

Church for a Different World Briefing September 2019

A 10-year strategy for the diocese

The final version of a 10-year strategy for the diocese was agreed at Bishop's Council in September, prior to being presented to October Synod.

The new strategy document sets out an inspiring and aspirational Christian vision for the diocese. The three mission goals – *Growing, Nurturing and Serving* - which are already well understood, continue to be at the heart of the diocesan strategy.

The aim is to set out clear programmes of work and support for each of the mission goals and to create a culture of accountability in delivering them. These will form the basis of a 3-year Mission Action Plan for the diocese as a whole, which will be presented to Bishop's Council in November, before the start of the new financial year.

Work is also underway on a transformation programme which will address some of the fundamental organisational changes that need to take place to ensure we achieve our vision. This work will be developed over the coming months and will address issues such as clergy deployment, mission units, development and training, and our properties, including parsonages.

Structural changes in the diocese

At its September meeting, the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) agreed to a consultation taking place on proposed structural changes at deanery level. The changes focus on moving to 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 that are required to ensure our future.

This follows on from four successful Archdeaconry briefing sessions in September which were attended by over 400 people.

The final set of proposals will be presented to October Synod after which there will be a formal consultation process. This will run from November to February. The consultation will be widely publicised to enable individuals to respond and consultation meetings will be held in every deanery. The proposed date for the new deanery arrangements to be in place and the new Area Deans to be in post is 1 January 2021.

Review of deanery Mission Action Plans

A sub-committee of DMPC has started the process of reviewing deanery MAPs. In September, a very positive meeting was held with two of the pilot deaneries, North Manchester and Salford, to review their progress and achievements and discuss key learning points for the future. These deanery review meetings will continue over the coming year. It was recognised that the work at deanery level provides an important basis for future joint working at local level, whatever the future size shape of the deaneries following the consultation exercise.

Financial update

The diocese continues to face significant financial challenges with the latest forecasts projecting an operating deficit in excess of £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 which means that we are not able to cover our core operating costs, including clergy costs.

A financial strategy for the next three years was discussed at Bishop's Council in September, prior to being presented to October Synod. This includes options for increasing income, for example through the sale of surplus parsonages, and also reviewing the number of stipendiary clergy to ensure we move to achieving a balanced budget.

Strategic Development Funding

In September, Bishop's Council signed off a new SDF bid to be submitted to the Church Commissioners next month. The bid is focused on church growth projects in Manchester City Centre, where we will be creating a new resource church linking with St Philip's Resource Church, and a new hub church working in partnership with St Martin-in-the-Fields; along with a project in Rochdale Town Centre where we will be working with the Church Army and Holy Trinity Brompton.

Education

We welcome Alasdair Coates as Interim Director of Education until Deborah Smith joins us in November.

Helen Platts Diocesan Secretary/COO
27 September 2019