

Impact Measurement

MC/22/36

Date of meeting	2-4 April 2022
Contact name and details	Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary, cs@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	For approval.
Resolutions	36/1. The Council receives the report. 36/2. The Council agrees that the issues listed in paragraph 8 be shared with the Conference.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	To share with the Council the feedback from small group discussions and the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) about impact measurement. To request that the Council shares the feedback with the Conference.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While no specific common themes arose from small group discussions a number of suggestions were made • The SRC has made a number of recommendations that it considers the Conference needs to hear.
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	MC/21/74 – Impact Measurement MC/22/8 – Impact Work
Consultations	Methodist Council (small group discussions) Strategy and Resources Committee

Summary of impact

Financial	Finance is one aspect of how impact is measured.
Wider connexional	A key aspect of this work is the impact at all levels of the Connexion.
Risk	The risk of not revising our impact assessment is likely to further overburden ministers, lay workers and volunteers in the life of the church.

- 1 At its meeting in January 2022 the Council received paper MC/22/8 to have further discussion about how to respond to Notice of Motion 2021/112 (full text listed below in Appendix 1). The Council was invited to have an open and searching conversation about how the issue of capacity within the Church can be managed, and did so by discussion in small groups.

Feedback from Council Small Group Discussion

- 2 The following questions were discussed and the feedback from the group discussions is listed after each:
- 3 *Does the Council feel it is the 'macro question' which is needing to be asked as well as responding the points about the cumulative impact of work? If so how and of whom should this macro question be asked?*

There were lots of questions around how work originates, and comments about needing to consider how it impacts the church. There were differing suggestions about how this might be done from each group ranging from Circuits and Districts to consider pieces of work, a sub-group at the Conference, prioritisation by the Conference itself, and a Council 'reality check' on what has been agreed.

4 *How does the Council respond to the 'year of jubilee' as a suggested way forward?*

Mixed views were shared including:

- Want to say yes to this but it isn't always practical. Will it solve the problems or just hold back the tidal wave?
- Consider Sabbath rather than jubilee. What if we moved towards a language around a Sabbath approach – long-term, sustainable patterns.
- The idea of Jubilee is good. But we need to go further and look at what we can stop, not just what we can avoid starting.
- If we had a break how would we deal with the "urgent"? Are we going to stop safeguarding, Local Preachers meetings, supervision?
- There is an essential need to be more prayerful rather set up another initiative. Could we stop doing a lot so we focus on worship, means of grace and prayer?

5 *What are the responses to the individual suggestions (see below)? Does any one of them seem a more critical place to start than the others?*

Individual suggestions listed in MC/22/8:

- Update the front covers for Notice of Motion/ Memorials to include the impact of the work being requested, including the personnel (both lay/ordained and paid/volunteer) who will be impacted by the work. **Two groups specifically supported this suggestion**
- Add a year onto the deadline of pieces of work already in progress to create some of the capacity that is needed. **Mixed views - one group in favour and one against**
- Revisiting the process of Memorials and how work is agreed from them. **One comment received was that if people bring a proposal they should be willing to be part of the working group taking the work forward.**
- Revisiting the process of Notices of Motion including the previously discussed number of signatories they require prior to debate.
- Look into how the Council approves items of work. **One group asked whether Council is able to say to the Conference that a piece of work is not possible?**
- A moratorium on Notices of Motion/ Memorials for a period of time. **One group (mostly) favoured this.**
- Limiting the number of pieces of work the Conference can agree to.
- Debating how to curtail items on the more detailed workplan with the Council to provide information of work coming to the Conference over the next three years.

One group stated that all eight points are worth doing, however, we should do the easy ones and not spend time on the more time intensive ones that involve redesigning process.

6 *What further work would the Council like done and by whom to enable a more developed paper to come before its next meeting enabling a report to be made to the Conference?*

Some of the groups ran out of time, and while no particular common themes emerged, some suggestions were made including:

- Update the impact box;
- Update the Notice of Motion / Memorials forms and limit them for a year, or have a moratorium for a year;
- Consider what a Jubilee/Sabbath would look like;
- Ask ourselves what we need to stop.

Consultation with the Strategy and Resources Committee

7 Given the wide variety of views shared from the Council we then took the opportunity to ask the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) to consider the feedback and make any further suggestions in addition to what the Council had already said.

- 8 Having reflected on these issues, the SRC has made a number of comments and some recommendations that it thinks the Council should consider making to the Conference in response to the original Notice of Motion:
- The Conference is not necessarily best enabled to view the totality of resourcing issues and therefore it can appear that decisions are being made in isolation of the cumulative impact (cost, people resource etc.) It is important that the Conference is encouraged in itself to think of how any piece of business would be resourced in the Church, Circuit and District that the representatives come from. Assuming the creation of the new Connexional Council happens then it will be a critical part of their role to start to address some of these issues. It is important to remind the Conference that as representatives vote they need to be thinking ‘what will this look like where I am?’, ‘who will do this?’, ‘is this critical?’, and ‘who will pay?’
 - As well as the Conference being able to decline to take forward a piece of work there also needs to be the space for the Council to stop a piece of work that has been given to it once the resource constraints are better understood. Currently it is the role of the SRC is to assess work and make comment. This is always done retrospectively, and therefore the Conference needs to be aware that this assessment will take place following any decision it makes.
 - It was noted that at present the scrutiny focus at the Conference on Notices of Motion that are presented is only on the financial aspects of what is proposed. It was thought that a new Scrutiny Sub Committee of the Conference which is able to comment on the impact on the whole Connexion /people resources, finances and the workload of the Connexional Team as well as taking into consideration other work that has been agreed would be a step forward. This would involve some aspects of the current Business Committee and the Finance Sub Committee of the Conference.
 - In order for the Sub Committee listed above to do its work it is suggested that there should be a new box/boxes on Notice of Motion forms which ask those writing to indicate how they have thought about ‘resourcing’ not just ‘finance’ which should indicate workload on all parts of the Connexion. It should also ask what the proposer offers towards the work (where appropriate).
 - It was noted that there have been various ways of the overall workplan being presented to the Council and that further reflection was needed on this to ensure that the information required is available. The Senior Management Group of the Connexional Team has begun such a reflection. Whilst Notice of Motion should remain an important part of our process it was noted that the more proposals that can come through the Memorials process the more detailed consideration can be given at an earlier point. Notices of Motion should be linked to pressing matters which could not have been taken through the Memorial process.
 - It was still felt that there needed to be some indication on any report to the Conference of the potential impact of the resolutions on the wider Connexion. A simple RAG system could show which resolutions were likely to cause an increase in what was being asked of the Methodist people in terms of time, finance or responsibilities. Where there was a severe increase then the Conference could be asked for a two thirds majority for that work to be approved.
- 9 The Conference Business Committee adopted the following protocols in relation to Notices of Motion. The Council is invited to consider whether these criteria might be developed further.
- a) The Notice of Motion must be brought about a matter that is urgent and could not have been brought as a memorial or district resolution;
 - b) The Notice of Motion must be within the competence of the Conference and if it requests something of another body over which it does not have jurisdiction (eg MHA or Action for Children), it must be phrased in an appropriate way;
 - c) The Notice of Motion must be properly researched beforehand – it is not possible for those advising the Conference (including the officers of the Conference) to undertake background work in the time available;
 - d) The Notice of Motion must be drafted in such a way that, if passed by the Conference, it could be implemented;
 - e) The Notice of Motion must not require the Conference to make a policy decision without adequate background information and thought given to the consequences;
 - f) The Notice of Motion, if passed, must not require such a level of resource that would require resources (human and financial) to be diverted from other areas of agreed work. To this extent if the Conference Financial Committee rules that the Notice of Motion cannot be accommodated within the contingency provided in the Central Services Budget, the Business Committee may need to rule that the Notice of Motion cannot be put before the Conference without further work on the part of the movers on how resources might be found.

- 10 The Council is invited to consider the feedback from the SRC and decide what it wishes to report to the Conference on this subject. This report suggests that the issues listed in paragraph 8 are shared with the Conference and the Council is invited to consider this as the response to the Notice of Motion.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

36/1. The Council receives the report.

36/2. The Council agrees that the issues listed in paragraph 8 be shared with the Conference.

Appendix 1 - Notice of Motion 2021/112: Looking to the Future

Mindful of the many valuable, exciting and necessary initiatives that the Conference has endorsed over recent years, the Conference nevertheless expresses concern that many of its people at every level of Church life are over-burdened.

The Changing Patterns of Ministry report documents that 'the experience of feeling overwhelmed by having too much to do was something frequently noted within conversations about ministerial workloads' (2.2.1) and this has significant effect on wellbeing (2.2.2). It is noted that the issues are systemic and institutional as well as personal. As an institution we must do our part in alleviating burden and not adding to it.

The decline in church members who have the time, energy, expertise or inclination (2.3.2) to administer many of the responsibilities for local societies further exacerbates our inability to action all the Conference resolutions that require a degree of local implementation.

At this Conference alone we are being asked to adopt resolutions that will considerably increase the workload of many who are already working beyond capacity.

This Notice of Motion in no way insinuates that any of the resolutions being presented are not worthy. Rather it recognises that we simply cannot implement all we would want to do at this time.

None of this is new but as the Secretary of the Conference states in his report, 'the last year has changed us...and periods of pandemic often serve to accelerate changes that were already in train' (5.1). The Conference can presume therefore that it is not going to get any easier to find the people, time and resources to implement resolutions they adopt. The Conference should be mindful of this when making decisions this week.

Therefore, in light of this increasingly limited capacity this notice of motion seeks to amend resolution 62/2 to:

The Conference commends the report and a record of its conversation about it to the Council for further deliberation and action. The Conference directs 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 appeals 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.