

Paper P1

Update on progress regarding property matters

Law and Polity Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Neil Mackenzie ravelston20@hotmail.co.uk
Action required	To note.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Following a Constitutional Review, reported to Mission Council in May 2019, detailed guidance on a variety of property matters is being prepared to bring to General Assembly 2022.
Main points	<p>Following an Assembly Commission decision regarding a dispute arising from a disposal of church premises and the application of the proceeds thereof, the Law and Polity Advisory Group were tasked to issue practical guidance with regard to disposal of church premises which might be adopted uniformly across the United Reformed Church, but not before consulting widely. With the aid of a consultation paper which included a questionnaire all a consultation exercise was completed.</p> <p>The interpretation of trusts relating to church premises by synods and Trust Companies and the practices adopted with regard to synod funds vary between synods to the extent that the Group needed to instruct and receive advice from a barrister of long good standing and experience in charity law. The Group has further work to do and will again consult with synod officers, the chairs of Trust Companies, PLATO members and other interested parties.</p> <p>The Group will bring its practical guidance to General Assembly in 2022.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Paper M1 of May 2019.
Consultation has taken place with...	Synods and Trust Companies were consulted and invited to complete a wide-ranging questionnaire. The Group also consulted Synod Clerks, Synod Moderators, members of PLATO, and the chairs of Trust Companies. This consultation

	will continue as the guidance is drafted, so that when it is presented to General Assembly 2022 those most closely involved will have been involved in getting the material to that stage.
--	--

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Reduction in risk of reputational damage through fewer problems arising.