

Review of Committees, Advisory Groups and Reference Groups that Support the Connexional Team

Basic Information

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Action Required	Information
Draft Resolution	
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This paper aims to update the Council on the Review of Committees, Advisory Groups and Reference Groups that support the Connexional Team.
Main Points	Building on work done last Connexional Year, the Review of Committees is continuing on a Cluster-by-Cluster basis. This will create a framework which ensures efficient two-way communication between all groups and the Connexional Team, help groups to determine clear terms of reference and purpose, maximise the effectiveness of all groups' work and offer the best support to all groups during transition to the new model.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Methodist Conference 2007 (Resolution 41/4) directed Council to oversee a review of all groups that support the work of the Connexional Team. The first steps in this review were taken last year when 31 out of the 78 groups originally identified were reviewed and a proposed nomenclature and specific changes to 16 groups were approved by Council (MC/08/49). Since then, Methodist Council has given the authority to determine future outcomes of the groups to the Secretary for Internal Relationships unless it involves a matter of substantive principle.
Consultations	The Connexional Team, Connexional Leadership Forum and all groups supporting the work of the Team.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	The outcome of the review of a number of committees may impact some Standing Orders, but this can only be determined once decisions are made on individual groups' futures.
Financial	The restructuring of the committee structure will improve the expenses procedure for all groups. Increasing the amount of electronic communication in the place of any unnecessary face-to-face meetings will reduce avoidable costs.
Wider Connexional	All Committees reviewed may wish to have detailed points in relation to the Review of Committees discussed and addressed.

Review of Committees, Advisory Groups and Reference Groups that Support the Connexional Team – an update to Council

Preamble

The Connexional Team recognises that all Committees and groups offer a valuable contribution to the work of the Methodist Church. Though the functions of these groups vary, each has its own significance and the support that they offer is highly valued throughout the Connexional Team. It is the aim of this review to create a framework which helps the Connexional Team and the Church as a whole to get maximum benefit from the good work done by all groups and Committees.

The Connexional Team is working with all groups and Committees to undertake this review. The final decision on to the future of all groups and committees lies with the Secretary for Internal Relationships unless a proposal concerns an issue of substantive principle in which case he will make recommendations to Council on the future of a group.

Background and Context

The review of committees was started last Connexional Year. 78 groups were originally identified and the 31 of these which had no input in the governance support process were subject to the first stage of this review.

A Council Working Group proposed scenarios for 16 of these groups and deferred decisions on the other 15 until this Connexional year to allow outstanding work to be completed. The Working Group expected that the future scenarios of these 15 groups would be resolved by the end of this Connexional Year, using the same approach, methodology and criteria that they employed when making their original proposals.

Room for Improvement

Since the review of committees started, the Team Focus review has been more fully implemented. As a result, some committees have had part of their self-declared remit removed. More significantly, the reconfigured Connexional Team has also been put in place.

It is now clear that it is more logical to adopt a Cluster-by-Cluster approach in this review so as to ensure that each group's work and management falls under the appropriate Cluster. This will create an improved structure which will help groups to be more accountable for their work, ensure better clarity of purpose and improve 2-way communication between the groups and the Connexional Team.

It has also become evident that the original list of 78 groups and committees was not exhaustive. Other groups, and other types of groups, have since been identified. Knowledge of these groups could well have impacted the future scenarios recommended by the Council Reference Group.

Revised Methodology

Members of all Clusters in the reconfigured team have been asked to co-ordinate the review of committees in their area of work. They will identify and work alongside all relevant groups to recommend a suggested future scenario for individual groups as well as an overarching framework for all those supporting the work of their Cluster, or if necessary, sub-Cluster.

No recommendations have been formed before this consultation. They will be a product of the responses and evidence provided by committees and the experience and expertise of members of the Connexional Team who work with these groups.

Once these recommendations have been made, it is for the Secretary for Internal Relationships to determine the final outcome for all groups. It is only if this would involve a matter of substantive principle that these recommendations need to be sent to Council.

Additional Comments

The timelines originally drawn up during the first stage of this review suggested that the future of all groups without governance powers should be resolved by the end of this Connexional Year. However, due to the new approach adopted for the review, this may not be possible. Although we will endeavour to get this work complete by August 2009, the staggered Cluster-by-Cluster approach may mean that some work is left outstanding at this time. However, we feel that this approach will result in a more beneficial outcome for the both the groups themselves and the Connexional Team.