

Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee

MC/23/78

Date of meeting	19-20 October 2023
Contact name and details	Matt Tattersall – Executive Director of Finance and Resources tattersallm@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	For comment
Resolutions	78/1. The Council receives the report. 78/2. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee and directs the Law and Polity Committee to prepare the Standing Order amendments required to give effect to it.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	To propose Terms of Reference for the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee.
Main points	The Conference is concerned about the cumulative impact of its decisions and has established a scrutiny sub-committee to analyse proposals coming before the Conference.
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	Notice of Motion 2021/112
Consultations	JDS Committee Chair of the Conference Business Committee

Summary of impact

Financial	Greater scrutiny will be made of Conference decisions that impact financial resources.
Wider connexional	The impact of Conference decisions on local churches and circuits will be better understood when those decisions are made.
Risk	Reduces the risk that Conference decisions are made but then implementation is frustrated by lack of resources.

Introduction

- 1 In adopting Notice of Motion 112, the 2021 Conference directed the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference with regard to resources, time and potential benefits. The Conference also appealed to the Council to recognise the reduced capacity in all parts of the life of the Connexion and therefore to apply the existing mandate the Council has to evaluate the number and cumulative time impact of resolutions presented to all future Conferences.
- 2 The 2022 Conference agreed to establish a Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee (CSS) in place of the Conference Financial Committee (CFC) with a broader remit to consider the 'impact' of resolutions. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to carry out further work to determine the details of the CSS (including its membership and its relationship with the Business Committee) and, following collaboration and consultation with the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee and the Law and Polity Committee, to bring Standing Orders for the establishment of the CSS to the Conference of 2023. The Conference further directed that, pending the establishment of the CSS, the CFC should scrutinise the material coming before it to determine as far as may be its impact on the whole connexion in terms of resources of finance, personnel and workload.
- 3 In response to this, the Council agreed that the Conference of 2023 would be a transitional year in which new questions would be asked of those proposing notices of motion and the learning from this process reported back to the Council alongside recommendations for the new scrutiny group and its Terms of Reference.

Conference 2023

- 4 A revised Notice of Motion (NoM) form (see appendix 1) was adopted for the 2023 Conference to allow the CFC better to assess the wider impact of the proposal being made. Only six NoMs were received (the average number from 2019-2022 was eighteen) and only four of these put to the Conference.
- 5 The impact of each of the six NOMs received was relatively minimal. Three concerned the composition of the Conference, two were amending Memorial responses, and one asked for specific issues to be considered as the lay mission partner programme was wound down. None were asking for churches and circuits to undertake further work.
- 6 The purpose of the new form was to get proposers to think more deeply about what they were asking the Church to commit to and how such commitments would be fulfilled. Whilst the number of NoMs was reduced compared with previous years and the scope of the NoMs was more limited, it is not possible to conclude that the introduction of the new form was the cause of this.
- 7 The CFC did note that some NoM proposers had taken the opportunity to seek the support offered on the form (such as discussion with the Connexional Secretary) and others had not. Also, some had been more successful than others in articulating the impact of their proposals. Nevertheless, the CFC were as content as they could be with the process this year.

Proposals

- 8 It is proposed that the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee is established in line with the outline proposals put forward last year. Membership should be from those most affected by notices of motion, such as Connexional Secretary, Synod Secretary, treasurer, superintendent, church steward as well as a member of either the Resourcing Committee or Connexional Council to ensure the link to the budgeting process. However, in light of a reduced Conference size (and therefore a reduced pool of available people in those roles) it would be unwise to be too prescriptive about membership; therefore it is suggested that the committee is made up of the Connexional Secretary (Chair), a member of either the Connexional Council or Resourcing Committee and three other members of the Conference. The sub-committee will be supported by the Executive Director of Finance and Resources.

9 On the recommendation of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Committee the JDS impact assessment (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/27546/jds-branded-equality-impact-assessment-english-111122.pdf>) will be incorporated alongside the Notice of Motion form to ensure issues related to discrimination can be actively considered and prevented.

10 The Terms of Reference of the sub-committee are proposed as follows:

10.1 The Connexional Council, with a view to the discharge of its functions during the periods of the Conference, shall appoint a scrutiny sub-committee annually, consisting of the Connexional Secretary (who shall Chair the committee), a member of either the Connexional Council or the Resourcing Committee and three other members of the Conference, together with such other members of the Connexional Team in an advisory capacity as the council may decide.

10.2 The committee shall meet before and during the sessions of the Conference as necessary, shall scrutinise all material coming before the Conference that has not already been subject to an impact assessment, to determine, as far as may be, its impact on the whole connexion in terms of resources, finance, personnel, workload, equality and culture and to advise the Conference of its conclusions.

10.3 In relation to all such resolutions which, if adopted, would result in increased resource implications the committee shall advise the Conference, prior to any debate or vote upon them,

- (i) whether, if adopted, the impact of the resolution has been fully articulated in the proposal;
- (ii) whether the financial costs can be accommodated within the council's proposed budget;
- (iii) if not, how those additional costs should be funded, and
- (iv) if there are several such proposals before the committee, what priority should be given to each.

10.4 The committee's advice shall, except in emergencies, be conveyed to the Conference in writing.

***RESOLUTION

78/1. The Council receives the report.

78/2. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee and directs the Law and Polity Committee to prepare the Standing Order amendments required to give effect to it.

The Methodist Conference 2023

Submission of a Notice of Motion

In adopting Notice of Motion 2021/112 at the 2021 Conference, the Conference directed the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference with regard to resources, time and potential benefits. The Conference also appealed to the Council to recognise the reduced capacity at every level and therefore to apply the existing mandate the Council has to evaluate the number and cumulative time impact of resolutions presented to all future Conferences.

In submitting a notice of motion, proposers are required to consider fully the impact of the proposal on all areas of the life of the Church. This should include consideration as to why the proposal is a particular priority for the Church at this particular time.

Members of the Conference Secretariat are willing to discuss how a notice of motion might be framed with proposers before it is submitted. Please contact conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk if that would be helpful.

Should you require advice in relation to completing the impact assessment please consult the Conference Financial Committee (CFC@methodistchurch.org.uk) before submitting this form.

Should the proposal impact the work of the Connexional Team please ensure this is discussed with the Connexional Secretary (cs@methodistchurch.org.uk) before submitting this form.

Appendix 1

Notice of Motion	
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Impact Assessment

What are the benefits of the proposal?	
By what criteria will the benefits be measured?	
Why is the proposal a particular priority for the Church at this particular time?	
Does the proposal require a person in a local church or circuit to do something new or different?	
How is it proposed that the work will be done? What is the time commitment?	
Does the proposal require additional work from the Connexional Team? Has the potential impact been discussed with the Connexional Secretary?	
What are the financial implications of the proposal including both the implementation costs and the ongoing costs?	

Appendix 1

How is it proposed that the financial consequences are funded?	

Please provide an email address if the signatory is attending online. These are for validation purposes only and will not be printed.

Proposer	PRINT NAME	signature
Secunder	PRINT NAME	signature
Other signatories Where the proposal is to amend a resolution and those responsible for presenting that business are prepared to accept it, the proposer and seconder of the motion only. Where such a proposal to amend is not accepted by those responsible, the proposer and seconder and four other persons. In all other cases, the proposer and seconder and eight other persons.	PRINT NAME	signature
	PRINT NAME	signature
	PRINT NAME	signature
	PRINT NAME	signature

This form should be returned to the Daily Record Office or emailed to conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk by the deadlines set out in the Agenda.