

## **IPPR Research: Devolution, Local Government and Gender Representation**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and direction.

### **Summary**

This paper provides an update to members on activity to support IPPR's research into gender representation in local government as the devolution agenda progresses. The paper outlines the detail of the emerging findings and recommendations as well as plans for a roundtable discussion to be held ahead of the launch of the final independent report.

### **Recommendation**

That the City Regions Board note the update and invitation to the roundtable.

### **Action**

Officers to take forward as directed by members.

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## **IPPR research: Devolution, Local Government and Gender Representation**

### **Background**

1. At the Board meeting on 20 January 2017, members were presented with an outline for the LGA supported research being conducted independently by IPPR examining gender representation in local government as devolution progresses.
2. Primarily the research has looked to learn the lessons of other devolved political systems internationally to understand what works in promoting better gender representation. The research has also focused on suggestions/recommendations to overcome these barriers; including practices to recruit and retain female politicians.
3. Members asked that the research reflect:
  - 3.1 Practical recommendations –members recognised that there is already a significant amount of research on this topic would like to see the emphasis of this research placed on practical solutions and detail of ‘what works’.
  - 3.2 The importance of positive role models and the role for schools and colleges in promoting female involvement in politics.
  - 3.3 The different selection process within political parties (including the use of all women shortlists).
  - 3.4 Practice within Scottish and Welsh devolved administrations.

### **Research Report**

4. It was intended that the independent research report would be produced ahead of the Mayoral elections in May 2017. However the researchers decided to postpone the publication so that analysis of the mayoral CA boards and any new appointments made by Mayors could be factored into the research findings.
5. The final research report will now be published in July 2017. As well as exploring gender diversity within combined authorities the report will also compare countries that have devolved political systems, how they perform on gender diversity measures and their strategies and activities to improve representation.
6. The report will make recommendations for what political leaders in local government and national government and other key actors can do to help build a stronger pipeline of female talent. It will also identify what could be learnt from initiatives in these countries to potentially inform the design of a UK scheme to increase gender representation in local government and will include detail on practical measures such as; childcare, allowances and maternity leave.
7. In advance of the publication of the final report IPPR have prepared a summary document with emerging key findings and recommendations for discussion and comment by Board members (**Appendix A**).

### **Roundtable event**

8. IPPR will be holding a round table discussion on Devolution, Local Government and Gender Representation on **18 July in Manchester from 1.00 to 3.00 pm** which will be chaired by Sir Richard Leese in his capacity as Chair of the Board. The event will include a 'preview' of the report and discussion about the emerging findings and recommendations.
9. As the key sponsor for the independent research, members of City Regions Board are invited to attend the discussion and will receive an invitation outlining the event details.

### **Next steps**

10. **Members are asked to note the content of the summary document (Appendix A) and are requested to feed back any comments to be raised with IPPR to Claire Hogan.** In doing so members may wish to consider the following questions:
  - 10.1 Do the emerging findings sufficiently explore the lessons of other devolved political systems internationally and give an understanding of 'what works' in promoting better gender representation.
  - 10.2 Are there further issues that should be reflected?
  - 10.3 Will the emerging recommendations help to address the issues raised? Are there further suggestions for consideration?
  - 10.4 How might the LGA promote the findings/recommendations from this work?
11. A draft of the full report will be circulated to Lead Members for further comment in the week commencing 10 July.

### **Financial Implications**

12. The research is funded from the Board's allocated budget.

### **Implications for Wales**

13. We are working with the WLGA to support its work with councils through sharing the learning from English councils and new Combined Authorities. As such the findings from this research will be shared with WLGA. In addition current practice in Wales will be featured in the 'lessons from international research' section of the final report.