

# IRO Membership Opinion Survey

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**Have your say on becoming a Chartered Institution and help the IRO develop the profession of Railway Operations**

**The IRO Members Opinion Survey for Chartered Status will open on 24<sup>th</sup> May and close on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

The Board believes that seeking Chartered status is an important step in Institution's 17 year evolution. The IRO is already the pre-eminent organisation for railway operators worldwide and boasts an ever increasing and engaged membership.

The Board recommends that the members support the application for Chartered status in order to deliver our increasingly important vision.

*The IRO vision is: "To support improvement in the quality of the railway operations workforce and help railway organisations to succeed".*

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We need to know what you think and we need a bit of extra information from you too. To make it easy we have teamed up with Electoral Reform Services, an independent scrutineer with a great track record in online voting. The following information will tell you all you need to know about why we are doing this and what you do next.

## There are three questions on the opinion survey:

The Board are seeking your opinion on two aspects of IRO's future form

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Why it is helpful?</b>	<b>What we will do with this data?</b>
1.	Do you support IRO's application for Chartered status?	The Board recommends that Chartered status is sought for the IRO and would like to involve the members on the journey towards this by asking upfront about their support for the idea. The Privy Council need to know that the membership is supportive of the IRO becoming a Chartered Institution to proceed effectively.	This will not be linked to your personal data and will be used only in the total count. It will not be retained.
2.	Do you support IRO's application for Charitable status?	Whatever the outcome of our application for Chartered status we may be best served by forming a Charity – the requirement or need for this would become evident during the application and feedback processes of the Privy Council.	This will not be linked to your personal data and will be used only in the total count. It will not be retained.

We also additionally ask for some personal information to assist with the application.

3.	Which is your highest level of education?	The application for Chartered status will require us to specify the current levels of education of our membership. We would appreciate an update from you on this according to a simple table of six levels (no qualification/GCSE equiv/A levels equiv/Diploma equiv/Degree/Higher degree)	On this item your access code generated by the Electoral Reform Services (ERS) will be linked in their system (not in IRO) to your membership number. After the survey is closed ERS will prepare the data so that your membership record can be updated.
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As there are so many types of national qualifications, the six levels for the education qualification are described in the broadest terms. If you are not sure then there is a table to denote exactly which qualifications are included in each level on the IRO website or you can call the office to enquire.

Some Background Information:

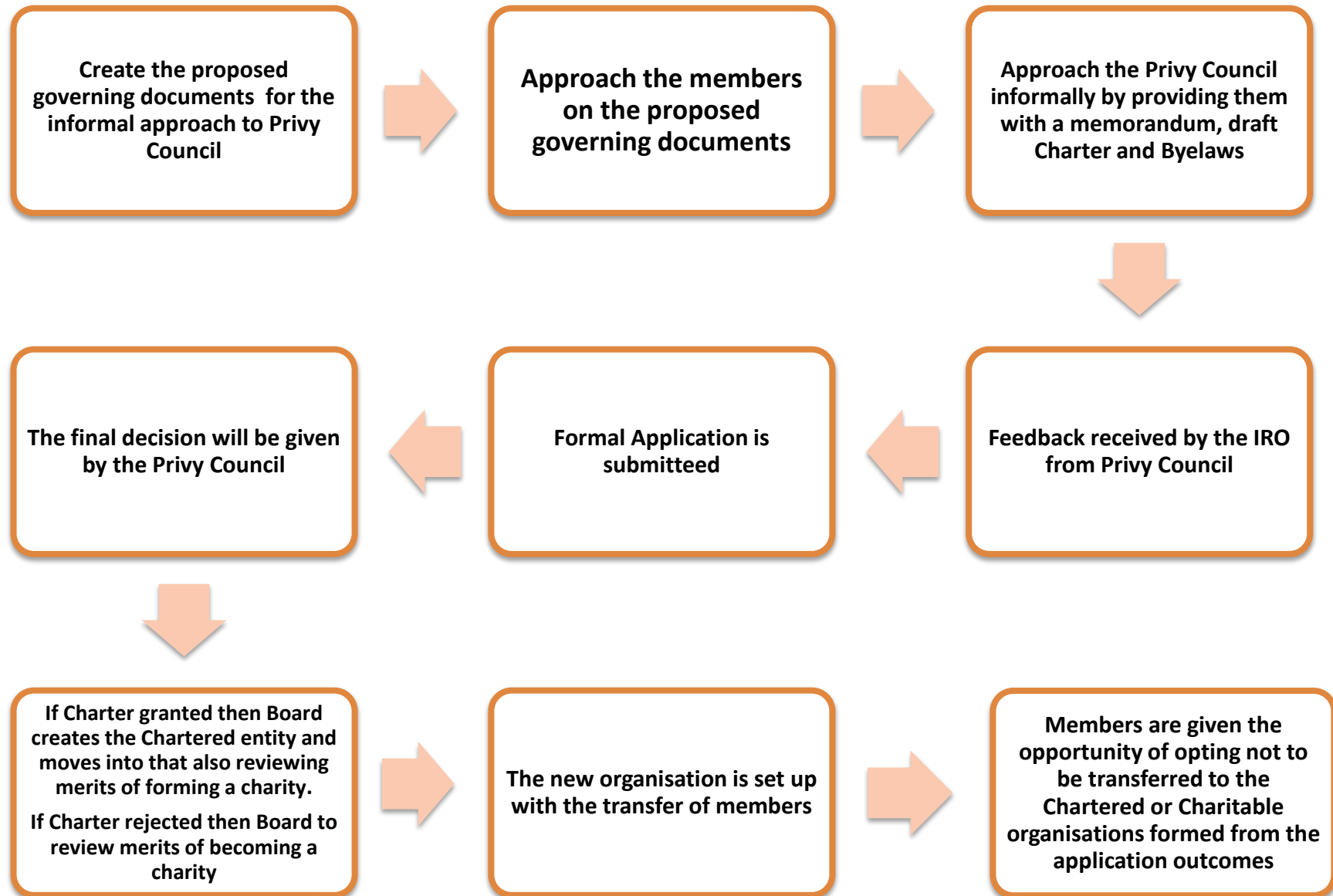
## What is a Charter?

A Royal Charter is a formal document granted by the Sovereign on advice of the Privy Council. The Charter grants rights and powers to a body corporate. They have a history dating back to the 13th century and were historically used to create public or private corporations, including towns, cities and universities. However more recently, new Charters are normally reserved for bodies that work in the public interest (such as professional institutions and charities) which can demonstrate pre-eminence, stability and permanence in their particular field. If the IRO were successful in their application, we would give up company status and become incorporated by Royal Charter. Grants of Royal charters are quite rare and are only granted to organisations of importance, thus a grant is recognition that the organisation is of such national and international importance that it is worthy of regulation in this way.

## What are the benefits to the IRO obtaining a Charter?

- Recognition for the contributions to society that the IRO makes
- Enhance the standing of the IRO in working with other bodies
- Enhance the standing of members
- The ability to offer individuals Chartered status
- Recognition that the IRO's work is of national and international importance, to the highest professional and ethical standards and for the public benefit.
- Enhance the IRO's reputation and credibility

## What is the process for applying for a Charter?



## Why am I also being asked about the IRO being a Charity?

Many organisations who work in the same way as ours find it beneficial to make their public benefit obvious by becoming a Charity whether they have a Charter or not. It is a form of organisation which may be useful for the IRO to have in the near future whether or not our application for Chartered status is successful.

## What are the benefits to the IRO becoming a Charity?

Charities benefit from a number of financial advantages, including exemptions from:

- Income or corporation tax on some types of income
- Capital Gains Tax
- Stamp Duty
- Inheritance tax on gifts made in wills
- The Gift Aid scheme allows charities to reclaim the tax on donations from individuals. Businesses receive tax relief when they make donations to charity.
- Additionally, charities pay no more than 20% of normal business rates on occupied buildings and can get special VAT treatment in some circumstances
- Becoming a registered charity can make it easier to raise funds from the public, grant-making trusts and local government
- Give donors and beneficiaries confidence that the IRO is legitimate and working within a regulatory regime, and that the funds are used for the intended purpose.
- It would become more clear that we are not-for-profit.
- The Charity Commission can provide advice and information to assist charity administration.

## What is the process of becoming a Charity?

It is similar to that of applying to the Privy Council for a Charter except the Charity Commission is the body which would determine how suitable we were with our application.

## What if we are successful?

If we are successful in our application then we can establish Rail Operations as a profession on a par with the other disciplines in the railway system. We can begin to award Individual Chartered status after an additional application to the Privy Council and we can change the organisation's name to the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators.

We can also consider beginning a Charity which would attract the benefits listed on the earlier page.

## What if we are unsuccessful?

The Board would need to consider the feedback from the process to determine how we can best fulfil our purpose. It may be at that time the Board would implement any changes the Privy Council suggest in the hope of re applying at a future date. Alternatively we would consider running as a Charity with an attendant trading company or remaining as we are – a Company Limited by Guarantee.

## What are our chances of gaining Chartered status?

We hope to be accepted as a Chartered organisation believing it to be fitting for an organisation of our size and track record to be positively considered for this honour. However, we are mindful that we do not own the process and so cannot guarantee a particular outcome. That is why we also ask you to consider what we must do if our application does not succeed at this time.

Application failures are not published and are therefore difficult to research. However what is known is that the process to become a Chartered organisation is highly selective and can focus on many facets of an organisation's suitability. We know by looking at a ten year history of successful applicants that many of them had been going for a lot longer than the IRO and most were trading as Charities in the lead up to their application. However, the research also reveals departures from the norm and so we cannot determine our likely outcome.

## What can I do to help as a member?

*Please vote* – let us know your thoughts and talk to others about it to encourage as much feedback as possible.

*Qualifications:* We need to convince the Privy Council on the stated requirement that ‘corporate members of the Institution should be qualified to at least first degree level in a relevant discipline’ (quote from the Privy Council website). We aim to do this by emphasising our commitment and track record in the professionalisation of Operations to date including ...

- Our education programmes
- Our short courses
- Our extensive Continuing Professional Development offering
- Our mentoring programme
- Our Recognition of Prior Learning system
- Our peer assessed membership upgrade structure

*About other institutions supporting the IRO:* - The Privy Council seems to place a high importance on whether an Institution is comprised of members of a unique profession and whether we have as members most of the eligible field for membership, without significant overlap with other bodies. We already have letters of support from a number of other rail institutions but not all have replied at this point. However, as we now have by far the largest number of railway operations members of all the Institutions it will be difficult for others to contest our validity on this factor. If you are a member of another Institution it would be helpful if you could promote positive discussion around the IRO’s application and be reassuring about the IRO’s intention to remain a willing participant in the Railway Engineers Forum – where all the rail institutions meet to uphold the common interests of all railway professionals.



## Where can I go to get more information?

- On the IRO website there are the following background documents:
  - Our current Articles of Association
  - The Proposed Charter to be used in the Application
  - The Proposed Bye Laws to be used in the Application
  - The Proposed Code of Conduct to be used in the Application
  - The Proposed Disciplinary Code to be used in the Application
  - The standard Charity Articles of Association
  
- Telephone us

Call the office to speak to a member of staff: 03333 440523

- Email us: [info@railwayoperators.co.uk](mailto:info@railwayoperators.co.uk)

## What do I do next?

You will receive a personalised, electronic communication in the next few weeks from Electoral Reform Services – it will explain everything you need to do. Voting is quick and secure. Please use your vote – we can't do this without the support of all our members.