

**FEASIBILITY STUDIES****Introduction**

In considering its response to God's call to mission, a church will frequently identify the possibility of redeveloping its buildings. The skills needed to consider and evaluate the alternatives are rarely to be found amongst the membership, and a church may be inhibited from exploring the options available by the cost of employing professional assistance.

Sometimes a church will have identified very clearly the functional requirements for its buildings and, with very little further consultation, a 'church' architect could present a range of options for re-development to fulfil the church's functional specification. More often, a church will need considerable assistance in the process of translating its vision into statements of requirements for its premises. Architects, quantity surveyors, valuers and others may all be required. In order to ensure that a church obtains the appropriate assistance, the Synod will pay the fees of suitably qualified professionals engaged for a feasibility study.

Before undertaking a feasibility study with outside assistance, a church will be expected to have used and responded to 'Wessex Navigator' and, perhaps, undertaken a 'Vision workshop'. Amongst the other resources available to assist in this process, the synod has a Mission Enabler, a Director of Training and a Youth and Children's Work Development Worker.

Policy

1. Grants are available to meet the cost of professional assistance with feasibility studies.
2. The professionals who take part in the feasibility study must be appointed by the Synod in consultation with the church.
3. The terms of reference for the professionals must be agreed between the Synod and the church.
4. On the recommendation of a review group from the District and the Synod, grants of up to the full cost of the feasibility study may be made.
5. Following a feasibility study, the procedures for the approval of building works must be followed.

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Procedure

6. The Church Meeting of a church that feels that a feasibility study is necessary as a result of a 'Vision workshop' or of using 'Wessex Navigator', should request the district to set up a review group including representatives of the district and synod. This group should meet with the whole church first.
7. If it is agreed as appropriate by the district and by the synod that a feasibility study should be undertaken, the convener of the review group will arrange one or more meetings with representatives of the church to review the needs of the church.
8. The review group will report back to the synod and will send copies of its report to the district and to the church for information, and to give them the opportunity to make any further comments.
9. If the review body recommends that a feasibility study should be undertaken and the Synod Finance Committee agrees then, in consultation with the church, the Wessex Trust, acting on behalf of the Synod Finance Committee, will appoint the appropriate professionals and will set their terms of reference.

Beyond the Feasibility Study

If, as a result of a feasibility study, a local church wishes to proceed with a project expected to cost more than £100,000, the district and synod representatives who visited the church, and subsequently recommended the feasibility study, will make a return visit (although the meeting could be with a smaller group than the Church Meeting). The representatives will then advise District and Synod in their consideration of the proposed scheme and any related application for financial support. The representatives' involvement in the developing scheme will depend on its size and complexity and there must be flexibility in the approval process.

If the project is expected to cost less than £100,000, the local church and District Council may agree to follow either the above procedure or that which normally applies when feasibility studies have not been undertaken (> 041).