

REVIEW OF RESOURCING MISSION OFFICE

Basic Information

Contact Name and Details	Nick Moore, Head of Support Services, mooren@methodistchurch.org.uk
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	The Council approves the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 13, 16 and 25 of this paper.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	The findings and recommendations of the Review of the Resourcing Mission Office, part of the Team Focus Review of the Connexional Team.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background to the Review • The Review Process • Staffing Recommendations for Property and Other Tasks • Transitional Arrangements • Relationship with TMCP
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Review of the Resourcing Mission Office, SRC Paper MC/10/05 Review of the Resourcing Mission Office, SRC Paper MC/09/69 Team Focus Report, Methodist Conference 2007 Location of Resourcing Mission Office , SRC Paper MC/07/80
Consultations	RMO staff, TMCP staff, District Property Secretaries, the Project Management Group.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	Guidance on the interpretation of Methodist Standing Orders and Model Trusts in relation to property projects is currently offered by the RMO. The recommendations from this review propose that this should be provided by Governance Support staff. Modifications to the handling of the Ecclesiastical Exemption may require changes to relevant standing orders.
Faith and Order	N/A
Financial	The review of the RMO is undertaken with the same financial considerations as earlier Team Focus work.
Personnel	15 members of staff currently work at the RMO, equal to 13.05 full-time employees. Proposals reduce staff numbers by 4.5 fte.
Legal	The RMO currently deals with the specialist work involved in administering the Ecclesiastical Exemption for listed buildings and conservation areas. These are legal requirements of the Connexional Team.
Wider Connexional	Churches, circuits and districts currently use the services of the RMO.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The RMO currently works ecumenically on charity and property law.
Risk	Failure to reconfigure the set-up of the RMO will mean a lack of strategic organisational structure and that additional costs are incurred. It may also perpetuate confusion between the roles of the RMO and TMCP. Proposed changes may cause the loss of corporate memory and familiar channels of communication for local churches. Ongoing support will, in particular, be offered to the consents process in particular to ensure this work is not lost.

REVIEW OF RESOURCING MISSION OFFICE

1. The purpose of the review was as follows: *“In consultation with staff and stakeholders, to review the work currently undertaken by the Connexional Team staff in the Resourcing Mission Office in Manchester, and reconfigure this work in accordance with the principles and practice of Team Focus”.*

2. For the avoidance of doubt, this review was of the Connexional Team’s Resourcing Mission Office (RMO) and not Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP). An organisational chart outlining the structure of the RMO as at November 2009 can be found in Appendix A. Although there has been considerable collaboration and joint working between the RMO and TMCP in Manchester, the functions and management of the two offices are distinctly different. The review recognised that this distinction is not readily made by many within the connexion.

3. Although the RMO and its staff have served the connexion well over the years, the area has been reviewed under the Team Focus principles, in common with all other areas of the Connexional Team. This review – the last to take place – was delayed by the Council by two years, primarily in order to allow the roll-out of the consents process.

Background to the Review

4. Over the past few years, changes have taken/are taking place both internally and externally that have impacted on the role of this office. For example:

- The consents process has now been rolled out to all districts, and CPD Part 9 has been re-written to reflect the new set-up. As a result the RMO no longer has a role in authorising property schemes on behalf of the Methodist Council.
- The requests for specialist technical knowledge have reduced substantially over time – in fact a Technical Officer is now only employed one day per week, after the last permanent post-holder resigned citing lack of work. This is partly due to the successful introduction of the Minor Works Scheme.
- The increased demands of the Charity Commission have demonstrated the need for a greater focus and linkage on both finance and governance issues within the Church.
- The grants process has changed with the creation of the Connexional Grants Committee which is responsible for all mission & ministry grant-making. Administration of all grants and the funds from which they are paid is now concentrated in one part of the Connexional Team located in London. Property grants are the only exception, pending the outcomes of this review.
- Through Team Focus, the Connexional Team has been reconfigured to work around themes, rather than discrete subjects, e.g. the Governance Support Cluster (GSC) brings together expertise in legal and constitutional matters. It seems logical, therefore, to locate staff dealing with property governance issues together with those in the GSC who are responsible for all other areas of Methodist governance. This will also be a positive way of dealing with the increasing crossover in areas involving managing trustee responsibility, etc.
- The creation of the Support Services Cluster aimed to assemble a range of functions together, so that their synergies could be effectively exploited to enable the more effective mission of the Church. This will be best achieved by placing all of the cluster’s work within one location.

5. It is worth noting that in recent years the RMO appears to have taken on additional tasks that were outside its original remit, e.g. charity registration and the collection of annual financial statements from managing trustees. This appears to have been because at that time there was no other group within the Connexional Team who was able to undertake this work.

6. It was an essential aim of the review to encourage the retention of the experience of the necessary specialist functions of the RMO whilst at the same time enabling joined up thinking across other work areas that have a wider impact across the Team, and ensuring that the established Team Focus redeployment process continues to be used.

7. As with all Team Focus reviews, any proposed changes had to pass the 'uniquely or best' test employed throughout this process.

The Review Process - Consultations

8. The RMO Review was overseen by a Project Management Group (PMG) with the following members:-

Graham Carter	Former President and retired District Chair (PMG Chair)
Andrew Moore	SRC member, Circuit Property Steward
Graham Danbury	Law & Polity Member, member of TMCP and PASLEMC (the lay staff pension scheme) Boards
Cliff Lewer	Resources Convenor, Notts & Derby District (the first consents pilot district)
Nick Moore	Head of the Support Services Cluster, the Connexional Team
Trevor Durston	Head of the Projects, Research and Development Cluster, the Connexional Team (not all meetings)

9. A summary of the full review process can be found in Appendix B.

10. An external consultant, Peter Desmond of Growth International, was used to undertake a series of consultations and 1-1 interviews which formed the basis for the review's conclusions. The consultant reported to the RMO Review PMG regularly, and the group alternated its meetings between London and Manchester. A complete list of the work areas and reconfiguration recommendations is attached in Appendix C.

11. Detailed consideration was given to the many and varied inputs that were obtained from RMO staff, TMCP, Districts, Circuits, churches and other stakeholders. Feedback from Focus Groups and Questionnaire sent to District Property Secretaries is outlined in Appendix D.

Property Related Tasks

Specialist Property Roles

12. There are three key areas within the Resourcing Mission Office which clearly work closely with TMCP:

- Conservation and Listed Buildings – to maintain the Methodist Church's Ecclesiastical Exemption etc;
- Administration – to maintain drawings and records held in Room 17 in the Manchester offices;
- Landfill Grants.

These areas are specialist and relate exclusively to property.

Recommendation 1

13. That these specialist areas of property work continue and that they remain in the Manchester Office. These specific areas of work might possibly be managed by TMCP (see later comment on role of TMCP).

Guidance on Property Matters

14. There has been an expectation amongst some parts of the connexion that the RMO provides

technical and professional advice in respect of building projects. This is not the case; the RMO can only offer guidance not advice on these issues. For such advice, the managing trustees of churches, circuits and districts need to employ specialists, e.g. architects and solicitors, whose work is covered by professional indemnity.

15. The sharing of knowledge and the identification of specialists to offer such advice is an area that needs to be supported. Furthermore it was noted that much of the practical knowledge of projects resided within the connexion, principally in the districts through the District Property Secretaries (DPSs).

Recommendation 2

16. A new post of Connexional Property Co-ordinator (CPC) is proposed within the Support Services Cluster to support/facilitate the exchange of information and to maximise the flow of best practice. Additional support from the CPC could help DPSs to assist in identifying professionals that are already delivering a good service to other Methodists within their regional area. The Person Specification for this role should consider the necessity for the CPC to hold appropriate qualifications in surveying or architecture.

17. Supporting this work within the Support Services Cluster is seen as a key outcome of the RMO Review. It is felt that this will only successfully be achieved by locating the post alongside cluster colleagues within the London office of the Connexional Team. The cluster is responsible for supporting and collaborating with a range of voluntary office holders, mainly at the district level and including treasurers, District Grants Officers (DGOs), DPSs, District Lay Employment Secretaries (DLEs) and candidating secretaries. A coherent and more effective approach to working alongside these volunteers can best be achieved by sharing expertise and best practice from a single base in London.

Non-Property Related Tasks within RMO

18. These remaining areas have strong links with the Connexional Team and have non-property equivalents in other parts of the Connexional Team based in London.

Grants

19. Currently, property related grants are administered differently to other connexional grants, despite these grant applications being considered by the Property Stream of the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC). Situating this area of work in London would allow these grants to become part of the connexional grants administration process.

20. Administering property grants in line with other connexional grants will also facilitate an approach to the use, management and advocacy of both the Fund for Property and the Connexional Priority Fund which better corresponds to that utilised for the other designated funds under the managing trusteeship of The Methodist Council.

21. It therefore makes sense both managerially and for completeness that any staff working on the administration of property grants are part of the wider grants team, already located within MCH.

Finance

22. Largely as a legacy of the old Property Division, a number of financial matters continue to be dealt with within the RMO in parallel with the Finance Office in London. It would be more efficient and effective to remove this duplication by consolidating all finance tasks within the Connexional Finance Office in London. This will also allow all funds which sit under the managing trusteeship of The Methodist Council to be managed from a single location. This measure was also recommended by the 2009 review of the Finance Office.

Governance

23. As the importance of proper governance assumes a greater prominence, not least with regards to the Church's obligations to the Charity Commission, governance tasks should all fall within the remit of overall Governance support, under the Officer for Legal & Constitutional Affairs. The Methodist Council has already strengthened the specialist staffing of this area with the stationing of Gareth Powell to this post. To now bring all governance support work under one umbrella will remove the current duplication of effort and enhance the Connexional Team's interaction with the Church's legal advisors and Law & Polity Committee.

Database Management

24. The new consents process is operated via the consents website. This is in turn driven by the property information held within the connexional database. It is therefore imperative that the database and website are effectively managed and developed in the future. The connexional database is now the responsibility of the Administration and Technology Co-ordinator (ATC) who manages the admin support and IT teams. It is therefore recommended that a new post be created reporting to the ATC in MCH to undertake this work. This post-holder would also facilitate a new connexional group of consents website users that will be established shortly.

Recommendation 3

25. Posts in the areas detailed above should be created within the Connexional Team in London. This would enable a uniform and properly managed view/response across each core area, ensuring that each discipline outlined above is regarded as a key part of the wider core function.

26. For example, the consents website is only one user of the connexional database (there is not a separate property database). Therefore, an integrated approach to data management and control will best be achieved if it is managed from within the overarching admin and IT structure within London.

Roles and Tasks in Detail

27. The interviews with current staff on their areas of responsibility and the discussion with DPSs and focus groups on future needs led to a distillation of the key tasks that need to be fulfilled by Connexional Team staff. These were then written into new job roles in a reconfigured set-up and their titles are listed below. (A detailed list of the tasks allocated to these roles is shown in Appendix E).

28. In summary therefore:

New Post	Work Area	FTE
<i>In Manchester</i>		
Conservation Officer	TMCP ?	1
Conservation Administrator	TMCP ?	0.5
Landfill Trust Grants Officer	TMCP ?	0.6
<i>In London</i>		
Governance Policy Officer	Governance Support	1
Finance Officer	Finance Office	1
Grants Administration Team Leader	Grants Administration	1
Administrator	Administration Team supporting Grants Officers	0.5
Administration Assistant	General Administration Support Pool	0.5
Database / Consents Web Manager	IT	1

Connexional Property Co-ordinator	Support Services	1
External Funding Facilitator	Fundraising within CCE&A	0.5
Total FTE		8.6

29. The reconfigured staffing is 8.6 full-time equivalents (FTE) against the current staff complement in the RMO of 13.1 FTE. This is a 34% reduction in headcount. Although the overall aim of Team Focus was to reduce core costs by around 30%, this RMO total was arrived at via a bottom-up analysis of the tasks required and was not dictated by any specific numerical aim. However, it was clear during the review that a certain amount of administrative work results simply from operating an additional office. This is minimised under these proposals.

30. A breakdown of the cost / benefit issues regarding the existence of a separate office in Manchester can be found in Appendix F.

Transitional Positions

31. In order to manage an orderly change to the structure recommended above it is recommended that a number of full-time and part-time transitional positions be created no later than 1st September 2010, in consultation with TMCP. The job descriptions for these transitional positions will be developed following consideration by Methodist Council of these recommendations at their meeting on 10th – 12th April 2010.

32. Whilst thought has been given to such transitional positions, more detailed consideration will be undertaken once the recommendations in this report have been discussed by the Council. It is likely that one of these transitional positions could be the post of a transition project manager, based within the RMO. It may be best for this post, intended to manage the process, address any personnel issues and clarify interaction with TMCP, to be filled from outside the Connexional Team.

33. A comprehensive process for transition will be put in place, not least to continue and fulfil the consents roll-out initiated by John Nelson of the projects group.

TMCP

34. In order to achieve an orderly transition, TMCP needs to be made aware as soon as possible of recommendations that have been approved by SRC, notified to RMO staff, and which are to be presented to Council. Whilst it would be inappropriate to formally notify TMCP of the proposed changes before the RMO staff have been informed, informal and confidential discussions with the Chairman and CEO about the principles behind such proposals have been held. Several RMO staff are part-funded by TMCP and solutions will need to be found regarding the future of this work within TMCP.

35. The review group wishes to place on record the professionalism of the RMO staff and the way that they have conducted themselves through what has undoubtedly been a difficult time.

36. The staff at the RMO have been given sight of this report before it was made public. Throughout the review process, they were assured that they would be given the chance to respond to the recommendations put to The Methodist Council. These responses can be found in Appendix G.

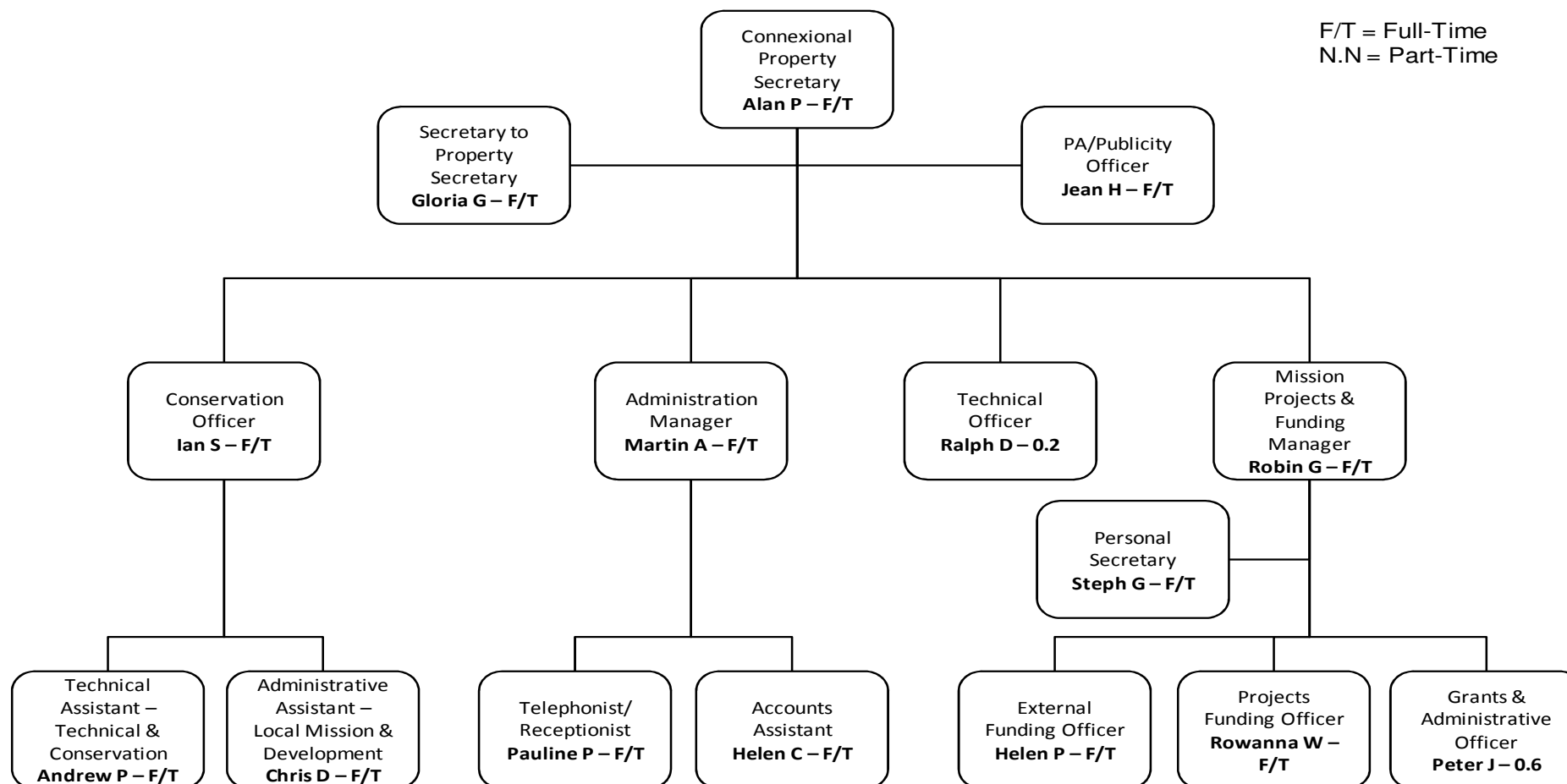
Recommendations

The Council approves the recommendations as set out in paragraphs 13, 16 and 25 of this paper.

Resourcing Mission Office, Manchester

Organisational Chart, November 2009

F/T = Full-Time
N.N = Part-Time



Summary of the Review Process

Review Principles

1. The review of the RMO was undertaken using the principles of Team Focus, so that the Connexional Team will:
 - i. Develop and fashion its work so that it makes its most effective contribution to realising the Church's priorities;
 - ii. Focus on what is best done or can only be done by the Team in pursuit of the Priorities;
 - iii. Be constrained by the resources available;
 - iv. Be a beacon of innovation and good practice;
 - v. Be accountable to the whole Church through the Methodist Council and the Conference;
 - vi. Work in the light of the Gospel and the Priorities;
 - vii. Work flexibly;
 - viii. Work with partners wherever possible;
 - ix. Work in and through networks across the Connexion;
 - x. Maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of everything it does.

Activities 1

2. In the first report to SRC it was noted that the following activities had been undertaken:
 - i. One-to-one interviews with all RMO staff using the existing Job Descriptions as the basis for the discussion. This approach provided insights into the breadth and depth of work undertaken and opportunities for reconfiguration. Second meetings were arranged with certain staff to clarify elements of their work.
 - ii. Section Meetings – meetings with RMO staff in small groups which built on the one-to-one interviews. The aim was to discuss the RMO's work with the staff in their working groups to seek their collective views on where they see opportunities to reconfigure their work to the benefit of stakeholders. The facilitation process for these meetings was agreed with Alan Pimlott, the Manager of RMO.
 - iii. Consultations with Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) staff: Anne Hughes-Holmes, Janet Street, Brian Couch, Ken Street and Joanne Broadbridge.
 - iv. Telephone conversations with key stakeholders including John Nelson (Consents), Ken Howcroft, David Bennett (Fundraising Manager), Jim Irving (District Property Secretary(DPS)), Jacky Healey (DPS), Alan Dawson (DPS), Roy Littlecott (DPS).
 - v. Review of Budgets
 - vi. Analysis of RMO
 - vii. RMO Office Development Plan – 3 scenarios for allocation of key areas of RMO activities as an initial means of considering options for reconfiguration were drawn up.
 - viii. Preparation of reports for the Project Management Group (PMG) and Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) – an update on the review was presented to the SRC Meeting of 16th December. The format and content was discussed at the Project Management Group meeting on 12th November.

Activities 2

3. In the 2nd report to SRC, it was noted that the following additional activities had also been undertaken:
 - i. Task List Analysis – following the one-to-one interviews, the task list in their job description was circulated to each Team member with a request to allocate the time in a typical month to each task. This was not an attempt at 'time and motion' study; rather to give an indication of the relative effort put into each element of the individual's role.
 - ii. Circuit Focus Groups – in order to assess what services Managing Trustees feel that they require from the Connexional Team, it was arranged to meet with church representatives from two Districts: Nottingham & Derby on 5/12 (District Property Secretary (DPS) = Alan Dawson) and Northampton on 24/11 (DPS = Roy Littlecott). The participants were a mixture

of churches who had experienced the RMO's work and those who had not. A summary of the themes which emerged from these discussions is in paragraph 9 below. Notes taken at the Circuit Focus Groups will be included in the final project report.

- iii. Evaluation Questionnaire – a wider consultation took place with DPSs via an emailed questionnaire (similar to that undertaken with the Finance Review but with an emphasis on service reconfiguration rather than performance improvement). A summary of themes which emerged is in Appendix D.
- iv. Telephone Consultations – further discussion on the telephone took place with a number of DPSs to seek their views on the services provided by RMO and opportunities for reconfiguration.
- v. RMO Staff Meeting 8th December – the staff of the RMO were briefed on the status of the project and timings of decision making by John Ellis, Nick Moore and Peter Desmond. The staff were assured that they would have sight of the report that was to be presented to the Methodist Council in April 2010 before it was made public. They were also told that they would be given the chance to respond to the recommendations and these responses would also be presented to Council before it is asked to take a final decision on the future of the RMO.
- vi. 4th PMG meeting 7th January 2010 – final discussions took place on reconfiguration ideas so that recommendations could be summarised and presented to the PMG meeting on 4th February and to the SRC at their meeting on 18th February 2010.
- vii. 5th PMG meeting 4th February 2010 – final discussions took place on the outcome of the review and the report to be presented to the SRC at their meeting on 18th February 2010.
- viii. Ongoing work has also been undertaken by the group via electronic communication between meetings and since the final meeting of the PMG in February.

Summary of Work Areas of RMO and Reconfiguration Recommendations

Section	Work Area	Summary	Reconfiguration Recommendations
Regulation and Guidance	Regulation	Management of Approvals prior to moving to Consents	Approval process to be replaced by Consents for all property projects from 1 st January 2010.
		Guidance on the interpretation of Methodist Standing Orders and Model Trusts in relation to property projects	Guidance on all Standing Orders will be provided by Governance Support staff, rather than the current two teams of experts split between London and Manchester.
	TMCP	Interface with TMCP as Custodian Trustee and resolving legal issues with property schemes	This role will still be required, but will be performed by the legal & constitutional affairs officers in Governance Support
	Accounting	Financial reporting and accounting issues for churches, circuits and districts, including Accountancy Support Group and Standard Form of Accounts	Undertaken by Finance Office in London – may be a resource requirement
	Trustees	Providing support and guidance on trustees' responsibilities	By Governance Support with training under Discipleship & Ministries through District Training Officers and District Development Enablers.
	Charity	Supporting charity registration applications – registration, requirements of Charities Act, Local Ecumenical Partnerships	By Governance Support with training under Discipleship & Ministries through District Training Officers and District Development Enablers.
	Publications	Publications e.g. Property Points and Role of a Trustee, District Property Secretary Handbook	The Christian Communication, Evangelism and Advocacy Cluster take over some of this area of the RMO's work
	Events	Organisation of events / roadshows around the Connexion	The number and type of events required will be assessed during the course of the review and recommendations made as to whether they could be organised elsewhere in the CT
Projects, Funding and Grants	Property Projects	Approval of property schemes (Consents process to replace this for all schemes by 1 st January 2010 at the latest)	Approval process to be replaced by Consents for all property projects from 1 st January 2010.
		Rollout of the Consents process, guidance, familiarisation (including roadshows)	This will largely be complete when the Consents process is completely live by 1 st January 2010
		Training, help and guidance to Churches, Circuits and Districts on using the Consents website and completing the process	The amount and type of support / guidance to Managing Trustees, Circuits and Districts will be assessed during the first year of the Consents process. The Connexional Property Co-ordinator's role will include ensuring that ongoing support is offered to users throughout the Connexion.

Section	Work Area	Summary	Reconfiguration Recommendations
	Funding for Property Projects	Guidance to Churches, Circuits and Districts in respect of sourcing loans and funds from Connexional (Fund for Property, Connexional Priority Fund) and external sources (Rank Trust, Barratt Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund, European Funds, Charitable Trusts)	Two sources of guidance to be available to Managing Trustees: a) Connexional Team resource with knowledge of funding sources and access to an external database of potential funders b) Managing Trustees can appoint local advisers or use their own connections / knowledge / resources to identify and apply for grants / other funding
		Funding applications, visits and audits under the Landfill Communities Fund Scheme	Whilst the Landfill scheme is still in operation and given the links with TMCP, this work to be continued via the current post which is funded through a charge on the scheme
Technical and Conservation	Technical	Responding to questions on the technical elements of projects e.g. planning regulations, risk assessment, health & safety	Currently one person spends one day a week responding to queries from churches; with Consents the onus will be more on Districts to provide such guidance or MT will need to hire local expertise.
	Listed Buildings	Administration of the Ecclesiastical Exemption re planning permissions and recommendations for approval of schemes	This is a specialised area of work and is a legal requirement of the CT which at present best sits with RMO; there are questions about whether the position could be home based with country-wide travel; links with TMCP and heritage bodies that require skilled expertise.
	Conservation Areas	As for listed buildings	As for listed buildings

Feedback from Focus Groups and Questionnaire sent to District Property Secretaries

1. In addition to the two Focus Groups held in the Nottingham & Derby and Northampton districts, 31 questionnaires were sent out by email and 18 replies were received. The questionnaire included the same two key questions which were used in the 2 focus groups:
 - a. Which areas of the RMO's work have you found particularly useful in the past?
 - b. What support and guidance do you think you will need from the RMO in the future?
2. The responses to these questions brought out the following themes:

The Past

3. The areas in which the DPSs had found the RMO to be particularly helpful in the past included:
 - i. That the RMO staff are friendly, helpful and knowledgeable;
 - ii. Technical information and guidance for refurbishment and alteration of buildings;
 - iii. *Property Points* and advice leaflets;
 - iv. Guidance on suitable external funding sources;
 - v. Completion of application forms e.g. Landfill Tax;
 - vi. Resourcing Mission Forums – networking, training, sharing, thought provoking;
 - vii. Interpretation of Standing Orders affecting property;
 - viii. Guidance on shared usage of Methodist buildings and property aspects of Local Ecumenical Partnerships;
 - ix. Keeping the Connexion abreast of changes in government legislation and assessing the implications for Districts, Circuits, and churches e.g. planning regulations, health & safety, charity law, financial requirements, listed building rules;
 - x. Handling negotiations with authorities on a centralised basis e.g. charity registration;
 - xi. Retention of key documents and historical records in Room 17;
 - xii. Location in the North – a greater sense of connexion with churches outside London;
 - xiii. Visits by RMO to Districts;
 - xiv. Liaison with TMCP.

The Future

4. The areas for support and guidance that DPSs felt would be needed in the future are summarised in the table below, along with an initial indication of reconfiguration opportunities:

Area of Work	Potential Reconfiguration
Technical Matters	Commissioning, by Managing Trustees, local architects with indemnity insurance
Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas	Ecclesiastical Exemption is managed by the Conservation Officer; this may be an opportunity to work more closely with other Christian denominations who face similar issues
External Funding	Managing Trustees given login access to a Grant Finder system (licensing negotiated centrally by David Bennett) in addition to resources available locally. Use Methodist website to spread advice and success stories.
Interpretation of Standing Orders and CPD (particularly for church legal advisers who have little, or no, experience in Methodism)	Law and Polity and Governance Support staff

Area of Work	Potential Reconfiguration
Ecumenical Buildings and Local Ecumenical Partnerships	Ecumenical Relations; TMCP (for legal agreements); Connexional Ecumenical Officer (currently Ken Howcroft); link with other Christian denominations who do not have centralised support & are faced with similar issues of resourcing
Precedents and Corporate Memory	Consents website; Connexional Database populated with key information about the current property portfolio; transitional project to capture knowledge of current staff and key processes
<i>Property Points</i> publication	Incorporate wider mission matters as well as property issues; managed by the Creative Resources Team in the CCE&A Cluster
Ongoing Contact and Support	Establish networks to better facilitate the horizontal sharing of knowledge and expertise in local areas, overseen by the Connexional Property Co-ordinator; improvements to Consents and main Methodist website; enhancement of help and guidance on Consents website
Legal Issues	Clarity required on role of TMCP and future of the current draft of the Service Level Agreement
Resourcing for Mission	<p>Greater use made of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Development Enablers (connexionally-supported for 5 years) • Training Officers (employed regionally) • District Evangelism Enablers (only connexionally funded if supported by a specific grant) <p>In order to maximise the use of Methodist buildings as a means of mission and outreach</p>
Resourcing Mission Forums	Focus on sharing knowledge (e.g. experience of consents) and networking
Consents	Support the rollout by identifying future needs at District level, learn from experiences, enhance help and guidance notes, and establish networks of expert users across the Connexion. Establish Open Network to support ongoing development of consents website
Connexional Team base outside London	Creation of networks sharing knowledge horizontally across the districts will generate a greater sense of identity for the Connexion outside of London, than can be done via a single office

Area of Work	Potential Reconfiguration
First point of contact when property issue arises	Not RMO, nor TMCP, rather local experts who can signpost to the consents website or relevant expertise at District level, supported by the Connexional Property Co-ordinator
Co-location with TMCP to link Methodist regulations with legal requirements	TMCP take responsibility for appropriate work areas which fall within the Custodian Trustee role rather than simply as legal adviser to the Connexion
Support for churches in remote locations which do not have access to the Internet and hence the Consents website	The new Standing Orders place the responsibility for districts to operate the consents process within their churches.
Assistance with the completion of grant application forms	A service not usually provided by RMO

New Salaried Posts – Key Tasks

Post	Key Tasks
Governance Policy Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of Standing Orders as they relate to property matters • Discharging Methodist Council's responsibilities under Standing Orders • Charity Registration – liaising with churches / circuits and Charity Commissioner
Finance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management for property matters • Processing of CPF/property grants • Interface with TMCP on finance matters
Grants Administration Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Connexional Grant Officers team, including administration of all connexional property grants • Provide guidance to churches on connexional grants • Assist assessment of grant applications and give guidance
Administrator (Assigned to Grants Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of admin team with standard administrator job description • Work with the whole of the grants team • Assist with preparation of grant requests and reports
Administration Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Admin Assistant job description • Boost the overall admin assistant pool to cope with the administration arising from the RMO reconfiguration
Database / Consents Web Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First line support for Consents website • Development and testing of Consents website • Maintain integrity of the property database • Work with the group that will be established to support users of the Consents Website
Connexional Property Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate Regional Property Network of advisers and DPS's • Provide guidance to local churches on property projects • Oversee connexional properties
Conservation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Ecclesiastical Exemption • Negotiation with churches and their advisors on listed building and conservation area property projects • Review project proposals and facilitate their consideration by the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC) • Liaise with the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee regarding policy
Conservation Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide administrative support to the Conservation Officer • Maintain Room 17 and liaise with TMCP on filing matters
External Funding Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with existing Fund-Raising Officer (David Bennett) to develop a model to support wider connexion access external funds • Research external funding opportunities • Disseminate information on external funding
Landfill Trust Grants Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess grant applications and give guidance on amendments • Deal with landfill grant claims • Carry out church visits to monitor grant claims

Cost Benefit Issues regarding the Existence of a Separate Office in Manchester

Category	Current Cost	Projected Cost	Projected Saving	Comments
Staffing	£ 487,706	£ 424,340	£ 63,366	Current figure net of TMCP share
Rent	£ 20,000	£ -	£ 20,000	
Office Eqt etc	£ 28,000	£ 14,000	£ 14,000	Assumes that 50% of costs are specific to retaining office infrastructure
Travel	£ 12,000	£ -	£ 12,000	Based on approx. travel costs between London & Manchester 2008-2009
IT	£ 2,500	£ -	£ 2,500	Budgeted centrally - this is an estimate of the cost of maintaining that infrastructure
			£ 111,866	

The reduction in staffing costs is partly offset by the impact of the Inner London Allowance, which adds approx. £28,000 to the total cost of employing the proposed staff in MCH. The projected cost has been calculated on a conservative basis (E.g. assuming all new post-holders join the pension scheme) so should be seen as a maximum figure.

In addition there are costs of communicating and managing a separate office. They are difficult to assess and may be seen as opportunity costs, rather than cash costs.

Cluster Head	£ 3,100	£ -	£ 3,100	Cost of Cluster Head's time based on 10 visits per annum. Travel included in total above
Strategic Leader	£ 3,300	£ -	£ 3,300	Cost of 1 SL visiting RMO 10 times per annum.

The cost in terms of efficiency of having finance, charity, grants and governance functions split between London & Manchester is impossible to quantify.

RESOURCING MISSION OFFICE (RMO) - STRATEGIC REVIEW

Response from the staff of the RMO to the report of the Project Management Group (PMG).

The Team Focus exercise began over five years ago and has consumed large chunks of staff time and endeavour. It has also been very stressful. Throughout this period the staff have conducted themselves with great professionalism and commitment and their approach has remained positive and cooperative with management and with local churches and circuits. This is a summary of the staff feedback on the Review document. It is based on the staff views about what would be best for local churches and recognises that the individual needs of staff members are secondary to that principle.

1 The Report and its basis

The Report is well-crafted, comprehensive and clear. It takes account of the significant areas of work. We understand it is not the document prepared by the external consultant but has been revised by the PMG. It would be helpful to see the original proposals by Peter Desmond, which we believe would have been positive in their assessment of the current team in RMO. We would like to discover how the proposals to close the office could have found germination in that first review report. Disclosure of this information would be consistent with a desirable ethos of transparency.

2 The arguments to remove a valuable connexional resource

We recognise and support the review process which the RMO staff have always acknowledged must be focused on the current needs of the church. However, it would have been more helpful to say more about what the current team does well and there is only passing reference to this in the report. During my ten years in post the RMO has delivered all that has been asked of it. I would like to attest to the dedication and expertise which the connexion has at its disposal. So my regret is to contemplate seeing that team dismantled. The depth of knowledge and corporate memory will be wiped clean in many respects as vastly experienced staff are replaced by later, more dilute, models. The staff numbers in RMO have reduced, mainly by retirements, from 19 to 14 since August 2008. A reduced team could operate effectively from Manchester retaining much of that corporate memory.

It would also achieve the stated aim to retain the experience of the necessary specialist functions of the RMO. Relocation would not do so, for practical financial and personal reasons

3 The arguments around co-location

The intention of bringing together expertise in the Governance Support Cluster will not obviously be achieved by the proposals. Many of these matters are now handled by the Legal Issues Group which includes RMO and TMCP neither of which would, in effect, be relocating.

The key areas that work closely with TMCP ought to include Technical (almost dismissed in the report but providing key guidance on health & safety/ risk assessments, planning regulations etc) and the development of complex projects. Guidance on such matters has been provided by liaison between RMO and TMCP.

4 The value of existing resources

Of course, change is vital as circumstances alter, and the new IT Consents process has been developed with very significant input from the RMO team. In the new era the Districts will need a great deal of transitional and ongoing support and guidance and we believe RMO are ideally placed and equipped to do that. As a manager in the Team I recognise the need for the strategic review and have engaged fully with it, challenging it when that seemed relevant. I feel the connexion is now rejecting one of its best

assets at a crucial period in its history - with circuits restructuring and increased responsibilities falling on the districts. There is a real risk that the oversight of property will become disjointed and lack effectiveness. What would most benefit the Connexion would be a proven resource to provide immediately the help and guidance needed around the connexion.

5 'Synergy' versus 'function-based working'

The Report uses terms such as 'synergy' to define its ethos. What is being replaced by that synergy is a functional, dedicated and focused resource proven over time. New ways of working demand new processes and the RMO has shown its ability to deliver projects of all descriptions over the past ten years including: the Review of Advance Funds - Minor Works - new Standard Forms of Accounts - charity registration implemented - trustee roadshows - external funding for projects and the new IT Consents process – these have all been implemented in a professional manner. The RMO has delivered all of these projects successfully.

6 Arguments for retention of Manchester location

The review appears to be driven by the needs of the Team. There is no logical reason why the RMO cannot provide all that circuits and districts need. Relocation to London runs counter to the cultural change we have seen from other organisations and we believe many people around the connexion support the continuing office in Manchester. There has always been a close working relationship with TMCP and that is best served by co-location. A prime example of this is the collaboration often required in working through legal issues from the custodian's perspective and on behalf of managing trustees. Another is the shared filing system. Both are key components of our service to the connexion. We believe that need is greater than that different functions within the team should be side by side - such as IT, Personnel etc - where there is little overlap. To argue that TMCP will be able to engage just as easily with MCH negates the argument for relocating the RMO to London.

7 Dilution of expertise and resources

Thus, the report proposes replacing an effective team in Manchester with several fragmented functions or add-ons in MCH. We would argue that the advantages of function-based resources outweigh the 'synergy' now desired. The Districts were asked what services they required from RMO in the future. They were not asked to contemplate the closure of the office. We understand their response was that they wished to see a connexional resource base outside of London. The proposed networks do not provide such a base. The potential loss of a dedicated help and guidance resource actually reverses all previous assurances given to the Districts of a continuing connexional body. This has led to an increased likelihood of Districts recruiting and paying for professional or administrative staff to fulfill what they perceive to be the present need. However, this is a misconception as that is not the role the districts are being asked to fulfill. It is not to provide professional advice. The wider cost to the connexion will be much greater than that of a small and dedicated team in Manchester.

8 Costs

The project cost savings are not very detailed and we feel it would be helpful to see more information making that case.

9 Consents

As Property Secretary I have cooperated fully with the review process and believe the new Consents process can prove a boon for local churches and circuits. However, the system needs ongoing support and those who have developed it are best placed to provide that support.

10 *Team needs being given priority over the needs of the local church*

We note the driver for change is not money, nor is it about proposing we no longer provide a connexional resource; the driver appears therefore to be to have the team staff in one place. Possibly all of the RMO staff will have to be made redundant as relocation is out of the question for financial or personal/family reasons. Several new posts are also half a post only, thus making them less attractive to apply for.

* * *

We have all felt it a privilege to serve the Church here with such a committed group of people, who have been a delight to work with. We do not believe a convincing case has been made for relocation of the staff and the closure of the office which has served the Council so well.

We are grateful for the opportunity to offer this feedback which is an attempt to focus on the main strategic and practical issues – though we have had just two working days to collate our views and prepare our response..

We hope the Council will consider these matters fully and hope to see the Minutes of the meeting in due course.

Alan Pimlott
Connexional Property Secretary

A collated response on behalf of the staff of the Resourcing Mission Office, Manchester

23 March 2010