

Church for a Different World Briefing July/August 2019

A 10-year strategy for the diocese

Work is continuing on a high level strategy for the diocese, bringing the key programmes together into one document and setting out an inspiring Christian vision of what we are seeking to achieve over the next ten years. Feedback from the discussions at Synod is being taken on board. The final version of the strategy will be presented to Bishop's Council in September and Synod in October.

Structural changes in the diocese

Following on from the presentation by Bishop David to June Synod, detailed proposals for structural changes in the diocese were presented by the Archdeacon of Rochdale, Cherry Vann, to the July meetings of Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) and Bishop's Council. The changes focus on having fewer, larger deaneries and creating a new full-time Area Dean role. They recognise the tremendous challenges facing the diocese and are driven by the need to organise ourselves so we can lead and deliver the radical changes required to grow the church of the future.

Invitations have now been sent out to a series of archdeaconry briefings in September where there will be a discussions on the proposals. The briefings are taking place as follows, from 7-9 pm:

- Wednesday 4 September – Bolton (Bolton Parish Church)
- Thursday 5 September – Salford (Kersal Moor, St Paul)
- Tuesday 10 September – Manchester (Eastlands, Church of the Resurrection)
- Thursday 12 September – Rochdale (Droylsden, Church of the Epiphany)

A [briefing document](#) is published on the website, with information on the proposed changes. Two or three representatives from each parish are invited to attend and they should sign up through Eventbrite.

The final set of proposals will be presented to October Synod after which there will be a formal consultation process. The target date for the new deanery arrangements to be in place and the new Area Deans to be in post is 1 January 2021.

Restructuring exercise – DBF

The restructuring exercise at the DBF has now been completed with five posts being made redundant. The changes include reducing the layers of management, and focusing on posts which have an impact for every parish, rather than posts which provide hands-on support for a few parishes. This has not been an easy decision.

In the new structure Mike Starkey, Jamie Mackenzie and Alison Peacock are confirmed as the leads for the diocese's three strategic themes of *Growing*, *Nurturing* and *Serving*, respectively. Mike, Jamie and Alison are working on the 10-Year Strategy and consulting on priorities for implementation, prior to these being discussed at Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod over the autumn.

Financial update

At Bishop's Council in July, Phillip Blinkhorn, Chair of the DBF, provided an update on the diocese's current financial position. The latest forecasts show that last year's operating deficit of £600k is likely to increase to £800k in the current financial year. This is mainly because the amount of parish share being paid to the diocese is not keeping pace with inflation and is not in line with the agreed budget.

The DBF restructuring exercise mentioned above will contribute around £250k to reducing the deficit from the beginning of 2020. Additional income is likely to be secured by freeing up space at Church House for commercial lettings and disposing of surplus parsonages to provide investment income. Numbers of stipendiary clergy will also be considered over the coming months to help us move to a position where we are able to achieve a balanced budget.

Restructuring funding

Additional funding of £787k has been secured from the Church Commissioners to help build capacity in the diocese. Of this £390k has already been drawn down to fund social media, gift aid and property support to parishes. At its July meeting, Bishop's Leadership Team agreed to apply the remaining funds to a Surveyor post to increase capacity in the Property Team, and for development and training activities in the diocese, with a particular focus on leadership development.

Strategic Development Funding

Work is continuing on a new SDF bid to be submitted in October 2019. Bishop Mark Ashcroft made a presentation to Bishop's Council in July on the bid which is focusing on new church growth projects in Rochdale Town Centre, and a project in the Manchester area where we are exploring working in partnership with St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London.

Mission Action Plans

Deaneries are being encouraged to continue work on their Mission Action Plans, in spite of the proposed changes to deanery boundaries from 2020. This is because of the need for parishes to build their experience of working together and developing plans for the future – all of which will be taken forward into the new arrangements from 2020.

This is why Deanery MAPs will be reviewed and considered by DMPC over the coming year – to provide support for joint working and to identify key issues and emerging themes. Over the coming months, each deanery will be invited to present their MAP to a small sub-committee of DMPC. The focus will be on giving feedback and providing constructive challenge, as well as honouring the work that has gone into developing each deanery MAP.

Education

Maurice Smith will be retiring at the end of August. The diocese is grateful to him for his inspiring leadership over the last 12 years. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Deborah Smith as the new Director of Education who is joining us from Carlisle Diocese. Deborah will be starting in November.

Helen Platts Diocesan Secretary/COO
8 August 2019