

The Connexional Team – Strategy and Workplan

Contact Name and Details	Mr Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary, swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk Prof Peter Howdle, Chair of SR, p.d.howdle@leeds.ac.uk
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	62/1. The Council notes the workplan and encourages the SLG and the SRC to continue to develop a Strategy for the Connexional Team and its work. 62/2. The Council asks the SLG to note the outcomes of any matters raised by the Council in relation to the formation of a workplan for 2013-2014.
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	n/a

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To share with the Council the evolution of a strategy and workplan for the Connexional Team
Main Points	The work undertaken on developing a strategy that explains the purpose of the Team. SRC discussion on the workplan. The resulting workplan for 2013-14.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Our Calling The Priorities of the Methodist Church Connexional Team Ways of Working
Consultations	SRC

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	n/a
Faith and Order	n/a
Financial	Work not budgeted for is noted and worked into budget planning for the year ahead
Personnel	n/a
Legal	n/a
Wider Connexional	n/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	n/a
Risk	The complex nature of the ongoing and new work of the Team needs to be accountable to the relevant governance bodies

Connexional Team Strategy and Workplan

Introduction

1. The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) two interlinking items for discussion and consideration – an emerging strategy for the work of the Connexional Team and an associated workplan for 2013- 2014.
2. The SLG wanted to share a workplan with the SRC and the Council which enables the following –
 - a. A more regular pattern of accountability through the year for the work of the Team
 - b. An engagement with the ongoing and repeating work of the Team
 - c. An acknowledgement that business sent from the Conference to the Team represents the minority of the work that has to be undertaken
 - d. A better focus on the desired outcomes and the key measures of success throughout the year
 - e. An opportunity at the end of any piece of work to compare the predicted measures of success with the actual outcomes
 - f. A built in examination of costs associated with work
3. The SLG wanted to reiterate that the purpose of the Team is grounded in Standing Orders and makes clear that we are here to support the Church and its processes. The Team cannot deliver on those things which are the strategy for the whole Church (e.g. A discipleship movement shaped for mission), but we are here to enable and equip by various means.
4. The Team seeks to be “Highly Professional” and “Distinctively Christian” and these are key goals that will enable our strategy of support. All the work that we do is underpinned by *Our Calling* and the *Priorities for the Methodist Church*. These remain the bedrock of what the Methodist Church is about and seeks to be.
5. The *Ways of Working* introduced in 2008 (this was an internal document used during Team Focus to express the values, attitudes, and behaviours of the Team) underpins the life of the Team and these will be re-worked in light of a staff consultation being undertaken throughout the Autumn and Winter of this year.
6. To enable the accountability referred to above it was the desire of the SLG to share with the SRC not only those items of business that have come from the Conference this year but also to offer a much wider view of key pieces of work that take up the resources of the Team. We knew we would never be able to offer a comprehensive list of everything the Team undertakes but we wished to share more with the SRC than had been previously. To enable this process we arrived at four sections in the work plan which we hoped would enable the whole Team to describe the work we undertake. These four sections are -
 - a. *Engaging & responding with purpose* – in this section is the work which we undertake to communicate with and respond to the Church’s needs – through projects, processes, or ensuring that we help support the Church to be “a discipleship movement shaped for mission”. Here we also think clearly about our role as a partner with other churches here and around the world.

- b. *Stewardship of resources* – here we report areas of work which have an outcome maximising value, making best use of time, technology or people, improving ongoing processes or instituting change to deliver a better result.
 - c. *Accountability & faithfulness* – this section reports on work which falls under a general umbrella of enabling the Church’s mission and witness by being safe, legal, and respectable .
 - d. *Fulfilling Conference requirements* – this section will contain the majority of the work that has been approved by the Conference through resolutions, memorials, and notices of motion.
7. For each of the four sections there is a number of expanded categories. These are:
- A description of an area of work or item from the Conference itself
 - The Cluster or team leading or liaising with others
 - The Committee or body responsible for oversight of the work
 - A suggestion of actions to be taken (with any deadlines to be met in relation to governance)
 - Assumptions or cost implications – relating to people and financial resources
 - Measures of success – what it is that we should achieve as a result of this work being undertaken
8. The resulting document was a work plan for 2013/2014 contained in MC/13/62B which was been put together by the lead staff in the Clusters and agreed by the SLG. We believed this gives a much clearer picture of how we are spending our time, energy and resources as well as the impact we hope the work will have. It is still noted that this is not the complete. The SRC discussed this workplan at its meeting on 16th September 2013.

SRC reflection on the Strategy and the workplan

9. The SRC affirmed the breadth of what had been produced and felt that it was a good start to thinking strategically about the immense amount of work that the Team was both expected to do routinely and also was sent from Conference each year.
10. However the SRC suggested the work was prioritised (as in the previous system of rating work A,B, or C) since it recognised the amount asked of the Team. They also questioned whether the ‘Key Measures of Success’ were actually a list of outcomes rather than measures of success.
11. The SRC focussed on the need for the Council to be informed of the priorities for the Team for the year ahead and had further suggestions of additions of a ‘traffic light system’ to aid monitoring as well as adding further information on how much time was being spent.
12. In light of the tight time scales between the SRC and the Council it was felt that a large amount of time should not be spent on reworking the 40 page workplan but that adaptations could be made throughout the year.
13. The Council is therefore offered the full workplan and also a document relating to the work from last year (MC/13/62C) which is yet to be completed.
14. The SRC considered it helpful to have a number of key areas highlighted to the Council. Choosing one area from each of the Key themes the following is therefore offered as an area of work which considerable time and resources are being expended in the year ahead ;
- Continuing the development of local preacher and worship leaders pathways
 - Managing regular and one off fundraising activities
 - Review of the appointment process for District Chairs

- Ongoing work and initial reporting of the Past Cases Review

Conclusion

14. It is clear that with the amount of work being expected of the Team we need to continue to find ways of expressing the work plan as a living document which enables accountability and transparency. The SLG believes this process has been started this year but hears the desire from the SRC for a different kind of document for next year. Through working together on this in the year to come, and hearing any feedback from the Council it is hoped that this work will continue to enable both the Council and the SRC to undertake their respective roles in relation to the Team.
15. The Council is asked to take a view on how it wishes the work of the Team throughout the year to be reported to the Conference through its own report.

*****RESOLUTIONS:**

62/1. The Council notes the workplan and encourages the Senior Leadership Group and the Strategy and Resources Committee to continue to develop a strategy for the Connexional Team and its work.

62/2. The Council asks the Senior Leadership Group to note the outcomes of any matters raised by the Council in relation to the formation of a workplan for 2013-2014