. Note the attached report “Genuinely representing the Tees Valley: Seizing the opportunity to write equality into the Constitution of the Tees Valley Combined Authority”.
- ii. Note the Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s intention to request that a formal response be received from Cabinet within two months of the final report’s presentation to Cabinet.

**DETAIL**

1. At its Annual General Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 members of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet requested that Overview & Scrutiny Committee carry out a study into a perceived lack of diversity in gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity in the membership of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet and Committee membership. The Committee agreed to this request at its meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
2. This work has been conducted by a working group consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and Cllr Matthew Storey, supported by the Combined Authority Strategy Director and Governance & Scrutiny Officer.

3. At its meeting of July 19<sup>th</sup> 2018 the Committee agreed to a recommendation that a completed report containing recommendations be presented to Cabinet before the commencement of the pre-election period in March 2019.
4. Over the past year the working group has taken evidence from the Tees Valley Mayor, the Leaders and Mayor of its Constituent Authorities, the Chair and other members of the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chief Executives and Managing Director of its Constituent Authorities, a survey completed by 78 local councillors and 7 individual members of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Regional Secretary of the Trades Union Congress. The working group has also examined relevant academic research and studied best practice from other Combined and Local Authorities.
5. Key findings of the investigation include:
  - i. The observation of an overwhelming and unanimous desire for both the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the five Tees Valley Councils to have memberships which more closely represent the communities they serve – and a recognition that this is currently not being achieved.
  - ii. Evidence that although women make up an above average percentage of the total number of Tees Valley councillors, they appear not to be progressing into leadership roles and roles in which they regularly engage with the Combined Authority– with councillors surveyed citing a lack of confidence and a perceived lack of knowledge as key reasons for this.
  - iii. The suggestion of a lack of engagement with and understanding of the Tees Valley Combined Authority’s purpose and ambitions, which even extends to councillors.
6. The working group subsequently met to develop a list of recommendations aimed at tackling these issues, including:
  - i. A second Deputy Mayor of the Tees Valley, of a differing gender or protected characteristic group to the incumbent Mayor and with a specific responsibility for driving the diversity and equality agenda across the Tees Valley, should be created.
  - ii. Named substitutes should be introduced for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where practicable of a different gender or from a different protected characteristic group to the regular member.
  - iii. The Tees Valley councils should immediately begin recording and reporting the ethnicity, gender and sexuality of elected members in the same way as they already do with staff members.
  - iv. The Tees Valley Combined Authority should lobby government to extend the legal entitlement to time off work for public duties enjoyed by public role holders such as magistrates, to councillors carrying out activities relating to Combined Authorities, Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and to conduct a review of financial disincentives preventing political engagement, in particular by currently under-represented groups.
  - v. The Tees Valley Combined Authority must comprehensively define the roles and responsibilities of portfolio positions and provide job descriptions to portfolio holders.

- vi. The Tees Valley Combined Authority should commission an independent audit of its premises to ensure accessibility, and seek to secure Disability Confident status at the earliest opportunity.
  - vii. Both the Tees Valley Combined Authority and its Constituent Authorities should consult with members on meeting times to ensure that they are as accessible as possible to all members.
  - viii. Both the Tees Valley Combined Authority and its Constituent Authorities should investigate potential use of technology to enable the remote attendance of meetings
  - ix. The Tees Valley Combined Authority should ensure that all Cabinet reports include a thorough and meaningful Equalities Impact assessment, and that this assessment is carried out only by suitably qualified staff.
  - x. The Tees Valley Combined Authority should consider how existing local authority-specific events showcasing the diversity of the Tees Valley – such as Pride and Mela- can be developed into region-wide events.
  - xi. TVCA should commit itself to the ambition of becoming the first Combined Authority to secure Diversity Champion status.
  - xii. Local Authority Leaders should publically commit to a gender balanced cabinet and committee system where practicable and acknowledge the risk of unconscious bias influencing the allocation of portfolios.
7. The draft report was scheduled to be tabled for approval by Full Committee at its meeting of March 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. As this meeting was not quorate it was not possible for the final report to be agreed.
8. Following unsuccessful attempts to arrange an additional quorate meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019, the Tees Valley Mayor agreed to table the draft report for information at the Cabinet meeting of March 15<sup>th</sup> 2019, in order to allow members to consider its findings ahead of the Local Elections and Local Authority Annual Meetings.
9. It is intended that the report be re-presented for approval at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's next scheduled meeting, Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup> 2019. If approval is granted the report will be tabled at the first Cabinet meeting following this approval.
10. Article 7 of the Constitution of the Tees Valley Combined Authority states that where the Overview & Scrutiny Committee makes a report or recommendations, the committee may:
  - i. Publish the report or recommendations;
  - ii. By notice require the Combined Authority or the Mayor to consider the report or recommendations, respond to the committee indicating what (if any) action the Combined Authority proposes to take; and if the Committee has published the report or recommendations, to publish the response.
  - iii. The Combined Authority or Mayor is required to comply with the above "within two months beginning on the date on which the Combined Authority or the Mayor received the report or recommendations".
11. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had planned to therefore asks the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet to note its intention to request that a formal response

be received within two months of the final report's presentation at Cabinet, as per the requirements of the Constitution.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. Implementation of some of the recommendations would incur modest financial costs to the Combined Authority, subject to plans coming forward for formal approval.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. Article 7 of the Constitution of the Tees Valley Combined Authority states that where the Overview & Scrutiny Committee makes a report or recommendations, the committee may by notice require the Combined Authority or the Mayor to consider the report or recommendations, respond to the committee indicating what (if any) action the Combined Authority proposes to take; and if the Committee has published the report or recommendations, to publish the response.
14. The Combined Authority or Mayor is required to comply with the above "within two months beginning on the date on which the Combined Authority or the Mayor received the report or recommendations".

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

15. Not Applicable

**Name of Contact Officer: John Hart**  
**Post Title: Governance and Scrutiny Officer**  
**Telephone Number: 01642 524 580**  
**Email Address: [john.hart@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk](mailto:john.hart@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk)**