

Figure 2.1 - The ten features of good policy-making

<p>1. FORWARD LOOKING The policy-making process clearly defines outcomes that the policy is designed to achieve. Where appropriate, it takes a long-term view based on statistical trends and informed predictions of social, political, economic and cultural trends, for at least five years into the future of the likely effect and impact of the policy. The following points demonstrate a forward looking approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a statement of intended outcomes is prepared at an early stage; • contingency or scenario planning; • taking into account the Executive's long-term strategy; and • use of the Foresight programme (details at http://www.foresight.gov.uk/) and/or other forecasting work. <p>2. OUTWARD LOOKING The policy-making process takes account of influencing factors in the regional, national, European and international situation; and draws on experience in other regions and countries. The following points demonstrate an outward looking approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes use of OECD, EU mechanisms, etc; • looks at how other countries have dealt with the issue; and • recognises variation within Northern Ireland. <p>3. INNOVATIVE, FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE The policy-making process is flexible and innovative, questioning established ways of dealing with things, encouraging new and creative ideas; and, where appropriate, making established ways work better. Wherever possible, the process is open to comments and suggestions of others. Risks are identified and actively managed. The following points demonstrate an innovative, flexible and creative approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses alternatives to the usual ways of working (brainstorming sessions etc); • defines success in terms of outcomes already identified; • consciously assesses and manages risk; • takes steps to create management structures which promote new ideas and effective team working; and • brings in people from outside into the policy team. 	<p>4. EVIDENCE-BASED The advice and decisions of policy makers are based upon the best available evidence from a wide range of sources; all key stakeholders are involved at an early stage and through the policy's development. All relevant evidence, including that from specialists, is available in an accessible and meaningful form to policy-makers. Key points of an evidence-based approach to policy-making include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviews existing research; • commissions new research; • consults relevant experts and/or uses internal and external consultants; and • considers a range of properly costed and appraised options. <p>5. INCLUSIVE The policy-making process takes account of the impact on and/or meets the needs of all people directly or indirectly affected by the policy; and involves key stakeholders directly. An inclusive approach may include the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consults those responsible for service delivery/implementation; • consults those at the receiving end or otherwise affected by the policy; • carries out an impact assessment; and • seeks feedback on policy from recipients and front line deliverers. <p>6. JOINED UP The process takes a holistic view; looking beyond institutional boundaries to the administration's strategic objectives and seeks to establish the ethical, moral and legal base for policy. There is consideration of the appropriate management and organisational structures needed to deliver cross-cutting objectives. The following points demonstrate a joined-up approach to policy-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross cutting objectives clearly defined at the outset; • joint working arrangements with other departments clearly defined and well understood; • barriers to effective joining up clearly identified with a strategy to overcome them; and • implementation considered part of the policy making process. 	<p>7. LEARNS LESSONS Learns from experience of what works and what does not. A learning approach to policy development includes the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on lessons learned and good practice disseminated. • account available of what was done by policy-makers as a result of lessons learned; and • clear distinction drawn between failure of the policy to impact on the problem it was intended to resolve and managerial/operational failures of implementation. <p>8. COMMUNICATION The policy-making process considers how policy will be communicated with the public. The following contribute to effective communication of policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communications/presentation strategy prepared and implemented; and • Executive Information Service involved from an early stage. <p>9. EVALUATION Systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of policy is built into the policy-making process. Approaches to policy-making that demonstrate a commitment to evaluation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly defined purpose for the evaluation set at outset; • success criteria defined; • means of evaluation built into the policy-making process from the outset; and • use of pilots to influence final outcomes. <p>10. REVIEW Existing/established policy is constantly reviewed to ensure it is really dealing with problems it was designed to solve, taking account of associated effects elsewhere. Aspects of a reviewing approach to policy-making include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing review programme in place with a range of meaningful performance measures; • mechanisms to allow service deliverers/customers to provide feedback direct to policy-makers set up; and • redundant or failing policies scrapped.
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