

To: Party Leaders, Bristol City Council

30th March 2012

Dear Party Leaders

Counting Women In: 50/50 Representation in Local Elections

Bristol Fawcett has this week launched a new local campaign, based on the national **Counting Women In** coalition. Its objectives are to campaign for:

- A change in political culture – through implementation of the Charter for Equality
- Political parties to do more to recruit and promote women – achieve 50/50 gender representation in politics
- The media to treat women in public life with respect

Given the implications for political structures heralded by the potential election of a Mayor and the election of a Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon & Somerset, this is an ideal and timely opportunity for us all to galvanise activity in Bristol to address the imbalance in political representation between the genders. Women make up over 50% of the population in Bristol and have a right to an equal say in politics, yet represent currently less than 25% of elected Councillors.

Given that potential Mayoral (in the event of a 'yes' vote in the referendum) and PCC candidates will be put forward by the local political parties your role will be critical in ensuring that women candidates come forward – both in your initial party selection procedures and as eventual candidates. We are, therefore, asking for information on:

- What action you and your party are taking to encourage women candidates
- What selection procedures you are intending to use
- How you are ensuring that selection procedures consider the imperative to address the need for 50/50 representation in our political structures

We appreciate that in relation to the potential election of a Mayor you may wish to respond following the outcome of the referendum, however, we look forward to your response after this date.

Further information on our campaign is available on our website:

<http://www.bristolfawcett.org.uk/CountingWomenIn.html> and via the blog at <http://wearstheshoes.wordpress.com/> and on Twitter via [@wearstheshoes](https://twitter.com/wearstheshoes). As the debate develops around the election of the PCC we will be campaigning to ensure that the critical issues that affect women are considered as a priority, and will look to do similarly for the potential election of a Mayor.

If you wish to meet to discuss any of the issues that we have raised further please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to your response

Bristol Fawcett

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