

Role of the Network Committee

Contact Name and Details	Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk Professor Peter D Howdle, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee p.d.howdle@leeds.ac.uk
Status of Paper	Final
Action	Decision
Resolutions	94/1. The Council receives the report. 94/2. The Council recommends that the Network Committee be disbanded at the end of the connexional year 2017/18, with its responsibilities undertaken by other bodies as set out in the report.

Introduction

1. The Network Committee was set up as a result of the implementation of the Fruitful Field report and is appointed annually by the Methodist Council. It is required to report to the Council and work collaboratively with the Ministries Committee and the Strategy and Resources Committee in developing and maintaining the learning and training of lay people and ministers and the pursuit of scholarship, research and innovation throughout the Connexion. The committee has brought a number of reports to the SRC and the Methodist Council over the past years concerned primarily with the responsibility of the Network Committee for the DMLN under SO32A3 and in particular with regard to the management and development of a number of key assets. These are MIC and MIC Ltd, North Bank Estate (Guy Chester Centre - GCC) and 24 Somerset Road, Birmingham (Frances Young House).
2. The committee has had broadly three main areas of work:

First it holds the managing trusteeship of those centres designated by the 2012 Conference in section J of the Fruitful Field Project Report as “income generating”;

Secondly it is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the terms of all agreements reached between the council and any training institutions with which the council has agreements (for the definition of “training institution” see S.O. 007(ii)) and;

Thirdly it works in collaboration with the Ministries Committee to ensure the implementation of connexional policy as regards learning, training and development.
3. Much of the work of the Network Committee is now undertaken in other places. This paper proposes that this committee now be dissolved and its remaining work distributed among the relevant existing committees.

The work of the committee

4. **Managing trusteeship:** the managing trusteeship for MIC and MIC Ltd has been delegated to the Property Development Committee as reported to the 2017 Conference by the Council in part 1(A) of its report (Agenda p 29). It is intended that the managing trusteeship of the North Bank estate also be passed over following the resolution of a pending legal case. The

trusteeship for the Frances Young Building (24 Somerset Road) is held by the Council and delegated to the Network Committee. Elsewhere in the Council papers, the Council is asked to change the delegation to the Property Development Committee.

5. **Review and monitoring of training institutions relationships:** The Ministries Committee, established under SO 32A0, has the responsibility for “developing and supporting the Church’s structures and resources for learning, training, scholarship, research and development” [32A1(2)(iii)]. The summary of the report of the Training Review Group (TRG) presented to the 2017 Conference (Agenda pp 459-461) noted “the need for continuing the conversation about how the content and pattern of training reflects more clearly our understanding of ministry in all its forms.” The natural setting for such a conversation would be the Ministries Committee. It would seem sensible therefore that the Ministries Committee holds the relationship with those places decreed as “centres of the network” and should be responsible for the development of another of the recommendations of the TRG to which the Council responded warmly, that of, “the need for further investments in creating Methodist theologians for the future”. This may require some flexing of the arrangements in the terms of agreements reached between the council and training institutions.
6. **Oversight of the implementation of connexional training, learning and development:** this responsibility also has a clear overlap with the tasks of the Ministries Committee and with the work of the SRC with regard to SO 213 (2B) to “advise and assist the council in fulfilling the council’s responsibilities for the strategic oversight and use of resources with regard to personnel, finance and physical assets” and also SO 213 (5A) to “exercise oversight of the general work of the Connexional Team, and report thereon to the council and Conference as appropriate.”

Conclusion

7. Given that the tasks for which the Network Committee was established either are, or now can be, dealt with elsewhere, the SRC recommends to the Council that this committee be disbanded and its work re-allocated as set out in this report. It should also be noted that the SRC was of the view that the committee should not be disbanded immediately but at an appropriate time, as there is still some work to be done with the Ministries Committee.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 94/1. **The Council receives the report.**
- 94/2. **The Council recommends that the Network Committee be disbanded at the end of the connexional year 2017/18, with its responsibilities undertaken by other bodies as set out in the report.**