

## Basic Information

<b>Title</b>	<b>Report of the North West Region Review Group</b>
<b>Contact Name and Details</b>	The Revd Will Morrey (Past President of Conference) wmorrey@btinternet.com
<b>Membership of the Review Group</b>	The Revd Will Morrey (Review Group Chair), Mrs. Ruth Pickles, the Revd Peter Whittaker, the Revd Rodney Hill (Reporter)
<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Resolution/s</b>	<p>62/1 The Conference receives the report of the North West Region Review Group</p> <p>62/2 The Conference approves the timetable set out in the report for developing options for mission-based change that will resource effective ways of working.</p> <p>62/3 The Conference appoints a working group.</p> <p>62/4 The Conference notes that the process of nominating a presbyter to serve as Chair of Bolton &amp; Rochdale District from September 2011 will be put in place at the close of the 2010 Conference and that the papers relating to the nomination will make clear reference to the Conference's decisions relating to the NW Region Review Report.</p>

## Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To report on the work and conclusions to date of a review process in the North West.
<b>Main Points</b>	<p><b>Summary of content</b></p> <p>A Remit and purpose of the North West Region Review Group.</p> <p>B The process of consulting with groups from the Districts.</p> <p>C Process and outcome of the consultation 7-8 May 2010.</p> <p>D Recommendations to the Conference.</p>

## **A Remit of the North West Region Review Group**

1. The District Chairs from the North West of England and the Isle of Man met with the General Secretary in January 2010. One trigger for the meeting was the decision by the Chair of the Bolton and Rochdale District not to seek extension of appointment beyond 2011. As a result of their meeting it was agreed that the General Secretary would approach a Past President of the Conference to chair a small group to work with representatives of the above districts to facilitate a process, the primary purpose of which would be to develop a vision for the sustainable resourcing of mission and ministry, especially noting the regional and ecumenical context.
2. The remit given to the group was contained in the following *Extract of the General Secretary's notes of a meeting of the Regional District Chairs*.
  1. The group would
    - meet with appropriate groupings in the Bolton and Rochdale District, guided by David King (e.g. District Strategy Group, Leadership Group and present Chair);
    - also meet with groupings of other Districts directly bordering the Bolton and Rochdale District (e.g. North Lancs., Manchester and Stockport, Liverpool); and
    - liaise with the Chairs of other Districts in the region (e.g. Isle of Man, Cumbria, Chester & Stoke) as to appropriate but probably lesser contact with and input to the review process.
  2. There will be a longer meeting attended by representatives of all regional districts, at which the Review Group will report, outline its proposals, receive comment upon them, and work out future processes.
    - This meeting will take place on 7–8 May, 2010: c6.00–9.30pm Friday; 10am–4.00pm Saturday.
    - The venue would be in the Bolton and Rochdale District, and David King will organise the venue and catering etc. (The subsequently agreed venue was Walkden Methodist Church.)
    - About eight to ten representatives per District from the immediate neighbouring districts will attend, and about one to three from other Districts, as decided by the Chairs of Districts. (It was subsequently agreed following the Review Group meeting with groups from each District that all the Districts would send up to ten people and the Isle of Man opted to send its District Chair as a participant observer).
    - Chairs of all the Districts in the region will be required to ask the Synods to give permission for representatives attending this event to act with delegated powers from the Synod. (If this permission is not given, Special Synods may have to be called!)
  3. The Review Group would aim to bring any recommendations arising from their work and the event in May to the Conference 2010.
  4. No process for selecting a nominee as the next Chair of the Bolton and Rochdale District, or to some other configuration in the Region will begin until after Conference 2010. A nomination process in light of Conference resolutions would be undertaken so as to bring any nomination necessary prior to the beginning of the stationing round in November 2010.

## **B The process of consultation**

3. The Review Group met with members of the policy making body of the following Districts: Bolton & Rochdale, Manchester & Stockport, North Lancashire, Liverpool, Chester & Stoke on Trent and Cumbria.
4. In preparation for its meetings with groups from each District, the Review Group prepared an outline agenda that was used for each conversation. The conversation focussed primarily on the experience of engaging in mission and ministry. We asked where the primary foci of mission and ministry are found and how any wider structures and networks currently support the church's mission and ministry. The primary purpose of these conversations was to hear

and understand the views of each District about how they see mission being carried out in their context and to then ask what structures beyond the circuit would best facilitate and resource that mission.

5. The outline agenda used and a context paper that was produced for the conversations are attached as an appendix to this report.
6. It quickly emerged in the initial consultations that it was important to assure the Bolton and Rochdale District that pastoral oversight of the District would be continued beyond 2011 by the appointment of a District Chair and that the process used to bring a nomination would need to make clear reference to the conversations taking place in the North West Region. The resolutions before Conference therefore include noting that the process of nominating a presbyter to serve as Chair of Bolton & Rochdale District from September 2011 will be put in place at the close of conference 2010 and that the papers relating to the nomination will make clear reference to the Conference's decisions relating to the North West Region Review Report.
7. In preparation for the 24 hour consultation at Walkden the Review Group also met the District Chairs and General Secretary in April and also met with the District Development Enablers from the same Districts.
8. Over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May the Review Group met with members of the policy making bodies together in a 24 hour period of reflection and discernment. The outcomes of that process are reported below.

### **C Report on the 24 hour consultation held 7–8 May at Walkden Methodist Church**

9. The Review Group shared with those attending the consultation its understanding of what it had heard from the Districts. There is much to be thankful to God for in the account of mission and ministry activity in the North West. The *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* processes have led to much change within the Circuits and to some significant reconfiguration. There is an openness to face the challenge of ongoing change. Following a presentation from the Review Group further observations from attendees were noted and a range of key areas identified for further consideration.
10. When addressing mission and ministry there is an inevitable tension between the need on the one hand to provide resources for the Church as it is in the present (sometimes called "inherited" church) in its proper good practice, and on the other hand to provide resources for new ways of working and of being church. That tension needs to be held together constructively.
11. A number of key areas for supporting mission and ministry were identified and attendees worked in groups to further explore how wider support, that is from beyond the local Church and Circuit, might best be provided in the future. This exploration was undertaken in the context of understanding that the current support structures are not sustainable for much longer.
12. The areas explored included:
  - stationing matching – noting the importance to all parties of a pastoral emphasis;
  - selection for authorised ministries and oversight of probation;
  - training for ministries, lay and ordained, and for lay employment;
  - property management and development for mission;
  - distinctive ministry networks;
  - demographic contextual links;
  - Complaints and Discipline processes;
  - Safeguarding;

- social care projects, accessing external funding, relating to external agencies;
- media engagements – to include developing communication;
- the question of how we work in partnership with others.

13. The different areas considered produced different support mechanisms ranging over varying geographical areas. The picture that emerged was complex with no ‘one size fits all’ solution.

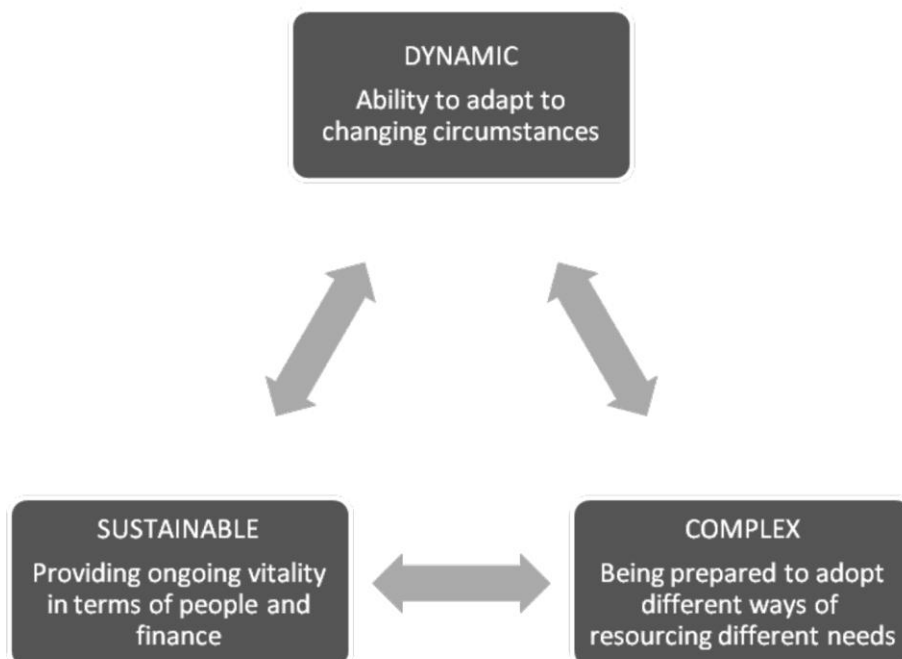
14. Three key pointers for future patterns emerged. We are looking to ensure that future patterns in the North West are:

- dynamic (i.e. have the ability to keep adapting to changing circumstance);
- sustainable (providing ongoing viability in terms of people and finance); and
- complex (different ways of providing resources for different needs).

15. Attendees agreed that further work needs to be undertaken by a small group to produce a range of options for change and for the development of support structures, so that those options can be presented to the Districts and Circuits during the connexional year 2010–11.

#### D Recommendations

16. The Conference is invited to appoint a working group as requested by the consultation at Walkden. The working group is to work on the basis of the terms of reference and timetable given below and to report to Conference 2011.



## Terms of Reference

**Purpose:** To build on the work undertaken by the North West review group so as to present to the Conference of 2011 a model that will resource and support Churches and Circuits in the North West Region for mission-based change.

**Accountability:** The Conference appoints the working group, which will then be accountable to the Conference through the Methodist Council

## Timetable

### *Summer & Autumn*

The working group develops a number of options, considering carefully the pros and cons of each, in collaboration with others in the districts.

### *November*

The working group reports back and further consults the 'Walkden Group'

### *January*

The Methodist Council considers the options for change proposed by the working group and authorises them for consideration by District Synods and Circuit Meetings (S0401 (2))

### *February–March*

Circuit meetings consider proposals and express their view to their Synod,

### *March*

District Synods consider the options proposed in the light of the views of Circuit Meetings and report the outcome to the working group and to the Assistant Secretary of Conference.

### *April*

The Methodist Council responds to the consultation and makes its proposals to the Conference of 2011

## \*\*\*RESOLUTIONS

**62/1.** The Conference received the report of the North West Region Review Group

**62/2.** The Conference approved the timetable set out in the report for developing options for mission-based change that will resource effective ways of working

**62/3** The Conference appointed a working group with the following members:

The Revd Peter Whittaker and Ms Ruth Pickles (Co-facilitators)  
The Revd Rodney Hill (Reporter)  
The Revd Peter E Barber  
Mrs Wendy Beard  
Mrs Helen Boardman  
The Revd Richard Hall  
The Revd Ron Hicks  
The Revd Michael A Neal  
The Revd Malcolm Peacock

with authority to co-opt as necessary.

**62/4.** The Conference noted that the process of nominating a presbyter to serve as Chair of Bolton & Rochdale District from September 2011 would be put in place at the close of the 2010 Conference and that the papers relating to the nomination would make clear reference to the Conference's decisions relating to the NW Region Review Report.

## Appendix 1

### The Outline Agenda for meetings of the District policy bodies with the North West Districts Review Group

- The context is a developing understanding of Methodism's role in God's mission in the Northwest of England and how best to resource that Mission.
- The primary purpose of the process is to develop a vision for the resourcing of God's mission, especially noting the regional and ecumenical context.
- The purpose of the meeting is to draw out items for inclusion on the agenda for the regional consultation on May 7th and 8th at Walkden.

#### Below are a number of questions to help guide the conversation:

1. Is the circuit the primary focus for our 'interconnectedness for the purpose of mission'? (SO 500)
2. What is the purpose, in Mission terms, of the wider structure of Methodism e.g. the District?
3. What does the wider structure enable and what does it constrict?
4. What are the difficulties in the local context that are best addressed by the wider structure?
5. What resources are needed to enable that wider structure to be fit for purpose?

NB The group is aware of the work already done in this regard by the Bolton & Rochdale District and invites that work to be fed into the process during the various conversations.

## Appendix 2 The Context paper produced for the meetings with District groups

For over a decade the Methodist Church has been seeking to renew itself in mission and ministry. Our Church has been attempting to discern God's will and purpose for our work and witness.

In 1996 the Methodist Conference adopted the statement on *The Calling of the Methodist Church*. It states that our Church is called "to respond to God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission." The twin poles of worship and mission are expanded in the statement.

In 2000 the Conference adopted the brief but transforming statement on *Our Calling*. It focussed on worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism. It was a framework for action and reflection throughout the Church set by a shared vision built on the 1996 statement.

The Conference of 2004 was able to push the Church further along the road of renewal, offering a serious mission edge to our calling through the *Priorities Statement*.

*In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments on this priority:*

*To affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world; and renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church*

*As ways towards realising this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to the following:*

*Underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer*

*Supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor – in Britain and worldwide*

*Developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved*

*Encouraging fresh ways of being Church*

*Nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible*

*Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* is an initiative born out of the above *Priorities*. It offers challenge and opportunity to reshape mission and ministry all across our Church. It has led, and is leading, to the creation of new circuits better resourced and shaped to respond to God's Mission today. This work of regrouping for mission has serious implications for resource sharing within and between Districts.

It is this conversation within the church that we are here to continue with you. We have been invited to accompany you for a few months along a journey of discernment as these matters are explored.

We are with you to listen. We are to prompt and encourage open and deep Christian conferring. We are to learn together as we attempt to discern God's will for the church's work and witness.

Our accompaniment will result in a report fashioned together and presented to the Conference of 2010 that will try to set a pathway for the next part of the journey.