

27. Taking Forward the Stationing Review Group's Report

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Resolution	The Conference receives the report.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This report updates the Conference on work undertaken to take forward the SRG report.
Main Points	This report summarises discussions about the SRG report at the Stationing Committee and the Methodist Council, and notes their conclusion that further development of the SRG report's strategic themes is required. It outlines the likely twofold legacy of the SRG report, and provides information about i. the immediate implementation of changes to Methodist practice and ii. a longer term commitment to a renewal of structures and processes which equip the Church's ordained and authorised ministries.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Stationing Review Group report to the 2008 Conference, Agenda 2008, pp.481-524
Risk	None

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Stationing Review Group's (SRG) wide-ranging report to the 2008 Conference contained 38 recommendations and a great deal of supporting commentary and analysis. Parts of the SRG report dealt directly with the stationing system, recommending straightforward policy changes. Other parts of the SRG report engaged with substantive strategic themes concerned with equipping the Methodist Church's ordained and authorised ministries.

1.2 The 2008 SRG report noted that "SRG is resolved that the Conference should have opportunity to consider each of the 38 recommendations on its own merit, and has given the Methodist Council and the Stationing Committee that assurance." However, given the inevitable restrictions on the Conference's time, the Conference was unable to meet this expectation. After a short debate, the Conference adopted six of the SRG report's recommendations (1, 2, 8, 11, 20 and 24). The remainder were referred "to the Methodist Council and the Stationing Committee, for the Council and the Stationing Committee, in consultation with the other committees named in the recommendations, either to bring an integrated and prioritised plan for their implementation to the Conference of 2009 or where practical to proceed to earlier implementation."

1.3 During the 2008/2009 connexional year, the Stationing Committee and the Methodist Council have given significant attention to the SRG report, and have been supported by work within the Connexional Team. The results of this detailed scrutiny and activity are outlined in sections 2 and 3 below. It will be clear that the SRG report's legacy involves both easily identifiable changes to Methodist practice, and also a longer term commitment to a renewal of structures and processes which equip the Church's ordained and authorised ministries (see section 3 below).

2. Work undertaken during the 2008/2009 connexional year

2.1 The Stationing Committee

2.1.1 The Stationing Committee, at its September 2008 meeting, discussed the SRG report. A number of policy considerations included in the SRG report's recommendations were identified and plans were adopted to implement the resulting policy changes (see section A3 below).

2.1.2 The Stationing Committee also identified four strategic themes from the SRG's report which it wished to explore further:

- i. the possibility of permitting each District a number or proportion of appointments to be filled by advertisement;
- ii. the role of establishment figures;

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- iii. the processes governing initial invitation and reinvitation of presbyters;
- iv. a flexible process of deploying presbyters connexionally and locally.

2.1.3 Three resource groups have been established to undertake further work on these strategic themes. The nature of the discussions in the spring of 2009 within the resource groups and at the Stationing Committee indicated that it would not be possible to bring to the 2009 Conference an integrated and prioritised plan for the implementation of at least some of the SRG report's recommendations identified as strategic themes by the Stationing Committee. The Committee's confidence in the work of the Stationing Matching Group in particular led it to conclude that mechanisms other than those outlined in the SRG report were required to deliver some of the outcomes which the report envisaged (see, in particular, A2.3 and A3.4 below). In short, and in general terms, the need for further development of the SRG report's strategic themes has been identified by the Stationing Committee's discussions, and the Committee is committed to continuing this work during the coming connexional year.

2.2 The Methodist Council

2.2.1 The Methodist Council, at its October 2008 meeting, discussed a report

which offered an overview of the SRG report. Seeking to complement the further work being undertaken by the Stationing Committee, the Council focused its attention on five strategic themes. These themes were the subject of small group discussions and were grouped around three quotations from the report:

- i. "Our roots as a movement";
- ii. "Ministries that are community-based";
- iii. "Diversity, fluidity and individual choice".

2.2.3 Common strands in the feedback from the small group discussions at the Methodist Council suggested that it would not be appropriate to work on bringing to the 2009 Conference an integrated and prioritised plan for the implementation of at least some of the SRG report's recommendations. Again, in short, and in general terms, the need for further development of the SRG report's strategic themes has been identified by the Methodist Council, and the Stationing committee is committed to continuing this work during the coming connexional year. In particular, three areas were identified by the Methodist Council where further work was required:

- i. the promotion of lay discipleship;
- ii. identifying and using the distinctive gifts of individual ordained ministers;
- iii. the merits of a larger proportion of appointments being filled by methods other than matching or direct stationing.

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3 The twofold legacy of the SRG report

3.1 In light of work undertaken by the Stationing Committee and the Methodist Council, the Methodist Council, at its April 2009 meeting, noted that the legacy of the SRG report is likely to be twofold.

3.2 The SRG report's recommendations

3.2.1 First, the SRG report, through its recommendations, identified specific changes, tasks or areas which require the attention of the Conference via the Stationing Committee and/or the Methodist Council. Amid work on the further development of the SRG report's strategic themes, it is important that these specific recommendations are not overlooked. The appendix to this report offers an explanation of the work undertaken to implement the SRG report's recommendations.

3.3 Developing the SRG report's substantive strategic themes

3.3.1 Secondly, and as importantly, the SRG report has provided a starting point for the development of substantive strategic themes related to equipping the Methodist Church's 'ecclesial ministries'. While some of these strategic themes relate to the stationing system – SRG's starting point – others relate to much wider ministerial issues.

3.3.2 Three quotations from the SRG report illustrate the ways in which SRG

found itself dealing with substantive strategic themes relating to major ministerial issues:

In our report to Conference 2007 we used the iceberg metaphor: above the water there is an evident stationing problem, but concealed underwater there are many more complex and related issues that come into sharp focus during the stationing process.
[Introduction, §1.2.2]

We have been aware from the beginning of our work that the processes of stationing presbyters and deacons are not just a set of pragmatic arrangements. They are a vital element in the lived practices which constitute our way of being Church. Changing aspects of these practices without due reflection could produce results that no-one would have wished or intended, undermining those distinctive gifts which we have to offer to God's mission in the world.

But at the same time failure to change in response to changing circumstances could constitute a backward-looking refusal to listen to the Holy Spirit's promptings.
[Introduction, §1.4.2]

The task is to discern where the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to be counter-cultural and where to respond to promptings from within the culture. The beliefs underlying this report and reflected in many of its recommendations – that we

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must soften boundaries, loosen structures, and accept fuzziness, without losing accountability – reflect the SRG's conviction that this is indeed God's calling. As we have said, there is a balance to be struck. Offering the Church the freedom to respond more easily, relevantly and quickly to today's challenges and opportunities within the context of increasingly diverse communities is not mere conformity to a 'secular' agenda: it is an embodiment of the Church's priorities for mission. [Introduction, §§1.4.7]

3.3.3 Both the Stationing Committee and the Methodist Council identified that further development of SRG's strategic themes is required. This development work forms the second part of the SRG report's legacy. This substantial task – and its proper embedding in the work of the reconfigured Connexional Team – is mapped in the next section of this report.

4 Equipping Ministries

4.1 The changed landscape of ecclesial ministry

4.1.1 The SRG report maps a changed landscape of ecclesial ministry: "Historically... [enabling ecclesial ministry] was judged to be best done by stationing presbyters in appointments which, although they offered the possibility of many kinds of activity, were basically structured around the care and oversight of Local Churches which constituted the

mission bases. Although there always were exceptions to this pattern, it is fair to say that the present situation is fundamentally different. Described in much of the literature as post-Christendom, today [the situation] is characterised by a wide gulf between many local churches and their mission field." [Preface of Section 2, §2]

4.1.2 The Methodist Church has already been responsive to this change, and the landscape of ecclesial ministry now includes a range of worship-leading, teaching, pastoral, community-based and evangelistic ministries. With a greater emphasis on 'encouraging fresh ways of being church' and on regrouping for mission through the *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* programme, and through a significant investment in connexional projects such as 'venture FX' (formerly 'Pioneer Ministries'), the landscape will become increasingly diverse in the future.

4.2 Equipping a range of ministries

4.2.1 Part of acknowledging this diverse landscape is to be willing to reassess the starting point for strategic thinking about equipping the Methodist Church's ecclesial ministries. A traditional starting point may have been the processes governing church-based presbyteral ministry. A realistic new starting point may be the structures and ethos required to equip a range

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of lay and ordained, life-long and shorter-term, paid and voluntary, connexional and local, generalist and specialist, church-based and community-based ministries.

4.2.2 This does not imply any neglect of the processes governing church-based presbyteral ministry – on the contrary, they will require renewal in the light of changing expectations of and from those exercising a church-based presbyteral ministry. However, it does imply placing these processes, and their underlying principles, in a dynamic relationship with, and at the service of, the structures and ethos which equip a wider range of ecclesial ministries.

4.3 Equipping ministries to equip discipleship

4.3.1 Strategic thinking which begins with the structures and ethos required to equip a range of ecclesial ministries also demands clarity at the outset about the focus of these ministries. Echoing the categorisation of *Our Calling*, they can be analysed as:

- i. ministries which enable God-centred worship and prayer
- ii. ministries which help people to grow and learn as Christians
- iii. ministries which engage with the everyday acts of love, kindness and service of the people of God in the world
- iv. ministries which encourage patterns of witness and evangelism.

In short, they will be ministries which equip the holistic discipleship of the people of God. Thus, structures and ethos at a connexional level focus on equipping a range of ecclesial ministries – ministries which, in turn, equip discipleship.

4.4 Emphases embedded in the reconfigured Connexional Team

4.4.1 The structure of the reconfigured Connexional Team is designed to facilitate the equipping of this range of ecclesial ministries. Emphases embedded in the reconfigured structure include:

- i an emphasis on encouraging vocational exploration
- ii an emphasis on initial, continuing and reflective learning and development provision for all ordained and authorised ministers (eg for local preachers and worship leaders as much as for presbyters and deacons)
- iii an emphasis on equipping superintendents through a holistic pattern of provision, including discernment of the call to superintendency, pre-selection provision, induction provision and continuing learning, development and support
- iv an emphasis on coordinating and encouraging the work of Methodist chaplains, and nurturing links between chaplains and the wider Church
- v an emphasis on equipping a

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distinctively Methodist ecclesial ministry in the context of "fresh ways of being church".

4.5 A complementary structure of committees, advisory groups and reference groups

- 4.5.1 The connexional committees and other advisory groups and reference groups which relate to The Methodist Church's ministries play an important part in the work undertaken at the connexional level to equip those ministries. This is notably so when engaging with a challenging report such as the SRG report, given the key roles of committees, advisory groups and reference groups in:
- i. transforming strategy into policy and programmes

- ii. providing a mechanism for consultation
- iii. providing an initial forum for decision-making and for exercising oversight.

- 4.5.2 The review of committees is engaging with the committees, advisory groups and reference groups which relate to the Methodist Church's ordained and authorised ministries, and will need to consider the ways in which policy-development and programme-development functions, consultative functions, decision-making functions and oversight functions are best enabled within a strategic framework modelled on the analysis of ecclesial ministry outlined above.

***RESOLUTION

27/1. The Conference received the Report.

27/2. The Conference amended Standing Order as follows:

(a) **322 Stationing.** (1) There shall be a connexional stationing committee ... which shall consist of:

...

(ix) **the chair and** a lay member of the Diaconal Stationing Subcommittee;

(b) **423 New Appointments ...**

(3) ... The dates when the nomination committee is to meet and the means by which a nomination **or expression of interest** may be made **or shown** shall also be published ...

...

(5) Nominations **or expressions of interest** shall be made **or shown** using a standard forms obtained from the Secretary of the Conference, who

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shall at the same time supply a copy of the district statement and person specification. Ministers may not submit their own names.

Appendix

A1. Introduction

A1.1 This appendix offers an explanation of the work undertaken to implement the SRG report's recommendations, adopting the categorisation of strategic themes and policy considerations reported to the Methodist Council at its October 2008 meeting.

A2. Strategic themes

A2.1 The ministry of the people of God; Methodism as a movement / Methodist spirituality
See: recommendations 2 [approved by the Conference], 3, 4A, 37

A2.1.1 The report advocated further work on clarifying the nature of the ministry of the people of God. A range of considerations suitable for inclusion in this further work were noted, including:

- ∞ the traditional and distinctive 'Methodist charism' of 'sharing of accountability and responsibility by lay and ordained'
- ∞ the factors which produce 'minister-dependence'
- ∞ the need to clarify the distinction between 'the ministry of the people of God in the world' and 'the ministry of all Christians within the corporate life of the Church'
- ∞ potential tensions between 'the ministry of all Christians within the corporate life of the Church' on the one hand and ordained ministry on the other, and the resulting need to clarify the practical shapes of elements of ordained ministry – the need for clarification being a central component of Recommendation 2, approved by the Conference.

A2.1.2 The report also advocated further work on the connected issues of:

- ∞ Methodism as 'a movement of and for the Spirit'
- ∞ 'a spirituality of being God's people in a Methodist way'.

A2.1.3 These issues were linked in the report to:

- ∞ opening 'diaconal ministry to those who do not feel called to belong to the [Methodist Diaconal] Order, as well as opening up membership of the Order to people other than deacons'
- ∞ 'affirming the value of a Rule of Life'

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- ∞ the opportunity for 'community-based' (as opposed to 'church-based') ministries, especially for those 'who feel called to fresh expressions of ministry or evangelism'.

A2.1.4 Implementation: Preparatory work has been undertaken within the Connexional Team on equipping ministries and equipping discipleship (see 4.3 of the substantive report above). Additionally: The *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* programme is engaging with issues of structure and deployment in order to enable renewed expressions of ministry and of local church life. The Fresh Ways Working Group of the Methodist Council has been developing guidelines to facilitate 'community-based' ministries. The 'venture FX' connexional project will pilot a model of 'community-based' ministry, especially for those 'who feel called to fresh expressions of ministry or evangelism'. The *Holiness & Risk* connexional event engaged intensively with the model of Methodism as 'a movement of the Spirit'. The 'Conversation' sessions at the Convocation of the Methodist Diaconal Order (9-11 March 2009) have begun processes of in-depth exploration both of the 'value of a Rule of Life' and also of the scope of the diaconal order. The Methodist Council has discussed the importance of equipping discipleship as an emphasis within the workplan of the Connexional Team.

A2.2 Fixed-term authorised ministries and specialised ordained ministries

See: recommendations 30, 31, 34 [part]

A2.2.1 The report noted that some younger people have been "put off entering ministry because of a seeming lifelong commitment to one particular type of ministry", and that "many who enter ministry with the best of intentions and become ordained, have chosen to opt out of circuit ministry". "Exploring ways of embracing those, especially the young, who may at present only be able to see shorter term horizons could enable valuable contributions to the mission of our church in today's world to be harvested."

A2.2.2 The report also advocated the explicit recognition of the focused nature of the call which some receive to specific expressions of ministry. Further considerations included the nature and limits of such a call, including its relationship to a call "to the 'general practice'... of circuit-based ministry". The report highlighted the learning and development implications of such a recognition, as well as the existing learning and development needs of ordained ministers stationed to 'distinctive' appointments.

A2.2.3 Implementation: The 'venture FX' connexional project will pilot a model of ministry which may appeal to younger people seeking to explore a shorter-

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term expression of ministry. Ongoing work within the Discipleship and Ministries cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with other components of these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A2.3 Stationing: structure vs fluidity

See: recommendations 8 [approved by the Conference], 9, 10, 12

- A2.3.1 The report directly addressed the stationing system at a conceptual and a practical level.
- A2.3.2 Conceptually, the report addressed the relationship between a “highly unified and controlled” system of deployment and “a contemporary culture which emphasises diversity, fluidity and individual choice”. “The task is to discern where the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to be counter-cultural and where to respond to promptings from within the culture. The beliefs underlying [the] report and reflected in many of its recommendations – that we must soften boundaries, loosen structures, and accept fuzziness, without losing accountability – reflect the SRG’s conviction that this is indeed God’s calling.”
- A2.3.3 Practical consequences of such a conviction would include:
- ∞ retaining the ‘mixed economy’ approach to stationing (stationing directly, stationing by matching and stationing by advertisement); this recommendation was approved by the Conference
 - ∞ ‘permitting each district a number or proportion of appointments to be filled by advertisement’ – mindful in particular of allowing for the ‘stationing and deployment of lay and ordained people in fresh expressions of Church’
 - ∞ creating more flexible processes for the initial invitation and, in particular, the reinvitation of presbyters
 - ∞ creating a flexible process of deploying presbyters locally, as well as connexionally, with the stationing matching ‘structured so as to deal with those widely available for stationing first, followed by those available within a defined geographical radius’.
- A2.3.4 Implementation: See references to these recommendations in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the substantive report above. Ongoing work by the Stationing Committee and within the Discipleship and Ministries cluster of the Connexional Team will engage further with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year. In scrutinising these recommendations during the 2008/2009 connexional year, the Stationing Committee has sought

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to maintain the integrity of the Stationing Matching Group's processes, and to highlight:

- i. the Group's success in filling, through the matching process, a number of appointments which the SRG report suggested might need to be filled by advertising
- ii. the Group's ongoing success in matching to appointments both those presbyters who are widely available for stationing and also those who are only available within a defined geographical radius.

A2.4 Intentionally unfilled stations

See: recommendation 7

A2.4.1 The report advocated "that Districts and Circuits always consider in the light of their agreed mission policy the possibility of not filling a station immediately upon a minister leaving".

A2.4.2 Implementation: This suggestion has been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The 'Good Practice Guide' to the stationing system, which is circulated annually to those involved in the stationing system at circuit and district level, will be changed from the beginning of the 2009/2010 connexional year to include the guidance that consideration be given to not filling a station immediately upon a minister leaving.

A2.5 Call, vocation and nurturing leadership talent

See: recommendations 1 [approved by the Conference], 5

A2.5.1 The report recommended that "the call to ministry, as lay or ordained, be heard afresh amongst Methodist people"; the Conference approved this recommendation. The report further advocated that those called to a ministry of leadership in local church, circuit, district and connexional contexts be identified and nurtured through "God-centred planning for leadership".

A2.5.2 Implementation: New work within the Discernment and Selection unit and the Discipleship and Ministries cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A2.6 Learning and development provision for participation in team ministry; learning and development provision for superintendent ministers; nurturing ministers in their first appointment

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See: recommendations 4, 34 [part], 35, 36

- A2.6.1 The report highlighted the “mixed economy of ministries” present in most Circuits (“ordained presbyters and deacons in roles within and outside the Church, full-time or part-time, lay people employed as well as in formal voluntary posts and faithful members holding office”) and advocated the need for greater development of ‘collaborative partnership ways of working of a professional standard”.
- A2.6.2 The report also anticipated that, as Circuits grow in size, “the superintendent’s role will become one of major leadership”. Consequently ‘consideration of an offer of appointment as a superintendent minister [should become] conditional upon the satisfactory completion of a connexionally validated training programme”.
- A2.6.3 To ensure that ordained ministers are given ‘the best possible start in their ministry’, the report advocated:
- ∞ “an increasingly rigorous approach to initial appointments to ensure good supervision and collegueship throughout the term of the appointment”
 - ∞ that “sufficient appointments suitable for probationers be designated across the connexion”
 - ∞ that a suitable appointment be defined in part by the presence of a superintendent whose “competence and willingness to supervise probationers” has been tested.
- A2.6.4 Implementation: In addition to the emphases on superintendency noted in section 4.4.1 of the substantive report above, provision has been made for each superintendent of a Circuit in which a probationer is to be stationed in the 2009/2010 connexional year to attend a learning and development course on supervision. Ongoing work within the Learning and Development Unit of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage further with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A2.7 The shape and role of Circuits

See: recommendations 20 [approved by the Conference], 21, 22, 23

- A2.7.1 The report affirmed the work of *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission*, in particular its proposals to create fewer Circuits (the Conference approved the recommendation containing this affirmation), and recommended that “other than in exceptional circumstances defined by a District (such as a

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widespread rural area, city or significant town centre or an ecumenical team), single- and two- station Circuits cease, and be joined together or with others”.

- A2.7.2 The report also advocated greater strategic planning by Circuits, Church Councils and clusters of churches, to enable a move “from the present generally independent and isolated approaches of individual churches towards shared and flexible ways of working that are appropriate for the area and communities covered by the Circuit. This includes how churches are arranged, grouped and supported and how mission activities are organised”.
- A2.7.3 Implementation: Ongoing work on the *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* programme under the auspices of the Connexional Leaders' Forum will be encouraged to engage with these recommendations.

A2.8 Ministry in rural areas

See: recommendations 6, 38

- A2.8.1 The report advocated encouraging greater interest in rural ministry among ordained ministers, and the provision of specific learning and development for such ministry.
- A2.8.2 In the context of discussing the ‘ministry of all Christians within the corporate life of the Church’ (see §2.1.1 above), the report advocated further consideration of the distinctive nature of, and need for, such ministry in rural areas.
- A2.8.3 Implementation: Ongoing work by the Secretary for Internal Relationships, within the Christian Communication, Evangelism and Advocacy and Discipleship and Ministries clusters of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A2.9 Comprehensive geographical presence through ecumenical collaboration

See: recommendations 24 [approved by the Conference], 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

- A2.9.1 The report recommended that “ecumenical collaboration at church/parish, circuit/deanery and district/diocese/synod levels continue to be vigorously encouraged.” The Conference approved this recommendation. Moreover, in seeking to counter increasing challenges to “an effective Christian presence”, especially in villages, the report advocated entering into “agreed commitments with partner churches resolving that at least one will retain an effective

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presence in all communities where such currently exists”.

- A2.9.2 Implementation: Ongoing work by the Secretary for External Relationships and by the Ecumenical Review connexional project will engage with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A2.10 The availability and expectations of supernumerary ministers

See: recommendation 33

- A2.10.1 The report advocated structures, such as a “register and clearing house”, to enable churches, Circuits and Districts to ascertain more formally the availability and expectations of retired ministers.

- A2.10.2 Implementation: Ongoing work by the Secretary for Internal Relationships, within the Discipleship and Ministries cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A3 Policy Considerations

A3.1 Removal of candidating age restriction

See: Notice of Motion 119 [incorporating recommendation 32]

- A3.1.1 The report recommended, contrary to Notice of Motion 135 carried at the 2007 Conference, that “the maximum possible flexibility be applied to the admission of candidates at the upper end of the age scale”. Notice of Motion 119, carried at the 2008 Conference, directs the Council to identify the implications of admission for older candidates (in respect of pension, housing, stationing, etc).

- A3.1.2 Implementation: The task identified in NM119 necessarily precedes a decision on the recommended policy change. (The policy change would involve revising S0710(5), which specifies that a candidate must be able to “be stationed for a minimum period of ten years before ‘normal Pension Date’ as defined by the rules of the Methodist Ministers’ Pension Scheme and meet such other conditions of availability for stationing as are set by the Conference at the time of acceptance”. S0710(6) permits the Ministerial and Diaconal Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committees to make recommendations as to exemptions from the requirements of 710(5) to the Ministerial and Diaconal Candidates Selection Committees respectively.) As

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the Methodist Council was advised in October 2008 and February 2009, work on the task identified in NM119 will be undertaken by the Connexional Team in the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A3.2 Stationing cycles

See: recommendation 11 [approved by the 2008 Conference]

- A3.2.1 The report recommended, and the Conference approved, maintaining the status quo of one stationing cycle each year.

A3.3 Stationing deacons

See: recommendations 13, 14

- A3.3.1 The report advocated a greater "connexional overview" of the stationing of deacons by:
- ∞ aligning more closely the presbyteral and diaconal stationing matching processes
 - ∞ increasing the role of Chairs of District in the diaconal stationing process
 - ∞ appointing the chair of the Diaconal Stationing Sub-committee to membership of the Stationing Committee.
- A3.3.2 Implementation: These three changes of policy have been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The Stationing Committee has welcomed ongoing work being undertaken by the warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO) and the chair of the Diaconal Stationing Sub-committee (DSSC) to align more closely the presbyteral and diaconal stationing processes. The warden of the MDO has become a member of the Stationing Action Group. Standing Order changes will be proposed to the 2009 Conference to make the chair of the DSSC a member of the Stationing Committee; the chair of the DSSC is already in attendance at Stationing Committee meetings.

A3.4 Establishment figures

See: recommendation 15

- A3.4.1 The report advocates retaining establishment figures (perhaps renamed 'Ministry and Mission figures'), counted at district level, but recommends further work "to define those stations and posts to be included, and, in that light, what the initial figures shall be".

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A3.4.2 Implementation: This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee and by a Resource Group established by the Stationing Committee. The Stationing Committee was initially minded to seek to discard establishment figures. Further scrutiny in the Resource Group highlighted the need for new processes to deliver the underlying purpose of establishment figures, namely to ensure that the ministry as a whole is at the disposal of the entire Connexion, should establishment figures be discarded. Further work will be undertaken by the Stationing Committee, supported by the Connexional Team, during the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A3.5 Appointing Chairs of District

See: recommendation 16

A3.5.1 The report recommends that “the present process for appointing District Chairs be retained, with the suggestion that candidates may apply directly as well as be nominated”.

A3.5.2 Implementation: This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The policy will be changed to that outlined in the recommendation from the beginning of the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A3.6 Responsibility for stationing between the Conference and November

See: recommendation 17

A3.6.1 The report recommends “that presbyteral stationing matters arising between the end of the Conference and the beginning of the next year's stationing cycle be the responsibility, under the direction of the President, of the convenor of the Stationing Action Group”. The Report advocates that the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, who is responsible for diaconal stationing matters arising in the same period, liaise with the Stationing Action Group when diaconal matters arise.

A3.6.2 Implementation: This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The policy has been changed to that outlined in the recommendation.

A3.7 Grant funding security prior to profile submission/advertisement

See: recommendation 18

A3.7.1 The report recommends “that all grant applications must have received

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consent before (a) any profiles are submitted for diaconal, presbyteral or probationer appointments or (b) any post is advertised”.

- A3.7.2 Implementation: This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The policy will be changed to that outlined in the recommendation from the beginning of the 2009/2010 connexional year.

A3.8 Priority stationing for island districts

See: recommendation 19

- A3.8.1 The report recommends that “up to two of the changing stations in each of the island districts (Shetland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands) be included in phase one of stationing matching”.

- A3.8.2 Implementation: This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee, and is now being piloted during the 2008/2009 and the 2009/2010 connexional years.