

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

8.4 YOUR VIEWS ARE INVITED:

Q Do you think the Council's preferred option (twice-yearly conference) meets the requirements of the Order in Council?

Q Do you think the Council's preferred option is the best way to involve the professions in addition to the ways they are otherwise being included in the practices and processes of the Council?

Q Do you think that the Council's preference for twice-yearly meetings is appropriate to the likely workload of the professional advisory committee?

Q Do you agree with the Council's proposal to hold the Conferences at venues around the four countries on a rolling basis?

8.2 THE ORDER SAYS:

Part II, 3 (12): The Council -
(a) may establish such other committees as it considers appropriate in connection with the discharge of its functions; and

(b) may, in particular, establish professional advisory committees whose function is to advise the Council and its statutory committees (whether on the request of the Council or otherwise) on matters affecting any relevant profession, and may delegate any of its functions to them, other than any power to make rules.

Schedule 1, Part I, 14: In appointing non-Council members to any committee set up under article 3(12) the Council shall have regard, where appropriate and subject to the other provisions of this Order, to the guidance issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

(1) The Council shall ensure that such members of the committee who are not Council members shall have the qualifications, interests or experience as, in the opinion of the Council, are relevant to the field with which the committee is mainly concerned.

(2) The majority of members of a professional advisory committee shall be members of the profession concerned and the Chairman shall be a Council member.

(3) The Council shall -
(a) establish and maintain a system for the declaration and registration of private interests of its members and of other members of its committees and sub-committees; and

(b) publish entries recorded in a register of such members' interests.

8.3 THEREFORE THE COUNCIL MAY:

Set up one or more professional advisory committees to advise the Council or its statutory committees on matters affecting relevant professions, but any such committee which the Council does set up must be chaired by a Council member and include members of the relevant professions in a majority. The Council must also define the qualifications, interests or experience which committee members must have, and ensure that these requirements are met by all committee members who are otherwise not Council members.

The Council has consulted many of the relevant professional bodies on this matter in its 'Listening to the Professionals' day and has undertaken a number of facilitated workshops to analyse the issues. The options which have been considered are:

- **do nothing** The Council would not set up professional advisory committees at all but rely rather on the advice from registrant assessors for specific issues and the experience and advice of Council members for wider issues. This option will leave the Council still needing to find a means of consulting with the professions from time to time as required in the Order in Council

- **twelve standing committees** The Council would set up a standing committee for each of its registrant professions which would meet on a regular basis to advise the Education and Training Committee and the Practice Committees in areas where the knowledge or experience of their own members, or the panels they have convened for particular purposes, is insufficient. It is not clear how much work would be left for the professional advisory committee to

undertake, and the risk is consequently that this option will increase the bureaucracy (and costs) of the Council without a complementary increase in efficiency

- **twice-yearly conference** The Council would set up a committee of key players from each of the professions, who would meet twice a year at a Conference of the Professions, and provide a consultative forum in which to discuss issues concerning standards and guidance or changes to the register, as outlined in the Order in Council. These 'Conferences' would be held in a rolling sequence of venues, thus helping to ensure equal involvement of professionals from around the four countries. This option meets the requirements of the OIC in terms of consultation whilst minimising the cost implications. It is the Council's preferred option.