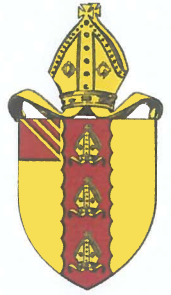


## THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER

*The Rt Revd Dr David Walker*



March 2018

To:  
Clergy  
Lay chairs  
PCC secretaries

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a blessed Easter Season. As we prepare for Holy Week and our Easter services I pray that you will be filled with Easter joy.

I appreciate that this is a very busy time for us all and our focus is rightly on our preparations for Easter, but I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on Fit for Mission and provide clarity on how the programme is moving forward.

Over recent weeks a series of very honest and detailed conversations has taken place about Mission Action Plans (MAPs), including the activity that is being undertaken within the four Fit for Mission pilot deaneries. I want to take this opportunity and confirm precisely what is happening and to confirm why it is so important in order that there is a shared understanding.

The importance of Mission Action Plans (MAPs)

Mission Action Planning is a vital underpinning component of Fit for Mission, it is not a separate activity. Every parish and deanery within the Diocese of Manchester is expected to develop a MAP. I would like to take an opportunity to acknowledge and thank the significant number of parishes that have already submitted their MAP. This investment of time and energy by parishes is of great value and is already helping to develop a clear picture of what resources and support are required.

MAPs are the means of providing parishes and deaneries with the opportunity to shape and influence the future and the allocation of resources. MAP, in a standard form that facilitates aggregation across larger areas such as deaneries, is essential. It will not become a distraction from existing missional efforts, indeed I am confident that parishes won't find it onerous or distracting to capture the key elements of their current and intended mission activities in a plan. Rather it will clarify the vision and may help other parishes benefit from it.

The important thing is that resources need to be allocated to support mission. If the mission is taking place without our knowing it (in a standard format) then it becomes impossible to do that allocation. I and my colleagues need to know what opportunities God is opening the doors to in the Manchester Diocese, so that we can hold those doors open as wide as possible.

Tools have been developed, and are available, to assist parishes to develop their MAP. These are available via the website: [www.manchester.anglican.org/map/](http://www.manchester.anglican.org/map/)

In addition Andy Salmon and colleagues based in Church House will continue to be available to work alongside parishes to provide practical support and assistance.

For parishes that are part of a pilot deanery (Ashton, Deane, North Manchester, Salford) parish MAPs should be developed by 30 April 2018.

I acknowledge that this deadline follows fairly soon after Eastertide and I want to allay concerns that this is only being highlighted to parishes now. This deadline was confirmed in late January 2018 and every parish within a pilot deanery area has already been contacted and informed.

MAPs for all other parishes within the diocese (non-pilot deanery parishes) should be developed by the end of November 2018.

#### Pilot Deaneries

There are four pilot deaneries (Ashton, Deane, North Manchester and Salford) operating at the moment. They have been in place since early 2017 and are due to complete their work by the end of December 2018. The outcome of the work of the pilot deaneries is the development of a Sustainable Deanery Mission Action Plan which will include:-

- A very clear plan for missionary activity across the 5 Marks of Mission
  - To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
  - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
  - To respond to human need by loving service
  - To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
  - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
- How the local church will reshape itself to promote greater collaboration, and even integration where appropriate, in order to undertake aspects of mission that require a larger geography
- How deployment will take place across the range of ordained and lay ministries (paid and unpaid)
- Arrangements for the future of buildings within the deanery

Each pilot deanery has been allocated a project manager to provide support and assistance with their work. Over the coming months the further rollout of the pilot deanery approach will be considered and decisions will be informed by the valuable learning and experience of the current pilot deanery areas.

Fit for Mission is the process to support Manchester Diocese to become a Church For A Different World and to realise our vision of being "A worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community".

It is about effective and sustainable mission: it is not about managing decline or financial crisis – these are not the drivers.

Moreover it is a holistic approach with the five marks of mission and it is crucial that this approach is delivered from the bottom up. However, if there are places where we cannot deliver from the bottom up, and where there are no plans from parishes and deaneries, there will be a need to intervene: this will be the very last resort.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt Revd Dr David Walker  
Bishop of Manchester