



PRESS RELEASE

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CHIEF MINISTER PUBLISHES COMMAND PAPER FOR A GIBRALTAR CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Picardo creates body which will be above politics

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has today published a Command Paper for a Gibraltar Consultative Council Act. The proposed Act reflects the decision of the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC, to propose a body for Gibraltar which would be similar to the Privy Council in UK. This proposal was included within the Chief Minister's Budget Speech in June 2014.

In last year's Budget Speech, Mr Picardo said, 'When a nation such as ours finds that there are issues that affect the national Interest, there needs to be a body above party politics that can provide an opportunity for consideration of those issues.'

Members of the Gibraltar Consultative Council (GCC) will be:

As Post-Holders:

The Chief Minister, who will act as Chairman

The Deputy Chief Minister

The Minister for Justice

The Leader of the Opposition

As Life Members:

All individuals who have held the post of Chief Minister

All individuals who have held the post of Deputy Chief Minister

As Ad Hoc Members:

Other persons (but not exceeding ten in number) may be appointed by the Chief Minister.

When the Act comes into effect, there will be an inaugural meeting of the GCC at which all members will take an Oath of Appointment. After that, the Chief Minister will convene a plenary meeting of the Council at least once every 12 months. A plenary meeting will be convened at least once within four months of the appointment of a new Chief Minister who may, at his discretion, convene a meeting of the GCC as he



determines necessary. The Chief Minister may wish to consult individuals or groups of members of the GCC on any matters as and when he considers it necessary.

Members of the GCC may use the pre-nominal style, 'The Right Honourable'. However, they will not receive any remuneration.

The Chief Minister said, 'This is a seminal piece of legislation. I think it is important that there should be a permanent forum created which allows for the best brains in Gibraltar to work together on issues that can affect all of our community regardless of party political allegiance. I believe that the UK Privy Council model is a good one for us to follow in establishing such a body. I committed myself to doing this in my Budget speech last year and I am very happy that I have been able to see the draft Bill produced in time for publication now. I am very keen indeed to see this Bill on the statute book as an Act which makes provision for us to have the proper forum for confidential discussion between our Nation's leaders on matters where cannot afford to quarrel and bicker. I sincerely believe this is the right thing to do and I hope the whole of the community will support this initiative and that the Consultative Council will become a permanent and enduring feature for the good governance of Gibraltar.'

Ends

Note to Editors:

In his Budget Speech in June last year, Chief Minister said the following:

"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF "THE CHIEF MINISTERS CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL"

269. I move on now to an entirely different matter, Mr Speaker.

270. I have spoken before about establishing for Gibraltar a status akin to that of the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. When a nation such as ours finds that there are issues that affect the National Interest there needs to be a body above party politics that can provide an opportunity for consideration of those issues.

271. Mr Speaker, such a body can off course be established on an ad hoc basis at any time. I have had ad hoc contact with the Leader of the Opposition on such terms last year. The previous Chief Minister established a similar ad hoc consultative body when Gibraltar was facing the threat of Joint Sovereignty but did not include the Opposition in it.

272. I want to go further than that Mr Speaker. I want to change the way we do politics on issues that matter to the National Interest. I am a supporter and defender of the Westminster, party adversarial system. But when the National Interest is at stake, then we must be able to all work together; because Gibraltar's best brains can be brought to work in unison when necessary but not condemned to never have to challenge each other by a change to a Committee System of government that some have talked off in the past.

273. But any such new body must be permanent. It cannot be ad hoc.

274. I therefore today propose to create a body to be known henceforth as the Chief Minister's Consultative Council. The make up of it should be as follows:



- For their lifetime all individuals who have held the post of Chief Minister; 65
- For their lifetime all individuals who have held the post of Deputy Chief Minister;
- For the period of their tenure in office, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Justice;
- For such period as may be stipulated in the notice of appointment, such other person or persons as the Chief Minister of the day may consider appropriate to appoint.

275. Membership of the CMCC will require members to sign the Official Secrets Act so that information shared with them is subject to strict rules of confidentiality.

276. The CMCC will enable the Chief Minister of the day to meet with all, some or just one of its members as he or she may consider appropriate and exchange ideas or take advice on any particular matter or issue within the parameters of the strict confidence required of individuals who will make up the CMCC.

277. It is my view Mr Speaker, that all individuals who become members of the CMCC should be able to use the pre-nominal letters The Right Honourable, as is the case in respect of membership of Her Majesty's Privy Council in the United Kingdom.