

Equalities and Diversity Project

Basic Information

Contact Name and Details	David Gamble
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	<p>1 The Council resolves to report to the Conference that it has agreed to the deferral of the date for reporting back to the Conference on Equalities and Diversity from 2009 to 2010.</p> <p>2 The Council authorises the Equalities and Diversity Theological Working Group to proceed in the manner outlined above in preparing its report for the Conference in 2010.</p>
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To brief the Council of the status of the Equalities and Diversity project
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference 2008 approved further work on Equalities and Diversity ("E&D") • This project is tasked with writing a theology on E&D (reporting to Conference 2009), developing an Equal Opportunities Policy for Conference 2009, and an Equalities and Diversity Policy • This paper summarises progress to date and requests a deferral for reporting to Conference until 2010.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	<i>"Report to Methodist Conference concerning Equalities and Diversity - 2008"</i>
Consultations	None

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	None
Faith and Order	None
Financial	None
Personnel	None
Legal	The E&D Project is tasked with obtaining legal advice on the Church's legal position under current legislation. Once the Church has a draft Equal Opportunities policy, Counsel's opinion will be sought. Deferral of the project timetable does not jeopardise the Church's current compliance with legislation, as advice is currently sought on a case by case basis.
Wider Connexional	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None
Risk	The absence of a new Equal Opportunities Policy does not significantly put the Connexion at risk, as the new E&D Officer has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Church's current policies relating to E&D.

Equalities and Diversity Project

The Conference in 2008 received a report on Equalities and Diversity which detailed future work to be done on theology (to report to the Conference in 2009), an Equal Opportunities Policy (also to report in 2009) and an Equalities and Diversity Policy (to report at a future date to be determined).

To that end an Equalities and Diversity Theological Working Group has been set up. The group was set up under the auspices of the Equality and Diversity Project working with Faith and Order, assisted by the Projects Cluster and Governance Support Cluster. The process established two chairs – Helen Tyers and Donald Eadie. Sarah Willison from the Projects Cluster was appointed to provide some project management for the Working Group. As Faith and Order Secretary, Pete Phillips serves as a consultant member on the group. Membership seeks to represent key people involved in Equality and Diversity work alongside members of the Faith and Order Committee.

The Working Group has met three times since its inception in November 2008. Having had the chance to consider the scale of its task, the Working Group considers that it is not possible to develop a well thought-out theology of equalities and diversity by Conference 2009, for the following reasons:

- the theology of equalities and diversity may in fact encompass many theological positions, each of which must be explored by the Working Group; and
- in order to do this it is necessary to involve/consult with more people than currently comprise the Working Group
- the tight timescale involved in producing a complex report for the Council in preparation for the Conference.

The Working Group therefore requests the Council to:

- defer the date for reporting back to the Conference on these matters from 2009 to 2010 ;
- authorise the Group to develop material to be used as a basis for a sufficiently wide-ranging consultation exercise on Equalities and Diversity, to enable the Working Group to prepare its report as a background for developing the draft policies of Equal Opportunities and Equalities and Diversity.

RESOLUTION

1. The Council resolves to report to the Conference that it has agreed to the deferral of the date for reporting back to the Conference on Equalities and Diversity from 2009 to 2010.
2. The Council authorises the Equalities and Diversity Theological Working Group to proceed in the manner outlined above in preparing its report for the Conference in 2010.