Taking forward the Stationing Review Group's report

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	To approve
Draft Resolution	The Methodist Council: a. receives this report; b. authorises ongoing work in this area to be reported to the 2009 Conference using the 'twofold legacy of the SRG report' model outlined in section 3.
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This report updates the Council on work undertaken to take forward the SRG report. It provides a model for reporting this work to the 2009 Conference.	
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 i. information about the implementation of specific recommendations and ii. interplay between the SRG report's strategic themes and work by the Connexional Team and connexional committees on equipping the Methodist Church's diverse ordained and authorised ministries.	
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	MC/08/92 and MC/08/92A (reports on taking forward the SRG report discussed at the October 2008 meeting of the Council)	
Consultations	Aspects of the report draw on discussions at the Stationing Committee and at resource groups established by the Stationing Committee	

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	SO changes resulting from policy changes outlined in the appendix will be taken forward by the Stationing Committee
Faith and Order	None – ongoing work will be taken forward in collaboration with the Faith & Order Committee
Financial	None
Personnel	Changes to the stationing system resulting from policy changes outlined in the appendix will be taken forward by the Stationing Committee
Legal	None
Wider Connexional	The report deals, mostly in general terms with equipping the Methodist Church's ecclesial ministries; again, specific policy changes will, at the moment, be taken forward by the Stationing Committee
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None
Risk	None

Taking forward the Stationing Review Group's report

1   Introduction

1.1   The Stationing Review Group's (SRG) wide-ranging, 20,000-word report to the 2008 Conference contained 38 recommendations and a wealth of supporting information. 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 related to equipping the Methodist Church's ordained and authorised ministries.

1.2   The 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 restrictions on the Conference's time, the Conference struggled to discuss all of the SRG report's recommendations. 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.'

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.

2.1.2   The Stationing Committee also identified three strategic considerations from the SRG's report which its wished to explore further: i. the possibility of permitting each district a number or proportion of appointments to be filled by advertisement (and the implications for establishment figures); ii. the processes governing initial invitation and re‑invitation of presbyters; iii. a flexible process of deploying presbyters connexionally and locally. Three resource groups were established to undertake further work. These resource groups reported their initial findings to the January 2009 meeting of the Stationing Committee, and the committee commissioned further work from the resource groups, to be reported to the April 2009 meeting of the Stationing Committee.

2.1.3   This work is therefore ongoing. However, it is already evident that it will 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 considerations by the Stationing Committee. In short, and in general terms, the
         need for further development of the SRG report's strategic themes has been suggested
         by the Stationing Committee's discussions.

2.2   The Methodist Council

2.2.1   The Methodist Council, at its October 2008 meeting, discussed a report (MC/08/92)
         which grouped the SRG report's recommendations into 12 strategic themes and eight
         policy considerations.

2.2.2   The Council discussed five strategic themes in more detail in small group discussions
         (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. In particular, three areas were identified by the Methodist Council
         where further work is required: i. the promotion 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.

3   The twofold legacy of the SRG report

3.1   In light of work undertaken by the Stationing Committee and the Methodist Council, the
         legacy of the SRG report is likely to be twofold; and this twofold legacy will inform the
         manner in which work on taking forward the SRG report is reported to the 2009
         Conference.

3.2   <u>The SRG report's recommendations</u>

3.2.1   First, the SRG report, through its recommendations, has 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 (where possible) the SRG report's recommendations, adopting the categorisation of strategic themes and policy considerations reported to the Methodist Council at its October 2008 meeting.

3.3   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 strategic themes related to equipping the Methodist Church's ordained and authorised ministries[1]. 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 substantive strategic themes:

> 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 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 also the Methodist Council identified that further development of SRG's strategic themes is required. This development work – and its

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[1] Referred to as 'ecclesial ministries', or simply as 'ministries', from this point onward in this report. The phrase 'ministries of leadership' could also have been used. Both phrases are rooted in the Conference report, *The Ministry of the People of God* (1986).

proper embedding in the work of the reconfigured Connexional Team – is mapped in the next section of this report.

4 **Equipping ministries**

4.1 <u>The changed landscape of ecclesial ministry</u>

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 <u>Equipping a range of ministries</u>

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 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, for 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 ministries of leadership.

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 ministries of leadership 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 and encourage the everyday discipleship of the people of God in the world; iv. ministries which catalyse acts and patterns of witness and evangelism. In short, they will be ministries which equip the discipleship of the people of God. Thus, in short, structures and ethos at a connexional level focus on equipping ministries which in turn equip discipleship.

4.3.2   The Methodist Council, at its February 2009 meeting, discussed a report which explored Methodist understandings of discipleship (MC/09/15; see also the minute of the discussion of MC/09/15). Further theological exploration of the relationship between ministries and discipleship, and in particular of the discourse of 'ministry' and 'discipleship' in the context of such Conference reports as *The Ministry of the People of God*, will be required to support this analysis of ecclesial ministry.

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 different ministries of leadership. 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 distinctively Methodist ministry of leadership 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,
        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 (see the report on the Review of Committees presented to
        the April 2009 meeting of the Methodist Council) 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-drafting
        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.

5   **Recommendations**

        The Methodist Council:

    a. receives this report;

    b. authorises ongoing work in this area to be reported to the 2009 Conference using the
        'twofold legacy of the SRG report' model outlined in section 3.

Appendix

1   **Introduction**

1.1   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 (see
        MC/08/92).

2   Strategic themes

2.1   <u>The ministry of the people of God; Methodism as a movement / Methodist spirituality</u>

See: recommendations 2 [approved by the Conference], 3, 4A, 37

2.1.1   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

2.1.2   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'

2.1.3   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'

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

2.1.4   **Implementation:** Preparatory work has been undertaken within the Connexional Team on equipping ministries and equipping discipleship (see 4.3 above, MC/09/15 and the minute of the discussion of MC/09/15). 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.

2.2   Fixed-term authorised ministries and specialised ordained ministries

See: recommendations 30, 31, 34 [part]

2.2.1   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.'

2.2.2   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.

2.2.3   **Implementation:** The 'venture fx' connexional project will pilot a model of ministry which may appeal to younger people seeking to explore a shorter-term expression of ministry. Ongoing work within the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with other components of these recommendations.

2.3   Stationing: structure vs fluidity

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

2.3.1   The report directly addressed the stationing system at a conceptual and a practical level:

2.3.2   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.'

2.3.3   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 re-invitation 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'

2.3.4   **Implementation:** See references to these recommendations in section 2.1 above. Ongoing work within the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees (including the Stationing Committee at its next meeting on 23 April 2009) will engage further with these recommendations.

2.4   Intentionally unfilled stations

See: recommendation 7

2.4.1   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.'

2.4.2   **Implementation:** This suggestion has been discussed by the Stationing Committee. The 'Good Practice Guide', 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.

2.5   Call, vocation and nurturing leadership talent

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

2.5.1   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.'

2.5.2   **Implementation:** New work within the Discernment & Selection Unit and the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations.

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

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

2.6.1   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.'

2.6.2   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.'

2.6.3   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 colleagueship 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

2.6.4 **Implementation:** In addition to the emphases on superintendency noted in section 4.4.1, provision has been made for each superintendent to whose circuit 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 & Development Unit of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage further with these recommendations.

2.7 The shape and role of circuits

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

2.7.1 The report affirmed the work of 'Mapping a Way Forward', 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 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.'

2.7.2 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.'

2.7.3 **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.

2.8 Ministry in rural areas

See: recommendations 6, 38

2.8.1 The report advocated encouraging greater interest in rural ministry among ordained ministers, and the provision of specific learning and development for such ministry.

2.8.2   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.

2.8.3   **Implementation:** Ongoing work by the Secretary for Internal Relationships, within the Christian Communication, Evangelism & Advocacy and Discipleship & Ministries Clusters of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations.

2.9   Comprehensive geographical presence through ecumenical collaboration

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

2.9.1   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 presence in all communities where such currently exists.'

2.9.2   **Implementation:** Ongoing work by the Secretary for External Relationships and by the Ecumenical Review connexional project will engage with these recommendations.

2.10   The availability and expectations of supernumerary ministers

         See: recommendation 33

2.10.1   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.'

2.10.2   **Implementation:** Ongoing work by the Secretary for Internal Relationships, within the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster of the Connexional Team and within connexional committees will engage with these recommendations.

3   Policy considerations

3.1   Removal of candidating age restriction

         See: Notice of Motion 119 [incorporating recommendation 32]

3.1.1   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

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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.).

3.1.2   **Implementation:** The task identified in NM119 necessarily precedes a decision on the recommended policy change. As 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.

3.2   Stationing cycles

See: recommendation 11 [approved by the 2008 Conference]

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

3.3   Stationing deacons

See: recommendations 13, 14

3.3.1   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

3.3.2   **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.

3.4   Establishment figures

See: recommendation 15

3.4.1   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.'

3.4.2 **Implementation:** This change of policy has been discussed by the Stationing Committee and by a Resource Group established by the Stationing Committee. A report from the Resource Group will be tabled at the next meeting of the Stationing Committee (23 April 2009).

3.5 Appointing Chairs of District

See: recommendation 16

3.5.1 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.'

3.5.2 **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.

3.6 Responsibility for stationing between the Conference and November

See: recommendation 17

3.6.1 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.

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

3.7 Grant funding security prior to profile submission / advertisement

See: recommendation 18

3.7.1 The report recommends 'that all grant applications must have received consent before (a) any profiles are submitted for diaconal, presbyteral or probationer appointments or (b) any post is advertised.'

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

3.8   Priority stationing for island districts

        See: recommendation 19

3.8.1   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.'

3.8.2   **Implementation:** This change of policy was piloted this year. Its future adoption will be
        discussed at the next meeting of the Stationing Committee (23 April 2009).