

Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MC/23/36

Date of meeting	22-23 February 2023
Contact name and details	Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary Matt Tattersall, Director of Finance and Resources
Action required	For discussion

1. 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.
2. During the connexional year 2021/2022, the SRC and the Council considered how best to address the question of impact and the Council brought a report to the 2022 Conference which proposed the establishment of a Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee in place of the Conference Financial Committee. It is envisaged that this new Sub-Committee will have a broader remit than the present Financial Committee which, under SO 136A(2), has responsibility to 'identify all resolutions in the Agenda or otherwise circulated to the Conference which would have financial implications, other than those for which provision has already been made in the budget, and [to] notify the Conference accordingly.'
3. The 2022 Conference directed the Methodist Council to carry out further work to determine the details of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee (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 Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee to the Conference of 2023. The Conference further directed that, pending the establishment of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee, the Financial Committee, in addition to its responsibilities under Standing Order 136A, shall 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 and shall advise the Conference of its conclusions. Such advice shall wherever possible be given in writing.
4. The Council therefore needs to give consideration to the detail of the establishment of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee, and also to how the Financial Committee may be able to fulfil this wider scrutiny role at the 2023 Conference as part of the transition.
5. It is suggested that the notice of motion form should be adapted to include questions relating to the potential wider impact of the work that is requested within the notice of motion. Questions could include:
 - Does this require a person in a local church or circuit to do something new or different?
 - What is the role that will need to undertake this work locally?
 - How is it proposed that the work will be done (including time commitment)?These will need to sit alongside the questions about financial implications.
6. It is expected that this Committee will be supported by Connexional Team staff, in particular the Connexional Secretary and the Director of Finance and Resources, who would be available to assist in the drafting of notices of motion as well as with the assessment of impact.
7. It is suggested that the new Committee will comprise members of the Conference who represent among them the key roles who are likely to be most impacted by notices of motion (for example, Synod Secretary, superintendent, District Treasurer, church steward) alongside a member of the Resourcing Committee or Connexional Council to ensure that there is a strong link to the budgeting process.

8. Work will need to be done to ensure that there is good communication with the Conference Business Committee, to ensure that business is scheduled appropriately and that, where there are major impact considerations, to take those into account, so that the business is undertaken in a way that is most helpful to the Conference.
9. In its discussions the SRC also recognised that a similar approach for evaluating the impact of all areas of work will need to be an ongoing process for the Connexional Council once it is established. The Conference Scrutiny Sub Committee will have sight of all Notices of Motion before the Conference as they are submitted, but both the Memorials Committee and the Connexional Council will need to have a similar (if not identical) process for considering impact in work they intend to take to the Conference.
10. It is recognised that this will be an evolving process, and that 2023 will be a transitional year and an opportunity to test out the best way of approaching this.

*****RESOLUTION**

36/1. The Council receives the report.