

Paper B6

Net Zero Task Group

Terms of Reference

Business Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Roo Stewart, Head of Public Issues roo.stewart@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution #tbc General Assembly adopts the terms of reference for the Net Zero Task Group

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Terms of Reference for Net Zero Task Group
Main points	Terms of Reference, clarifying that a Convenor (rather than a Chair) is to be appointed for the task group, and that the task group will be a hub for mutual accountability, to urge and equip progress within the United Reformed Church.
Previous relevant documents	General Assembly 2022 Resolution 17(d) General Assembly 2024 Resolution 36
Consultation has taken place with...	n/a

Summary of impact

Financial	None
External (eg ecumenical)	Includes ecumenical representation from Methodist Church

Net Zero Task Group Terms of Reference

Task Group	Net Zero Task Group
Convenor	Appointed by General Assembly following the nominations safer recruitment process (to be included in the numbers below in task group make-up)
Members	Appointed by General Assembly following the nominations safer recruitment process, constituted as below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one member of the Finance Committee, • one representative of the URC Trust, • one representative of URC Youth, • one Synod Green Apostle, • one Synod Moderator, • one Synod Property Officer, • the Chief Operating Officer, • the Head of Public Issues.
In attendance when required	Additional Synod Green Apostles or Synod Property Officers with appropriate skills and experience may be co-opted. An ecumenical representative of the Methodist Church's Action for Hope team.
Length of term	Four years renewable once
Minute Secretary	PA to the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action)
Accountability and reporting duties	Accountable to Faith in Action Committee Reports to General Assembly
Frequency of meetings	Approx. six times per year
Terms of Reference review	Every four years or more frequently if required

Responsibilities

The Net Zero Task Group exists to:

1. Oversee progress in implementing the Environmental Policy of the United Reformed Church and report regularly to the Assembly Executive and General Assembly
2. Identify, advocate for, and where possible put in place any additional resources, support and expertise that are needed to implement this policy across the Church
3. Engage with Assembly committees around their Net Zero Action Plans and support them to develop them further
4. Encourage and facilitate the sharing of experiences across the Church, including celebrating achievements.

Structure

The General Assembly (2022, Resolution 17) established the Net Zero Task Group to include within its membership:

- one member of the Finance Committee
- one representative of the URC Trust
- one representative of URC Youth
- one Synod Green Apostle
- one Synod Moderator
- one Synod Property Officer
- the Deputy General Secretary (Admin and Resources) (now Chief Operating Officer)
- the Secretary for Church and Society (now Head of Public Issues)

The task group meets every one or two months as required. Aware of Resolutions 10-12 from General Assembly 2021 encouraging meetings with online access and out of normal working hours, meetings may be scheduled in the evenings or at weekends as well as standard working hours. Meetings are usually online.

It is important the membership of the committee reflects the diversity of the URC. The Net Zero Task Group members should have an active interest in care for creation, a willingness to grow in their knowledge and understanding of net-zero-related issues, and have a desire to see the URC reduce its carbon footprint.

Summary notes are produced from each meeting: it is expected that, as representatives of various parts of URC life, Task Group members will share these with their peers and invite conversation and feedback that will help inform the direction and decision-making of the Task Group.

Relationship with the wider denomination

The Net Zero Task Group seeks reports from each synod once a year on their progress in reducing their carbon footprint. The Task Group reports this to General Assembly annually through the Faith in Action Committee's report paper.

The Net Zero Task Group offers a hub for mutual accountability within the denomination, urging action and offering support in the implementation of carbon footprint-reducing policies.

The Task Group aims to support General Assembly, committees, synods and congregations in their journey of reducing their carbon footprint through a variety of means, including webinars and webpages, to inform, educate and challenge. The Group wishes to learn from the good practices observed within and beyond the URC, and share these broadly for the wider benefit of the church and society.

Delegated authority

The Net Zero Task Group gathers information from local churches, synods and related Trust companies as instructed by General Assembly (2024, Resolution 35). It reports to the Faith and Action Committee.

Links with the wider church

Recognising that other denominations are striving for similar goals and will have complementary and relevant knowledge and experience, we seek to include ecumenical representatives in our

Task Group meetings and share good practice with other churches and faith groups when appropriate.

External relations

The Net Zero Task Group does not relate externally but the resources it produces for the denomination may also be available publicly.

Inclusion

The Net Zero Task Group seeks to support the whole URC. The Convenor will be expected to have received Anti-Racism training to help address conscious and unconscious biases. The Task Group seeks to have representation from children and young people: this may be through appropriate inclusion of the children and young people themselves, and/or through a Children and Youth officer. The Group seeks a diverse membership which is representative of the breadth of diversity of the URC.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is at the heart of all our activities as a church. The Task Group will adhere to the URC safeguarding policy. Recognising that there is potential for members of the Task Group to be under 18 or an at-risk adult, Safer Recruitment will be implemented for all new members of the Task Group.

Risk management

The Net Zero Task Group will review the Risk Register as it relates to its key responsibilities, at least once per year but will add additional actions as and when they arise.