

Report to Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee

Subject: Establishing a mechanism to better inform policy development

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1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views about establishing a mechanism to better inform policy development.

2. Introduction and background

Members of this committee have previously expressed a view that they would wish to have a mechanism by which they could input into creation and change of major employment policies at an early stage and before consideration by the Joint consultative and Safety Committee.

In terms of a solution to deal with the process of policy formation generally, the Monitoring Officer has identified several options:

- Change process to take draft policies into this committee for "in principle" agreement prior to consultation at JCSC.
- This committee to formally set up a sub-committee and delegate power to the sub-committee to give "in principle" agreement to a draft policy prior to consultation at JCSC.
- This committee to formally set up a working group which will have no delegated powers but will be consulted for their views on a draft policy prior to consulting JCSC.

Based on the views expressed at previous meetings, the third option may best fit the committee's need and if this option was to be selected then the working group could meet informally (there would be no decision-making powers). If the options to bring reports to the full committee or a sub-committee were preferred then the meeting would be subject to all the usual rules relating to agendas and minutes. Usually a working group/sub-committee would contain a small number of members and is politically balanced.

3. Proposal

It is proposed that the committee considers the three options outlined that are designed to address the need to influence key policy development and determine if there is a wish to proceed with one of these.

The option proposed to best meet the perceived need of the committee is to establish a working group. If this preferred option is selected the committee will need to determine an appropriate composition of the group. This would also be the case if Members prefer to create a sub-committee.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee:

4.1 Determines if there is support within the committee to create a mechanism by which major policy formulation can be influenced prior to referral for formal consultation and, subject to an expression of support,

4.2 Agrees the proposed preferred option by which such policy review will be undertaken, which is to create a working group and

4.3 Determines, if created, the membership of such a working group paying due regard to political balance.