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Risk Logs and Stakeholder Engagement Plans specific to the process of strategy development have also been prepared but are not included in this pack.

Appendix A – Intergenerational Communities Strategic Priority Plan

A note: The plan at Appendix A is dependent upon a successful Diocesan Investment Proposal (DIP) to the national church. This is currently in development. It is therefore very likely that plans will continue to evolve as part of the discernment process with the national church, as well as in light of ongoing feedback from within the diocese. This DIP funding is not guaranteed and this appendix and especially the roles described should be read in that context.

As we seek to respond to the Three Key Questions, the challenges and opportunities we face, for the next 10 years, we will especially prioritise *Intergenerational Communities* – our work with children, young people, and families, especially through partnership with our schools – in making resourcing decisions. In this document *Intergenerational* and *Growing Faith* (the national Church strategy of households, schools and churches working in partnership) are used interchangeably.

This strategy outlines our Growing Faith approach to evangelism and discipleship with children and young people (CYP), that provides continuity and can be contextualised across emerging Minster Communities. The vision is to see a flourishing intergenerational worshipping community within reach of every child and young person, leading to a doubling of the number of children and young people as active disciples.

Key to implementing this approach to evangelism and discipleship will be the employment of a Growing Faith Minister in each Minster Community. The exact nature of Growing Faith roles will vary depending on context, current ministry provision, cultural readiness, and local discernment. We will seek Diocesan Investment Proposal (DIP) investment to catalyse these roles as we establish Minster Communities.

Theory of Change & Discipleship Pathway

Our approach to Growing Faith with children and young people emphasises:

1. Prayer and worship (encounter)
2. Relationships of trust (engagement)
3. Active participation (exploration & expression)
4. Young leaders (empowerment)

Listening and Learning

In 2023 we heard the voice of more than 375 children and young people through a reimagined Bishop’s Children and Youth council (BCYC)¹.

When asked *what do you value in a leader?* The children and young people involved emphasised character traits (who I am) rather than skills (how I lead) as most important. These responses emphasise the importance of relationships. Relationships of trust require time and space.

When asked who they would talk to if they had a question about faith, children 5-11 year olds) said they (are most likely to talk to parents, teachers, and vicars. However, young people (11-18 year olds) are least likely to speak to teachers and parents and more likely speak with youth workers.

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) annual report² states the flourishing Church schools are those where the impact of worship and spiritual development are seen throughout the school day and not just within Collective Worship. The report also suggests that pupil led worship and prayer are both powerful tools within a school but that a focus needs to be on *why* this is done. This is something local churches could support schools with.

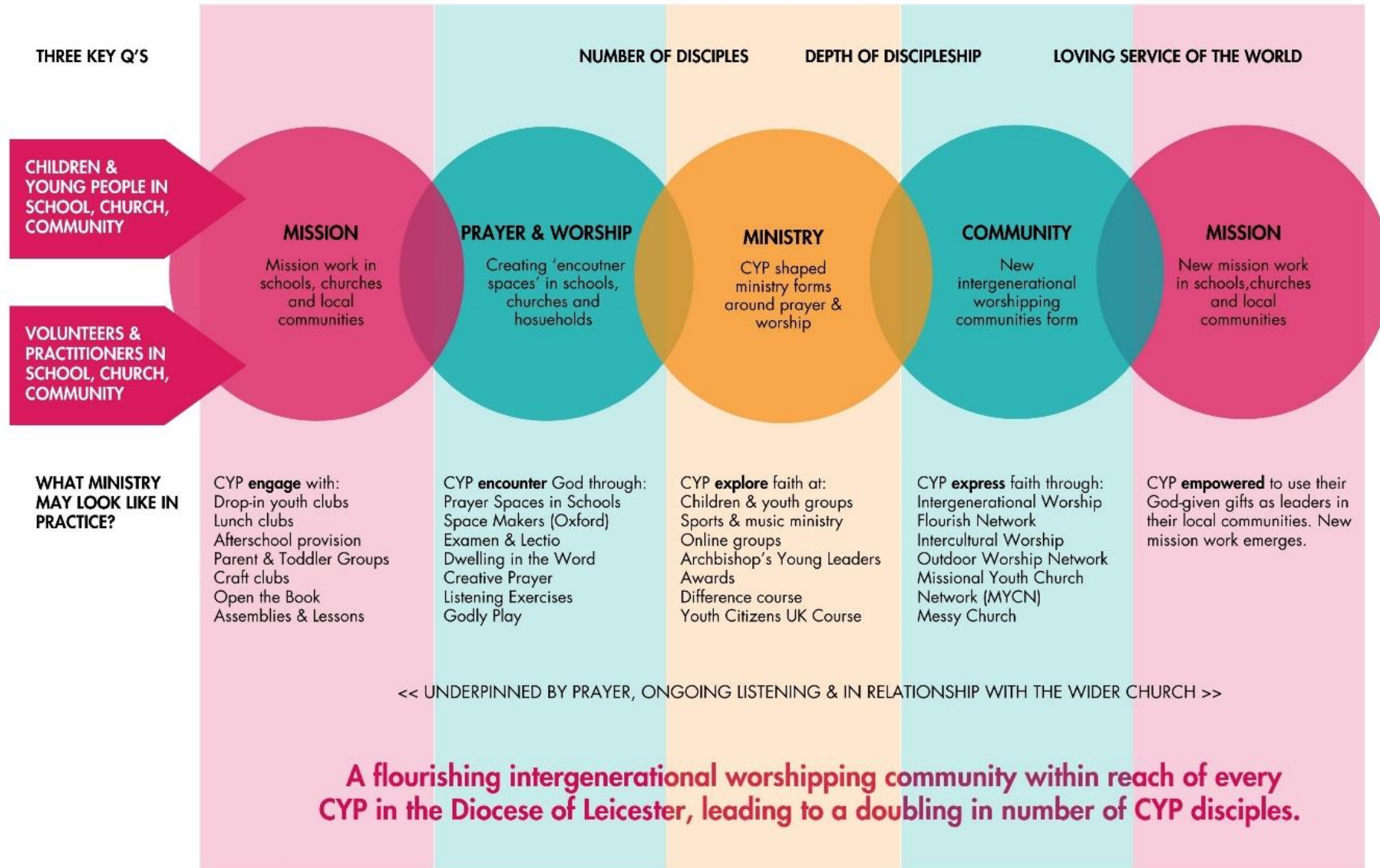
¹ <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/children-families-and-young-people/bishops-children-and-youth-council-bcyc/>

² <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/siams-annual-report-2022-2023.pdf>

Defining Intergenerational Community

Intergenerational community exist where deep relationships form across generations, through mutual service and two-way learning (exchange). Children and young people have a voice and are empowered to be leaders in their communities. All-ages contribute to the planning, delivery and evaluation of prayer, worship & discipleship.

INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITIES

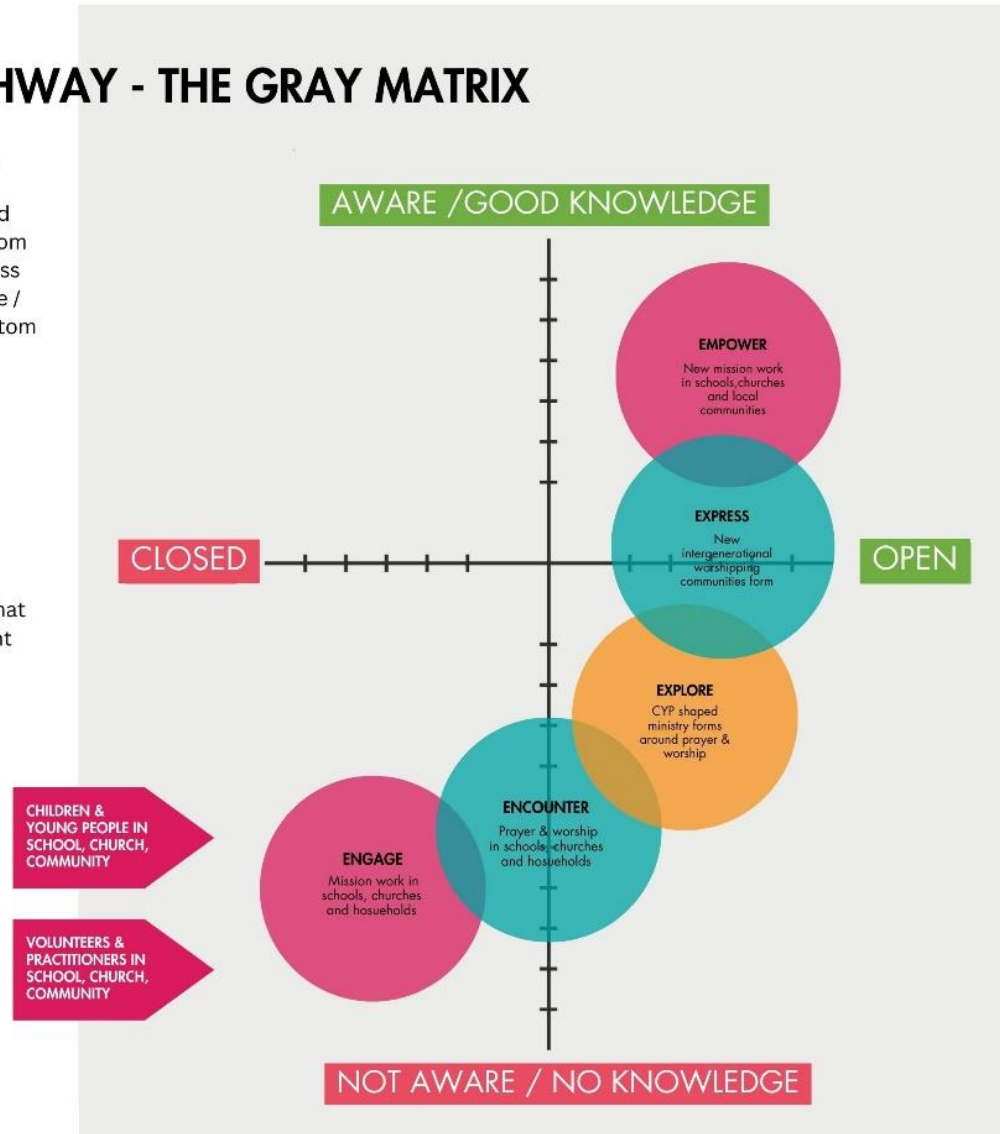


CYP DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY - THE GRAY MATRIX

The Gray Matrix is made up of four quadrants. They are divided horizontally into Attitude towards God and vertically into Awareness and knowledge of God. Attitude to God changes from closed to open (left to right). Level of awareness and knowledge of God changes from not aware / no knowledge to aware / good knowledge (bottom to top).

Spiritual conversion is not merely a matter of acquiring knowledge or developing a positive attitude towards Christian belief. The Matrix maps the discipleship journey and depicts conversion to Christ as taking place at the horizontal axis, or "0" on the vertical scale.

The Gray Matrix helps create faith pathways that will lead children and young people to top right quadrant – active young disciples.



Outcomes and Impact

Children: primary school, aged 5-11 years

Young People: secondary school, aged 11-18 years.

See note on p6 of the main strategy document about how each Minster Community will consider how these overall outcomes relate to their plans

Outcome	Baseline	Expected growth by 2034	Verification
Outcome #1 Expression			
Number of active young disciples <i>(attending monthly worship and growing in two or more of; prayer, scripture, praise, sacrament, social action).</i>	900 (based on AWA, 2022)	1,800	Termly reporting Stats for mission
Number of new intergenerational worshipping communities formed	-	50	Termly reporting
Outcome #1A Engagement (Children and young people)			
Number of children engaging with <i>mission work</i> in schools	-	9,000	Termly reporting School registers
Number of children and young people engaging with <i>mission work</i> through churches	-	6,000	Termly reporting Stats for mission
Outcome #2B Engagement (volunteer Leaders)			
Number of new volunteers recruited, trained, and commissioned	-	400	Training course completion. Ministry records
Number of new schools engaged with	-	<i>TBA through Minster Community formation process</i>	Termly reporting
Outcome #3 Encounter			
Number of children & young people regularly planning and leading prayer & worship in school or church	-	320	Termly reporting School registers
Number of children and young people attending worshipping communities (at least monthly)	-	2,500	Registers. Stats for mission.
Outcome #4 Exploration			
Number of children and young people regularly attending age-appropriate discipleship groups	-	1,000 new	Termly reporting. Registers.
Number of new age-appropriate discipleship groups formed	-	200	Termly reporting.
Outcome #5 Empowerment			
Number of children and young people involved with Bishops' Children and Youth Council (BCYC)	-	5,000	Registers. Data collection.
Number of children and young people taking on leadership roles within intergenerational worshipping communities	-	160	Termly reporting.

Within reach defined by the acronym 'AIR':

Accessible – culturally, physically (e.g. in terms of transport, and access for people with disabilities), practically (e.g. in terms of cost, timings) and appropriate (e.g. in terms of age, ability, and neurodiversity)

Inclusive – places where culture is proactively shaped to welcome, value and enable all who come (welcoming to and working with and for CYP)

Representative – reflecting the communities they serve, and led by indigenous leaders who are recognisable to those they lead (shaped and led by CYP)

Prayer & Spiritual Practices

Prayer and spiritual practice are foundational to our theory of change. We want to see discipleship pathways for children and young people that emphasise encounter with God and opportunity to explore and express faith. Prayer is crucial to the discernment and sustainability of new Growing Faith roles in each Minster Community.

Minster Community Discernment & Mission Design

We will work with each Minster Community, as it emerges, to discern what type of Growing Faith role is needed, as part of their proposal to Joint Archdeaconry Mission Committee and then as part of the Diocesan Investment Proposal. We will start this discernment process with those Minster Communities which are formed or forming (phase two of the minster process³). Each Minster Community will discern a contextual delivery plan with schools and churches, which will include:

- Why _____ minster community, why now?
- Clear plan of what you will do.
- Work plan for Growing Faith role to catalyse and connect work with children and young people across the Minster Community, including schools and churches.
- Plan for recruitment, training, and support of local volunteers & practitioners.
- Discipleship & engagement pathway.
- Clear leadership, oversight, and accountability structures.

All Growing Faith Roles...

...will be open to lay or ordained candidates.

...will receive ongoing training, professional development.

...will be centrally employed by the Diocesan Board of Finance (lay) or on Common Tenure (clergy) on as close to an equivalent basis as possible (comparative role analysis available on request)

...will have a network of support including, line management, coaching, community of practice and spiritual accompaniment.

...will be 35 hours a week, including Sunday, as per the umbrella group for children and young people's workers *Paraklesis*' Charter for Churches, with space for flexible working agreed locally.

Sustainability of roles

The new Growing Faith roles are initially additional to roles which can currently be funded through diocesan budgets/Parish Contributions. They are to help parishes see the cultural and missional change they have articulated a desire to see around intergenerational mission and ministry. New roles are centrally employed (lay) or Common Tenure (clergy) and locally deployed. Due to their length and HR law, all roles are permanent.

³ Minster Process infographic >

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_T2EOO1qWqylaDjwrl7smzcnK2wX1Uln/view?usp=sharing

The ongoing process of Minster Community formation is critical to ensuring that parishes are able to cover the cost of the ministry they receive (as outlined in the Financial Sustainability section of the Main Strategy document). This means DIP monies would be tapered to avoid any funding ‘cliff edges’. This is a key part of our strategic shift towards all parishes being intergenerational (with a much greater emphasis on work with children and young people).

A written agreement will be in place with each Minster Community from the outset ensuring clarity and shared expectations around such as HR responsibilities and line management. This will include a commitment to Minster Communities working towards covering the cost of ministry they receive.

Central Diocesan Support

This level of focused investment will require additional support and oversight. To be able to deliver, monitor, equip and enable the roles in context across the diocese to succeed, additional central support is required. These roles split into two types. All of these roles should be considered draft until the outcome of ongoing conversations with the national church are known.

Direct Intergenerational Team roles			
Role	Purpose	Funded by	To/from
Growing Faith Director (1 Fully Time Equivalent)	Oversee the implementation of the intergenerational strategy	DIP	Ongoing, permanent
Growing Faith Church-facing Role – title tbc (1 FTE)	Responsible for supporting churches in addressing the cultural readiness required to refocus work on intergenerational ministry and receive the workers in a way they and the ministry can flourish	DIP	May 2025, fully funded for 10 years so as to help all roles establish before the role finishes
Growing Faith School-Facing Role (1 FTE)	Working collaboratively with school leaders to champion schools and represent their voice. Partnership working with the Diocesan Board of Education.	DIP	Scheduled to start as more Minster Communities have formed so budgeted from May 2026, fully funded for 5 years so as to help all roles establish before the role finishes
Growing Faith Vocations & Training (1 FTE)	Oversee training and vocations, with a particular focus on new Growing Faith roles, volunteer leaders and emerging young leaders (inc collective worship). Partnership working with the Diocesan Board of Education.	DIP	May 2025, fully funded for 10 years so as to help all roles establish before the role finishes
Growing Faith Admin Support (0.5 FTE)	Support Intergenerational Team with day-to-day admin; recording & monitoring, bookings & registration for courses and events	DIP	Required now as admin requirements are front loaded. Budgeted to start May 2025, fully funded for 5 years so as to help all roles establish before the role finishes

Coaching - Money will also be budgeted to hire in sessional time from a partner organisation (e.g. Paraklesis or Youthscape) for coaching and support of Growing Faith workers. This will ramp up as more roles are filled, budgeted as 0.1 FTE in 2025, 0.3 FTE in 2026 onwards, finishing three

years after all workers have started (Q3, 2030). Funding for this will be sought from the DIP and is included now as for 'Full Approval'.

Indirect diocesan roles			
Role	Purpose	Funded by	To/from
Increased Safeguarding capacity (initially 0.5 increasing to 1FTE as more Minster Communities develop Growing Faith work)	To provide additional safeguarding casework and training time given the level of increase proposed in children's and youth ministry. An increase of this provision is crucial (the first part of the DIP envisages a new 0.5 role with capacity increasing to 1.0 FTE as more Growing Faith leads start).	DIP	0.5 from May 2025 increasing to 1.0 FTE from May 2026. Permanent. Will become sustainable over the long term as the Jay Report is implemented (the legal advice for which indicates the Church Commissioners rather than Dioceses will take on the financial liability to minimise conflicts of interest)
Project Management office	The quantum of change envisaged here means that this aspect of the strategy will need increased support from the Project Management Office	DIP	TBA

Risks, Mitigations, and Assumptions

Assumption	Mitigation
Local buy-in and commitment from Minster Communities to Growing Faith	Shaped By God Together and three key questions are well embedded in the Diocese. We have undertaken significant preparation and are confident of local commitment to Growing Faith. We have the support of Synod, Diocesan Trustees and Bishop's Leadership Team.
Appointment of a Growing Faith role in each Minster Community	We are aware of national challenges in recruiting children and youth workers. Our record of recruiting excellent people and our ability to train them on the job is strong. We anticipate some appointments to be local and others through pilot schemes such as the 30K Project, in the coming years.
School engagement and commitment to Minster Communities and Growing Faith	Working in partnership with the Diocesan Board of Education to increase awareness and involvement in Minster Communities with headteachers.

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Not enough focus on young people	Emphasis on schools and intergenerational ministry tend to focus on primary aged children. We have 94 church primary schools to 3 church secondary schools.	Intentionally connect with secondary schools and those churches who work with young people (11-18's).
Only focusing on church schools	Whilst acknowledging church schools as a significant asset, we need to be aware of excluding	Intentionally connect with and serving all schools in a Minster Community and working with other denominations, initiatives,

	community schools and other local CYP provision.	and organisations, such as Open the Book, Rock UK, YFC, and Ventures.
Decisions made only from the perspective of maintaining a Parish church rather than the needs of the wider community	Our starting place for decisions and analysis is often from a 'church perspective'.	Ensure we have a diversity of voices in the room, including school leaders and young people.
Only focusing on children and young people	Intergenerational includes 'older people' too, including parents and grandparents and all members of church.	We need to ensure ministry with children and young people, is connected to, integrated and journeying with and learning alongside, established worshipping communities.
Growing Faith 'Household' under resourced	Often the weakest of the 'Growing Faith Spheres', as most resource and decision-making comes from church and school spheres.	Promote resources such as Parenting Courses, Mental Health Support, The Dad Course.
Parochialism	Often, churches only have vision for their own parish and find it difficult to see things on a larger scale – limiting collaboration.	Enabling parishes to see children and youth ministry through both parish and Minster Community lenses. Encouraging collaboration and porosity.
Poor employment and supervision of practitioners	Practitioner wellbeing impacts ministry. Practitioners who are not supported well will suffer or leave.	Adopt Paraklesis 'Charter for Churches' ⁴ , commitment to ensure excellence in employment of all practitioners. Including support networks, good management, ongoing professional development, retreat, rest, and recognition.

⁴ Inspired by Paraklesis - https://www.paraklesis.org.uk/Groups/364978/Charter_for_Churches.aspx

Appendix B – Intercultural Communities Strategic Priority Plan

Summary

We are called to see worshipping communities across the diocese where UKME/GMH⁵ people belong and grow as disciples, are valued, represented and lead with confidence. We want greater diversity in governance and cultural competency of all members in all structures, as we work to be a more racially equitable diocese. We are planning to better reflect the communities we serve and continue learning from one another's cultures for effective mission and ministry.

Overview of any history, challenges addressing, opportunities available

Story so far

Intercultural mission and ministry has long been a strategic priority for the diocese, and this formalised in 2017 with a small team undertaking research to understand why the ethnic composition of our churches was not reflective of the diversity of our city and county. This led to the creation of the Intercultural Worshipping Communities (IWC) project in 2019. Now in its fifth year, this project is engendering cultural change and growing the diversity of many of our worshipping communities. We have already seen significant growth in the numbers of UKME/GMH individuals within churches attached to the project.

Racial Equity Strategy

One of the key parts of work that we have grown from the IWC project is the work relating to Racial Equity. This led to the diocese adopting its own Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy (DRES) in early 2021 and launching our own Racial Equity Unit in 2022 as we seek to become a racially equitable diocese.

What this means is that we need to address Whiteness as the culture within which our diocese is shaped. Our diocesan Racial Equity Policy acknowledges the effects of the dominant cultural assumptions of whiteness and the way it continues to have a negative impact on those of UKME/GMH heritage⁶.

One of the outputs of this has been a recent application to the national Racial Justice Funding unit that has recently granted us 3 years funding towards the creation of the post of Director for Racial Justice within the Diocese of Leicester. This will allow more energy and resources to be dedicated to this area of work going forward.

The opportunity of an Intercultural Diocese

The summary outlined above is the natural next step for the Diocese of Leicester in relation to this strategic priority. Until this point in time, the IWC project has been responsible for the intercultural priority, a priority that is about missional growth because of cultural change. This will no longer be the case due to the project ending in 2026. How will the diocese continue this cultural change that has been proven to lead to missional growth when it is no longer the responsibility of the IWC project?

Challenges

Challenges remain. The more we learn about ourselves, the more we learn about the challenges we have and how we need to continue to change. Challenges would include:

1. Lower than anticipated levels of increased UKME/GMH leadership.
2. Racism within churches and mistrust towards UKME/GMH individuals.

⁵ UK Minority Ethnic / Global Majority Heritage

⁶ Diocese of Leicester Racial Equity policy January 2024, pages 2-3.

3. Buy-in to training beyond individuals and churches attached to the project.
4. The Whiteness of governance structures and decision-making spaces.

New measures		
Measure/ Outcome	What	Achieved via
1/. Each Minster Community having an intercultural champion	Lead measure. Ensuring that each MC has an intercultural champion, who works across the MC to embed this priority	Providing the function of resource to work within the MC process.
2/. % diversity of MC leadership roles	Lag measure. If we are serious about diversity, we should be aiming for diversity within our MCs. Adhering to policies created by REU and forming other strategic ideas	Providing the function of resource to work within the MC process.

Measures from DRES commencing Q4 2024		
Measure/ Outcome	What	Achieved via
3/. Groups within the diocese to complete mandatory UB, AR and cultural competency training. As per DRES	Lag measure of training delivered.	Developing and delivering the training.
4/. % diversity of Diocesan governance structures	Lag measure of diversity changes that have already taken place.	Strategic investment in areas such as mentoring and shadowing.
5/. The % amount to which the DRES has been implemented.	Confidence measure of DRES by REU	Assessed and reviewed by REU
6/. UKME/GMH Vocations target, lay and ordained	Lag measure	Cross departmental co-ordination between vocations and DRES

Measures from IWC project, due to finish mid 2026		
Measure/ Outcome	What	Achieved via
7a/. An increase in UKME individuals in diocesan churches.	There is currently no way of consistently measuring this across the whole diocese.	Increased levels of training across the diocese creating a more culturally aware environment in which evangelism and discipleship flourishes across cultures.
7b/. of which 1/3 will be children and young people	Co-ordination with Intergenerational strategic priority.	
8/. # of individuals accessing other forms of training, such as cross-cultural evangelism, intercultural worship, intercultural preaching	Lead measure for 7a + 7b.	Continued investment in the function of training people - see sustainability section.
9/. Diversity of confirmations	Lag measure for 7a + 7b, measured in co-ordination with Bishops lodge.	Creating a more intercultural and racially equitable diocese in which UKME/ GMH individuals feel safe and welcome enough to make this commitment, through outputs(?) listed above

Missional design/plan

Our theory of change is built upon the proven and successful theory of change that the IWC project has employed. From the IWC project we have learnt that resourcing intercultural work can provide significant cultural change. We have learnt that for the majority of people there is a willingness to learn and grow in their cultural competency, and we have seen that investment in a historically under-resourced area of mission and ministry has led to growth. The legacy, therefore of the IWC project is significant numerical growth and cultural change delivered to the diocese that provides a firm foundation to build from in the future.

However, this legacy is only possible because of the resources provided thus far. The Intercultural priority needs to continue to be overseen in order to ensure that it continues to develop and becomes embedded within the life of the diocese. Whilst we have achieved some elements of cultural change within churches attached the IWC project, and marginally across the diocese, we have not changed the culture of the whole of the organisation in a way that addresses the historical issues. Should the diocese wish to continue to achieve the outcomes above, it needs to consider how it will support the following functions that take place to enable this work. For more information, please see the section on sustainability.

For example, the output relating to intercultural Minster Community champions builds on our experience of running a smaller scale network across the IWC project for practitioners. This Minster Community champion network is the natural next step for this process as it aligns the intercultural priority with Minster Communities and has the potential to release significant growth in the majority of the rest of our measures (1,2,3,5 & 8). However, this growth is unlikely to happen without adequate coordination and resources centrally.

The significant level of cross diocesan training provision that is envisaged is key to the missional design of this area of diocesan strategy. If people within our diocese are not equipped in areas such as cross-cultural evangelism, intercultural preaching or culturally competent leadership, then we will not see sustained numerical growth. If the diocese, including our rural parishes, is increasingly becoming ethnically and culturally diverse, nonattention towards culturally appropriate models of evangelism and discipleship will result in the decrease of worshippers as a whole.

Finally, a key part of the Diocesan Intercultural strategy continues to be providing equitable opportunities for UKME/GMH individuals, recognising we cannot expect this work (and the associated emotional labour) to be undertaken solely by UMKE/GMH individuals. To become more intercultural and racially equitable, we need to effectively challenge the culture of Whiteness within our diocese, supporting and enabling UKME/GMH people to step into decision making positions. It is not the responsibility of the those who are victims of racial discrimination to change the system, and we have learnt that even with the current IWC project more needs to be done to directly invest in UKME/GMH individuals and associated opportunities. This investment is important as an outcome itself, but the wider output is also crucial. Increasing levels of diversity within our leadership and governance structures means that the decisions we make both now and in the future will represent the perspectives and the experiences of the communities we serve.

Sustainability

As the IWC project finishes, the diocese is at a point where it needs to consider who/what and how the cultural change that has been kickstarted via this project is embedded and continued within the diocese. Whilst great strides have been made, we remain a predominately White and mono-cultural diocese, particularly in the makeup of our leadership structures. Simply because the project will meet its targets does not mean that adequate cultural change to move away from ethnocentrism has been achieved.

Sustainability for this project therefore is about sustaining cultural change, and our targets relate to this. We are seeking to sustain the momentum of cultural change that the project has begun, and in order to do that we need to continue to fund the key functions that would allow this to happen are:

- Liasing and integrating the existing strands of this strategic priority (IWC project, racial equity) and helping embed cultural change across the diocese.
- Continued intercultural input into the Minster Communities process, in particular the creation and implementation of a learning community of intercultural champions.
- Supporting individual churches, schools and fresh expressions as they seek to become more intercultural.
- Increased levels of training across our Minster Communities in areas such as Unconscious Bias, Anti-Racism, Intercultural Preaching/Worship or Cultural Competency.
- Investing resources (mentoring, financial) in UKME/GMH individuals to raise up the next generation of leaders
- Resourcing of the administration and co-ordination required to undertake the above functions.

Top risks, mitigations and any key assumptions

Key assumption: As per risk 1, the outcomes proposed in section 3 are only possible if the diocese decides to resource the functions outlined in section 5. As mentioned previously, the IWC project has shown that this theory of change works and is necessary to sustain the cultural change and growth seen to date.

Risk	Detail	Mitigation	Status
1/. Insignificant resource for intercultural strategic priority.	Intercultural work viewed as “complete” and ministry not funded anymore. Intercultural flash in the pan. This would mean that there is no way to measure or impact the outcomes proposed in 3.	Effective stakeholder management of key decision makers.	R
2/. GMH/UKME individuals aren’t allowed to take up positions of power because White power is not given up.	Intercultural work seen as a threat because racial equity in some cases will mean White voices in places of influence have to be given up. E.g. Oversight Ministers.	Cultural competency Training of all leaders and governance bodies.	R
3/. White Fragility leads to burnout and therefore this work stalls	Work stalls because it’s too difficult and/or not seen as a priority compared to other important external concerns.	Emphasize the long term nature of this cultural change work, continue to cast vision at senior levels	A/R
4/. Numbers seen as main goal, rather than cultural change.	A focus on counting success means that we focus on achieving targets, rather than the reason behind them – cultural change. Numbers are a way to measure cultural change, but they aren’t the only way.	Focus on measuring where God is at work by sharing experiences, including good news stories. However, also recognise that the cultural change we are seeking to achieve can be difficult and may not always come through good news.	G/A

Appendix C – New Communities Strategic Priority Plan

By 2034 we are called to see an accessible worshipping community within reach of every person across the diocese, seeing lives and communities transformed by Jesus Christ. We are praying, planning and ministering to encourage more innovative ways of being church enabled with lay and ordained leaders working in creative partnership to establish new worshipping communities.

Summary

Churches are planted and grow, and they also decline and die. Currently we have around 400 worshipping communities and during the lifetime of this strategy we expect to see 100 new worshipping communities established. During that time some of the existing 400 may, at the instigation of the local parish, close due to demographic change, buildings ceasing to be fit for purpose, and other factors come into play. Therefore, it is important to recognize that this new communities focus is as much about renewal as it is about a growth in numbers. It is about ensuring we have a worshipping community accessible to every person in the diocese – all 1,080,900 people. Accessibility covers a host of different measures that will provide important benchmarks in any new community we establish and this is expanded upon and defined below.

History, Challenges & Opportunities

The diocese began a journey which in 2010 saw the discernment of a major new diocesan focus on normalising the creation of new worshipping communities into a diocese which previously was not especially known for fresh expressions of Church.

Over that time we focused on some specific areas, each providing important insights as well as successfully starting a significant number of new communities, such that at the end of the initial five year SDF funded project in 2019, 75 current fresh expressions of Church were identified (passing a high ecclesial bar, with many more on the way).

Collectively these comprised 1 in 4 of all worshippers in the Diocese (2,959 people), contrasted with 1 in 9 worshippers at the outset. In addition approximately 40, generally larger church plants, were started within the Resourcing Church Project, and one new ecclesial community in the Intercultural Worshipping Community Project.

1. Pioneering Fresh Expressions was the heart of this initial focus and was accelerated by an SDF funded project which ran from 2014 to 2019

This project saw and continues to see much fruit and much learning. The detailed learning reviews show how most leaders started as lay, volunteers with many growing into ordination. A significant proportion of new worshippers were un- or de-churched rather than transferring from existing Christian communities. High levels of creativity and community service were clearly observable as lives and communities were transformed. However, this work was also significantly impacted by a combination of Covid-19 and support roles ceasing as funding ended. Parish churches which formed fresh expressions of Church were demonstrably more generous than average (by 25%), but the wider diocesan financial environment meant it was not possible to sustain diocesan support when SDF monies finished. Taken with Covid-19, many of the fledgling fresh expressions stuttered and ceased, failing to cope with the forced transition to virtual gatherings, with a notable exceptions, such as the Launde Online Zoom Service.

2. The Resourcing Church SDF funded programme drew together six numerically medium-to-large churches or teams in the diocese (often in long term plateau or gentle decline), with a vision of incubating, accelerating and multiplying ministry so as to better serve our parishes, identify and share wider learning to further develop a multiplication mindset across the whole diocese. Unlike in some dioceses where the focus is either on fresh expressions of Church or church planting, this programme intentionally held both together, supporting contexts to both strategically develop plans, often through church planting, transplants or grafts, to address gaps in geography, demography or need, whilst also developing an entrepreneurial culture where more organic pioneers were encouraged and supported in forming fresh expressions of Church. The most recent review noted that, with two years left of the programme, so far 26

new worshipping communities have formed (with 9 more in the planning phase), together seeing 774 new worshippers and around £380,000 additional financial giving. Alongside what has gone well, the pain of 'giving away', the challenge of working with existing whilst developing new and the impact of changing plans due to financial realities have all been significant points of learning.

3. **Much of the Intercultural Worshipping Community SDF funded programme has been focused** on existing churches and their journey to become genuine intercultural communities. This will provide rich soil in which to encourage the 4 core pre-existing churches and 15 partner churches to prioritise the creation of new communities characterised by the key practices and culture of effective IWC's.

4. Lay-led and sustained

- Launde Online Zoom Service encouraged by the previous incumbent during lockdown but from the early days led by lay leaders who fully took responsibility during the vacancy, this continues to be the largest, most consistently attended worshipping community across a group of 23 parishes. *There are several identified examples of effective and sustainable lay led leadership (often in vacancy) and further work is planned to consolidate the learning.*
- Catalyst - Catalyst began in Autumn 2023 and is a learning, support and mentoring community, where lay church planters journey together through a learning pathway, designed to equip them over 2 and a half years with the tools they need to plant and establish new church communities. *This work already demonstrates that a light-touch is sufficient and more nuanced learning about a very resource efficient support structure is underway.*
- Two very effective, part time employed lay pioneer ministers are demonstrating benefits of non-clergy centric planting in schools and around the Eco Priority. *Their appointments have been difficult to do within our existing legal, financial, and structural systems and already we know that this obstacle needs addressing urgently if we are to unlock the potential of all God's people.*

5. A rural diocese with an urban heartland

The geographical realities of the diocese come into play when we talk about accessibility both from a physical travel distance and a cultural appropriateness perspective (as discussed in the Diocesan Rural Commission published in 2018).

Now, in the Shaped by God Together process, we are consolidating those insights into diocesan-wide learning that will shape and underpin this strategy in the area of establishing new worshipping communities. Most especially through the work of Converge, a new group to support new worshipping communities across all of the contexts and strategic priorities noted above.

Outcomes and Impact

The Minster Community formation process gives space for each context to consider how the strategic priority of new worshipping communities is developed appropriate to each context. Their plans will detail the scope of new worshipping communities we hope to see over the coming years. Below are some indicative numbers. These will be updated as the Minster Community formation process continues to develop but are offered to give a sense of what the anticipated ambition is.

Outcome: around 100 new communities across the 20-25 Minster Communities by 2034.

These new communities will be attentive to the 'AIR' as they discern, develop, and establish:

- **Accessible** – culturally, physically (e.g. in terms of transport, and access for people with disabilities), practically (e.g. in terms of cost, timings) and appropriate (e.g. in terms of age, ability, and neurodiversity)
- **Inclusive & Invitational** – places where culture is proactively shaped to welcome, value and enable all who come
- **Representative** – reflecting the communities they serve, shaped and led by indigenous leaders who are recognisable to those they lead

Practically this will mean:

- geographically - in rural, suburban, and urban areas placing a worshipping community in reach of everyone,
- Across difference
 - prioritising upskilling about disability (seen and hidden)
 - working with neurodiversities
 - including different gender identities
 - across cultures and ethnicities
- in areas of deprivation
- open to all particularly through a focus on CYP but also across the generations

Although the exact shape they take will be a product of the Minster Community discernment process, it is anticipated new worshipping communities might develop broadly as follows:

- 50% will be predominantly be focused on being Intergenerational, including a swathe of school orientated/based worshipping communities.
- 10% are likely Resourcing Church led, emerging from the original six hubs, but increasingly in partnership with others as Minster Community formation promotes shared missional action.
- 20% will be more focused on being intercultural because of their context.
- 20% will display predominantly Fresh Expression characteristics of church, occupying the fringes around the more focused, structured, and owned new communities that Minster Communities will be planning for. These will often be innovators and outliers who producing both bridge-backs from the fringe to the established church and new sustainable entities.

We will also more closely align the housebuilding strategy with the prioritisation of starting new communities as a diocese wide, intersectional focus. We have experience of doing this very effectively within some Resourcing Church initiatives and the Lubbethorpe ecumenical initiative running for twelve years by Churches Together in Leicester.

How will this happen? The Missional Plan

1. Led by Minster Communities

The new communities work will be led by teams in Minister Communities across the diocese. It will be discerned as part of the Minster Community formation process. This process will contextualise the direction of travel and scale of ambition articulated in this strategy and determine what this looks like in each context and how they get there. Based on the learning summarised above and the financial reality of the diocese, it is likely that most new worshipping communities will start as volunteers, teams and lay-led, with some growing into ordination as the worshipping community develops. The expectation is that most, if not all, will relate to the Parish/Minster Community in which they are set.

Who: Minster Communities with support from diocesan support staff

When: Ongoing as part of Minster Community formation processes

2. Leaders trained and supported to develop new communities

Whatever the specifics discerned by each Minster Community, we know that this is only possible with a significant and sustained increase in lay leaders encouraged, equipped, supported and accompanied. As articulated elsewhere in this strategy, research specific to this diocese found that an average new worshipping community needs a team of 3-4 leaders to grow and thrive⁷. In recent years the Diocese has partnered with Resourcing Churches to develop *Catalyst*.

Catalyst is a learning, support and mentoring community, where those developing or leading new worshipping communities journey together through a learning pathway, designed to equip them

⁷ God at Work, Church Army for the Diocese of Leicester, 2019, echoed in A Day of Small Things, also Church Army

over two and a half years with the tools they need to plant and establish new church communities. Developed in partnership with CCX, potential leaders of new worshipping communities are supported to discern if Catalyst is the right fit for them, including conversations with their incumbent or equivalent to see if they support the idea. If Catalyst is not the right fit, various other training pathways are also supported. All participants in a given cohort meet for two days every six months, engaging with online learning, meeting with a mentor and time with their incumbent in between. Each gathering includes eating together, prayer and worship, input, reflection, social and team time.

A pilot cohort is supporting teams as they form four new worshipping communities in the diocese (plus more with ecumenical partners). The plan is to launch a further cohort shortly. Catalyst is supported financially (largely by external grants) until 2026 but have plans in place to scale up so as to create more opportunities over the coming decade. An investment of £100,000-150,000 p.a. would allow one new cohort to start each year, across ten years seeing 915 leaders across 245 teams trained and accompanied (based on existing average size of worshipping communities, totalling 5,550 worshippers). It is proposed to continue to learn from the first cohort, launch a second cohort and develop these plans in light of that learning and conversations with the Parish Transition and Ministry Development Team, the Resourcing Church Programme Board and Converge around what is felt possible and how any plans could be supported as part of a DIP in 2-3 years' time. This sits as an integral part of the Vocations and Leadership Foundation (see Appendix G).

Who: Catalyst-led discernment with Converge, Resourcing Church Programme Board and PTMD

When: Ongoing, as per plan detailed elsewhere

3. Greater integration across all strategic priorities

As part of the Bishop of Loughborough overseeing diocesan development of new communities (including both the IWC and Resourcing Church Programme), a space was created in early 2023 to encourage and support integrated thinking and helps us reject the silos that tempt us. This strategy discernment has highlighted the importance and mission potential of such integration. *Converge* will continue to further develop these conversations, ensuring whether in itself as a place of connection or by encouraging other spaces, that plans are integrated and joined up. Examples of where this could be further developed include working closely with the new Director of Racial Justice to help integrate the intercultural and new priorities more closely (for example through cultural intelligence training), working with the SEND chaplain at one of our largest Multi-Academy Trusts to ensure intergenerational and new priorities work together to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disability.,

Who: Converge, chaired by the Bishop of Loughborough

When: Ongoing

4. Continue to Embed Sustainability in early years New Communities

The Resourcing Church and IWC projects were significantly centrally funded and paid-staff/clergy centred. Whilst enabling vital innovation and learning for this initial stage of the step change we seek to see, this an interim approach whilst longer term thinking was developed. A number of new worshipping communities have seen significant numerical growth alongside increasing financial sustainability and offer potential to further grow and give is sufficiently supported. Such new worshipping communities form an integral part of the Minster Community formation process and will continue to be fully involved so as to help them plan how they can both grow, cover the full cost of ministry and, in the fullness of time, continue to reach out to new people through developing new worshipping communities themselves.

Who: Minster Community formation process

When: Ongoing

Risks, mitigations and assumptions

Risk	Mitigation
Sustainability of key roles and activities in vulnerable or not yet fully established new communities or initiatives.	Provide fixed term for culture change and tapered funding for growth roles to secure growth or establish change.
May not be able to recruit sufficient Oversight Ministers with the right mindset to work in reshaped pattern.	Prioritise training, community of practice and peer review to ensure we can grow and develop effective and appropriate leaders through expansion and extension of the Diocesan Leadership Programmes.
Relies on being able to recruit a very large number of new bi-vocational ministers	This will be a significant challenge requiring significant central resources to recruit, discern, training and deploy to meet initial needs and then a not insignificant resource longer term to replenish leaders as others move on through retirement, relocation etc. It will also require a simplification and removal of unnecessary obstacles in bureaucracy and training and licensing requirements.
The most sustainable new communities have generally been those that were most strongly locally discerned rather than centrally directed or project initiated.	Working within the Minster Community structures to provide possibility, innovation and support structures which can resource and flex to support locally discerned and initiated mission activity to establish a new community will be key and agility, adaptability and an acceptance of messiness will be challenging but vital.

Key Learning in this area is provided in more detail from:

- The Annual Reviews of IWC and RC projects – latest 2024
- Diocesan Framework 2021
- God at work: Learning about fresh expressions of church and other pioneering missional activities within the diocese of Leicester 2019
- The Rural Commission Report 2018

Appendix D – Eco-Communities Strategic Priority Plan

Summary

We are called to see our churches, chaplaincies and schools enjoying God's creation and championing its care as intrinsic to the Gospel, for example by participation in the Eco-Churches award scheme. We recognise the global effect of the environmental crisis and will play our part in mitigating its impact, working towards Net Zero carbon emissions. We will advocate for those most affected by climate breakdown.

An Eco-community in the Diocese of Leicester is a worshipping community (time honoured parish church, fresh expression of church or church plant, chaplaincy, school or Cathedral) which recognises and embodies caring for creation as intrinsic to the gospel. We do this through:

- **Obedience** to God's command to care for God's creation and enable it to flourish
- **Worship** to join with all creation in worshipping our Creator through our prayer, praise and practice
- **Discipleship** to follow the example of Christ by living in full relationship with God, each other and all of creation, with a commitment to actively learning together
- **Mission** to share the Good News of God's concern and our responsibility to all creation
- **Justice** to recognise the global effect of the environmental crisis and to advocate for those most affected by climate breakdown

We plan to build on long established principles and desires to become a Gold-Eco Diocese by the end of 2034 (Silver by end of 2028 and Bronze by end of 2024, achieved since drafting). Being an Eco-Diocese is the sum of much work across parishes, schools and diocesan staff as outlined below. It also includes significant reductions in our carbon footprint as we work towards supporting the Church of England's commitment to be Net Carbon Zero by 2030. This is not an easy ask, with challenges, plan, risks and mitigation outlined below.

Overview of history, challenges and opportunities

The Leicester Diocesan Environment Group and Diocesan Environmental Officer (who is a Parish Priest) are long established, supporting parishes over many years in their desire to be better stewards of God's creation. Both through parishes and directly as a Diocese, formal and informal strategic partnerships with others in our wider community have been developed to support this.

Developing as Eco-Communities is intrinsic across all Three Key Questions: we recognise good stewardship of God's beautiful creation to be an integral part of Christian discipleship, a prophetic act of service within the wider world – especially as the climate emergency disproportionately affects those in financial deprivation – and an important part of seeing more people come to faith in Jesus Christ. It is also intrinsic across all five Strategic Priorities, for example a significant proportion of new worshipping communities over the last two decades have placed significant missional emphasis on creation care such as Forest Church or Mossy Church, often communities themselves that are looking to grow more intergenerationally.

Building on this, in November 2019, Diocesan Synod voted to work towards becoming an Eco-Diocese. In December 2021 this was followed by adoption of a diocesan environment policy. This policy included:

- repent and lament of previous failures and a clear theological rationale rooted in the consistent refrain of the scriptures and the fifth mark of Anglican mission;
- affirmation of the February 2020 General Synod commitment to work towards net-zero emissions by 2030 with related guidance to support contributory areas of diocesan life such as Parishes seeking to become Eco-Churches, the Glebe Committee, Parsonage Houses, Diocesan Travel, Diocesan Board of Education, Diocesan Board of Finance investment policy, St Martins House operations, Diocesan Advisory Committee, and Training and Development;
- Day to day delegation of implementation and annual review to Bishop's Council.

In working towards implementation, Bishop's Council and DBF Trustees agreed the establishment of a Net Zero Carbon and Eco-Communities Steering Group to take forward the Net Zero aspects of the Environmental Policy. This group has been meeting since early 2023, with the Chief Executive & Diocesan Secretary as Chair so as to help embed this Strategic Priority in all part of our shared life. In March 2024 the group brought a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan to Diocesan Synod. This was made possible by an initial grant from the Archbishops' Council offered specifically for this purpose. The plan set out what would be required to achieve net zero by 2030.

The importance of working towards net zero by 2030 was reaffirmed, with the difference reaching or not reaching it detailed in practical terms for our wider world, our local communities, our theology and missional calling. Whilst reaffirming this commitment and welcoming the availability of national church funding to support that commitment, it also noted constraints of available time, expertise, human capacity and finance, thus:

- "The plan is very costly (estimated at £30-40 million of investment in this diocese alone).
- The 'federal' and devolved nature of the Church of England means that decision-making is dispersed and therefore many, many 'hearts and minds' need to be convinced to take action – this is not something that we can impose. It requires at heart a(nother) process of culture change.
- The required input from people and expertise is very large and we do not have that capacity or knowledge within the diocesan support team, or in our parishes. Increasing the diocesan team, even with fully-funded posts, requires careful consideration.
- The ambition for net zero comes at a time when we are also wrestling with other things, such as the longer-term impact of the pandemic, a cost of living crisis and the impact of LLF, along with the formation of minister communities and dealing with a £2 million-plus structural deficit in our budget. We also have other strategic priorities, each of which will test our capacity for change.
- The national infrastructure to support carbon reduction/elimination is far behind the ambition of net zero emissions both in terms of national investment and available technology."

Diocesan Synod resolved that none of these very significant challenges is reason to do nothing, stop what is in hand or row back on our commitment, but taken together they do impact how much is possible. It was agreed to invest time, money and energy to enact as much of the Plan as possible with a step-by-step approach being taken and updates brought to Diocesan Synod on at least an annual basis.

Outcomes and impact

Rather than creating a major new diocesan measurement framework from scratch, it is proposed to continue to use the excellent frameworks offered by the Eco-Church and School programme, the tools developed by the national church to support a reduction in our carbon footprint, and the ongoing measurement offered through the Net Zero Action Plan. Whilst these do not measure everything in themselves, taken together they offer a 'balanced dashboard' of leading and lagging indicators, whilst not being overly onerous on those tasked with providing and collating data.

Overall Measure

Becoming an Eco-Diocese is our overarching measurable outcome as achieving it means making significant, measurable progress to all other goals expressed (for example, Eco-Churches, Schools, Culture, Net Zero, Training, Investments, Diocesan Offices and Celebrating Creation).

By end of 2034:	we will be a Gold Eco-Diocese
By end of 2028:	we will be a Silver Eco-Diocese
April 2024:	Bronze Eco-Diocese award received

Full definitions and criteria for Bronze and Silver awards are available from Eco-Church: <https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/denominational-awards/eco-diocese/> with the Gold award criteria currently being developed. This introduces some risk in committing towards being a Gold Eco-Diocese in 2034, but given the trajectory and requirements of Bronze and Silver we are confident this will be possible.

Contributory Indicators

	By end of 2030 (using Silver eco-criteria)*
Eco Church awards ^	40% of local churches registered (currently 18%); 30% of local churches awarded, of which at least a third of these awards should be Silver or higher (currently 9% have any eco-church ward and 4% have silver),
Schools and education	The Diocesan Board of Education has put in place an appropriate environmental policy (also see Carbon Reduction)
Carbon reduction	Agreed carbon reduction targets and developed an action plan to get there
Ownership	Commissioned a group (e.g. Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)) or working group to coordinate and progress Eco Diocese
Training and development	Environmental training is included in standard diocesan training for both lay and ordained ministry, and there are opportunities for training and development for other regional staff/volunteers
St Martins House	Achieve silver award for St Martins House and promote an understanding amongst all staff of Eco Diocese goals
Finance and investments	All diocesan funds are invested in line with ethical principles consistent with good environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) criteria and which target 'deep positive impact primarily in the themes of financial inclusion, affordable and safe housing, and the environment
Collaboration (e.g. with other dioceses, faith groups, secular/ community groups)	Work with partner church groups both locally and internationally to raise mutual awareness in regard to climate change and species loss mitigation and resilience measures
Celebrating Creation	Regular and substantial presence of environmental issues on the diocesan website and through wider communication channels
Land	An environmental policy and a land management plan, with an explicit reference to promoting biodiversity and managing the land for carbon reduction across the diocese

* for fuller details of definitions and how each indicator is evidenced see the Eco-Church website

^ Parsonage improvements are included in each Eco-Church award

Missional Plan

The Eco-Diocese award framework and self-imposed deadlines provides a clear outline of what work needs to be completed and by when. The two key groups co-ordinating work are:

- the **Leicester Diocesan Net Zero Carbon and Eco-Communities Steering Group** relating to the Bishop's Council (from summer 2024 a new Diocesan Trustee Body) and the Bishop's Leadership Team through the Archdeacon of Leicester through the Chief Executive & Diocesan Secretary as its Chair
- the **Leicester Diocesan Environment Group** supported by the Diocesan Environmental Officer and relating to the Bishop's Council (from summer 2024 a new Diocesan Trustee Body) and the Bishop's Leadership Team (as the 'Executive') through the Archdeacon of Leicester;

The former is in the driving seat specifically around working towards Net Zero Carbon, and the latter is responsible for supporting churches, schools, chaplaincies and diocesan bodies and staff as we work towards the Eco-Diocese commitments. Both provide regular updates to Bishop's Council (and its successor) and Diocesan Synod. Although there is a distinction between the focus of each group, clearly there is much overlap (e.g. Net Zero is part of the Eco-Church and Diocese award) and both groups are committed to working together in close partnership. This continues to be reviewed to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness.

The detailed action plan in working towards Net Zero came to Diocesan Synod in March 2021 and is available on request. The plan triages the 20% of churches responsible for over 50% of emissions. It includes specific plans and prioritisation around church buildings (inc halls), schools, housing and travel. It also includes further details of how a Net Zero specific grant from the Archbishop's Council may further resource this work.

The Leicester Diocesan Environment Group regularly reviews its plan of work on the way to supporting Eco-Diocese awards and looking to support Eco Church awards within parishes, with current foci including:

- facilitating a programme of cultural change so environmental concern is embedded in all we do as worshipping communities and individual Christians, including providing training resources through the Learning Hub and peer support
- ensuring membership of the Diocesan Advisory Committee includes specific expertise
- Encouraging the Glebe Committee to develop environmental considerations which are at the forefront of our land management, and welcoming and exploring opportunities for land use that contributes towards environmental care and Net Zero, such as use for solar energy
- providing training and development opportunities for local Eco champions and developing the diocesan support available to churches working towards Eco Church awards
- Supporting the embedding of environmental training within the standard training offer including Ordinands and
- Encouraging the Diocesan Board of Education in encouraging schools to become involved with and sharing stories of Eco Schools, signposting schools and MATs to "Let's Go Zero", encouraging courageous advocacy by students and staff, and encouraging outdoor classrooms/outdoor worship and Wild Worship (the latter through a new diocesan network currently being established – the OWL Network)

Sustainability

The vast majority of time and energy expended in working towards this Strategic Priority are from people who do it as an integral part of their role (e.g. parish priests) or by unpaid volunteers, rather than dedicated paid diocesan officers. In 2023 just £4,429 of a diocesan budget of £11.5m was specifically spent in this area. Whilst this model helps ensure local ownership and long-term sustainability, it is recognised some additional diocesan resource is needed to pump prime further changes, especially in working towards Net Zero. We estimate that in addition to specific resourcing for net zero carbon, a half-time post of Eco-Communities Enabler is required to make this strategic priority a reality.

Top risks and mitigations

The principal risk in this area is Insufficient capacity in terms of hours in the day, energy and 'head space' at parish/school/chaplaincy, minister community and diocesan levels to meet our aspirations for change. Nevertheless we are confident that the passion to grow as an Eco-Diocese, Churches and Schools is significant that some change will certainly happen. Therefore we need to fund capacity, for the whole eco-communities priority. It is also hoped that some national church funding specifically towards Net Zero will be made available beyond 2025, without which it is hard to see any viable path towards the 2030 target.

Appendix E – Reconciling Communities Strategic Priority Plan

Summary

There are three ways in which worshipping communities can serve as reconciling communities – each of which we want to develop further in the coming years, in order to mitigate some of the risks which could disrupt the overall strategy (chiefly pertaining to People and Mission), to help churches reach more people in their communities, and as part of our calling to sustained service in those communities:

- **By supporting social cohesion** – The St Philip’s Centre leads, and is the primary resource for, the diocese supporting good relationships and mutual understanding between different faith groups in our local communities through providing training to church leaders and through the projects and events it runs.
- **By supporting the inclusion of marginalised groups** – Through the Intercultural Worshipping Communities programme, Racial Equity Unit, Women’s Ministry Group, Deprivation Panel, promoting disability inclusion, and continuing to emphasise our calling to loving service, we aim for all our worshipping communities to be places where people, whatever their social class, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or culture, feel fully included and able to flourish in their faith. Working towards this will help us remove barriers to belonging to the Church of England.
- **Building bridges** – To respond to conflict within and between worshipping communities, we provide training on conflict resolution and provide access to trained mediators. We also encourage worshipping communities to run the Living in Love and Faith and Difference courses, which support living well across difference and the ‘habits’ of reconciliation. Through the Minster Community formation process, we also support different worshipping communities to build relationships with one another, and identify areas of shared mission.

History, Challenges & Opportunities

In 2022, we published [a report on Reconciling Communities as the Diocese of Leicester](#), which set out some of the divisions within society at large and points of fracture within the Church, how reconciliation is a core part of the Christian faith and our discipleship, and highlighting existing work and resources in the diocese which support reconciliation. A focus on reconciliation is also important to enabling the rest of the strategy to succeed, as it represents a means of addressing some of the missional and people-related risks; and Reconciling Communities where more people, who might otherwise have faced barriers to belonging to a worshipping community, can feel safe to do so.

One of the challenges with the Reconciling Communities priority is the difficulty of evaluating and quantifying its progress – individuals and communities which are living well across difference, or able to avert conflict or reduce tensions themselves are much less visible to diocesan leaders than the occurrence of conflict. The absence of conflict can also be an indicator of segregation rather than living well across difference. In addition, the work of reconciliation is hard to strategically plan for. First, because it is by its nature reactive - a response to the occurrence of conflict – and, second, because individuals cannot be compelled to restore relationships with one another or to engage authentically with those from whom, or with whom, they differ. So, in seeking to support our worshipping communities serve as reconciling communities, our focus will be on:

- Setting a cultural tone which encourages living well across difference, modelling and practising this as a diocesan leadership team
- Reducing structural causes of division and separation
- Resourcing the work of reconciliation at the local level

Prayer and Spiritual Practice

Reconciliation, in the Christian view, is where justice, truth, peace and mercy meet. By the grace of God, we are able to acknowledge the realities of sin, brokenness, and division; receive, and impart, forgiveness; and turn away from destructive patterns and ways of relating to ourselves, God, and others. Reconciliation, from this perspective, is not a one-off event (like a ceasefire) – like every part of our spiritual formation, it has to be sustained by patterns of life and social structures. The relationships between the persons of the Trinity – perfect love across diversity – serve as our model.

As Paul makes clear in the second letter to the Corinthians (*2 Corinthians 5:16-20*), the starting point for any Christian ministry of reconciliation is the forgiveness and new life which has been offered to us through Christ. From there, 'anyone [who] is in Christ' is called to bear '*the message of reconciliation*' to those around us.

We are built up as Reconciling Communities through the Eucharist: in the Communion liturgy, we seek forgiveness for ourselves from God, make peace with one another, and affirm our belief in our unity as the Body of Christ ("Though we are many, we are one body because we all share in one bread"). In addition, Paul builds on Jesus' teaching that His disciples should make peace with anyone who "has something against" them before offering their gift to God (Matthew 5:23–26) when he writes to the Corinthians that they are eating the Lord's Supper in an 'unworthy manner' if they do so while there are divisions among them (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

Jesus also described unity among His disciples as fundamental to our witness to the world: the night before he died, he prayed: "[T]hat all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you [...] I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17: 21-23). Accordingly, praying and working for reconciliation within and between our worshipping communities must be a core part of our collective and individual spiritual life.

Outcomes and Impact

The change we would want to see as a result of this work would be:

- Leaders feeling confident in responding to conflict
- Leaders feeling confident in engaging with people from different backgrounds (theological, social, ethnic, cultural and faith)
- Members and leaders of worshipping communities understanding the importance of reconciliation to the Christian faith and how it can be lived out
- Worshipping communities of different sizes and traditions working well together in areas of shared mission through Minster Communities
- Worshipping communities able to access support with resolving conflicts
- Leaders and members of worshipping communities with disabilities or from marginalised backgrounds feeling a sense of belonging and safety in their worshipping communities, and feeling like their gifts are valued.

Missional Plan

To encourage leaders to recognise the role they may play in conflict, feel confident in responding to it, and to develop leaders who can, in turn, help their worshipping communities understand the importance of reconciliation to the Christian faith and how it can be lived out in practice:

- The diocese's training team runs training on managing conflict at least once a year, which all clergy and lay leaders are encouraged to undertake.
- The training team have also developed and run a tailored version of the Difference course for lay ministers in training, so that they can run it locally.

- We promote the Difference course and a series of resources on the theme of reconciliation for use in churches and schools [on our website](#). This includes sermon outlines, liturgical prayers, ideas for collective worship and a video on developing a reconciliation-themed prayer space for children and young people.
- We will encourage Growing Faith Ministers to run the Difference Course for Youth Groups and/or for Schools so that children and young people have a better understanding of the significance of reconciliation to the Christian faith.

To see worshipping communities of different sizes and traditions working well together in areas of shared mission through Minster Communities (thereby building the missional strength of our worshipping communities), the Minster Community formation process:

- Helps build, expand and deepen a worshipping community's understanding of itself – its strength, weaknesses, history and future direction – so that people can share their stories; gain a better understanding of other worshipping communities in their area; and begin to explore opportunities to work together.
- Focuses on building trust between people from different worshipping communities and always emphasises exploring common ground rather than red lines.

To support leaders and church-members to feel confident in engaging with people from different backgrounds (theological, social, ethnic, cultural and religious) and hence see 3-5,000 new disciples, including a significant increase in people of UKME and GMH backgrounds part of churches:

- The diocese provides funding to the St Philip's Centre which directly supports relationships between people of different faiths through its events and projects (such as the Schools Linking Project), provides training for churches to increase their understanding of different faiths, and provides training on interfaith presence and engagement for those training for Christian ministry. To expand this work, we will seek external funding for the St Philip's Centre to run Come Dine Together, a tried-and-tested project which helps build understanding of, and relationships between, people of different faiths, to connect people from within our churches to local families of another faith.
- We will also seek external funding to kick-start a long-term project to develop Leicester as an Intercultural City (and recognised as such by the Council of Europe). This would involve catalysing a network of institutions (such as schools, colleges, and universities), faith groups, charities and community groups, businesses and individuals committed to promoting meaningful intercultural interaction across difference, fostering intercultural competence and tackling discrimination and prejudice, ensuring equality between people of different racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. This would be an important expression of our service to our communities but also, by supporting our churches and schools to lead the way in shaping what it means to be a diverse and cohesive city, we would be equipping Christians to share their faith across difference in a way which is sensitive and culturally competent.
- Through the Intercultural Worshipping Communities programme, the diocese is delivering Anti-Racism and Unconscious Bias training.
- The Racial Equity Unit will continue to oversee the implementation of the Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy. This will be furthered by a new Racial Justice Director, provided a funding bid to the national Racial Justice Unit is successful.
- A number of our worshipping communities are involved in outreach with refugees and asylum seekers and individuals experiencing homelessness, and we will continue to share stories and resources via our communication channels and training events to encourage others in this ministry. The diocese's work with people experiencing homelessness is supported by Together Leicester, which employs the Project Coordinator for the Leicester Homelessness Charter.

- The diocese’s Deprivation Panel supports and resources worshipping communities based in low-income areas so that they are equipped to respond to the specific needs of those communities.

To ensure worshipping communities can access support with conflict resolution:

- Our Bishops, archdeacons and area deans have this as an important part of their ministry
- The diocese can call on the skills of trained mediators when serious conflicts within worshipping communities do arise.

Sustainability

- By focusing on training and resourcing parishes to understand the importance, and be familiar with the skills, of reconciliation, this work should be sustainable and deepen over time.
- We would look for the Intercultural City programme to become sustainable by securing investment from local businesses, universities and the public sector once the person in role has been able to build relationships across those sectors and provided proof of concept.

Key risks and mitigations

Risk	Response
A significant proportion of parishes choose to not be part of Minster Communities.	All churches are invited to take part in the formation of Minster Communities, to help shape the proposal for what that would look like in their area, and to then vote on it as a PCC. If a church chooses to opt out of the formation conversations, there remains a ‘seat at the table’ for them, and we would encourage them to play an active part in shaping the proposal rather than pre-emptively deciding against it. If they choose to not join a Minster Community, there will be conversations between that church and diocesan leadership about what level of resourcing and support can be provided. They will be free to join the Minster Community at a later date.
There is little appetite for learning to live well across difference, or faith that it is possible in the face of divisions within the Church.	We will continue to make the theological case for reconciliation and for unity within the Church, model it ourselves as leaders and within the diocesan support team, and share stories of it in practice.
The difficult financial decisions required to reduce the diocese’s deficit increase levels of distrust and conflict.	We will continue to be transparent about our diocesan finances and the decisions made to reduce our deficit, with proposals for doing so being taken to Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Synod, and communicated at parish and deanery level, so that there is as wide as possible buy-in of those decisions.
There is not sufficient resource or appetite to change the culture of all worshipping communities to ensure they are welcoming and inclusive for people of marginalised backgrounds.	We have applied for funding from the national church for our Intercultural Worshipping Communities programme, which has made available training and events for people from across the diocese, and are doing so for the position of Racial Justice Director. This means access to resources and expertise on becoming more intercultural and racially equitable are easier to access for all worshipping communities. We will continue to seek to build interest and commitment to inclusion through sharing stories of the God at work in such contexts, making the theological case for racial justice and interculturalism, and giving people opportunities to meet people from different religious backgrounds through the St Philip’s Centre.

Appendix F – Outcomes and Measurement overview

Having a long-term diocesan strategy allows us to measure where and how God is at work across the whole of the Diocese. Throughout the strategy those ministering in each of the strategic priorities and undergirding foundations have outlined what they believe are the SMART⁸ objectives. Co-ordination and implementation of the measurement of our outcomes will be the responsibility of the Strategy Programme Management Office (PMO). It will be the role of the PMO to help the diocese to synthesis these objectives into a measurement framework and implement them across the diocese as required.

It is the intention that measure processes will be simple and where possible use existing data. The Diocese already collects significant amounts of data via processes such as Statistics for Mission and Finance Returns, and the current expectation is that these will form the backbone of our measurement frameworks. The key reason for measurement will be to assess how God is at work, and the PMO will work across the structures of the Diocese to enable this. This will in turn enable future decision making to be informed by learning gathered from what is measured within our strategy.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting feedback on the details of the new national measurement framework that is about to be rolled out. We anticipate this information to be nationally available towards the end of 2024, and in light of that we may adjust what we measure and how we measure it. This could mean stopping or starting measurement in certain areas, but as with everything we are measuring, the focus will be on assessing how God is at work within our strategy. Where it is practical and possible we will align our measures with this national framework as it is rolled out. We will balance this with the local agency of our Diocese and our Strategic priorities so that measurement remains effective and practical at a local level.

Having said this, it is expected that the areas of our strategy that receive external investment will require a proportionally higher level of accountability and measurement. Many worshipping communities within the Diocese already have experience in this regard through being involved with one of our successful “SDF” projects⁹, and this learning will be crucial as we continue to grow in our diocesan strategic maturity.

Linked to this, the Diocese will soon submit an investment proposal to the Church Commissioners, with the aim of investing in the Intergenerational strategic priority in each Minster Community. The specific measures for this will be listed in the forthcoming investment proposal but will have a higher level of accountability that corresponds with the significant external investment we will receive. It is expected that the PMO and central staff will support and resource this measurement.

Appendix G – Strategic Plans for relating to some of the Foundations

This section includes a summary plan summarising *how* some of the Foundations supports the strategy outcomes as a whole:

- i. Vocations and Leadership**
- ii. Safeguarding**
- iii. Minster Communities**, including a gantt chart showing formation timing plan
- iv. Church Buildings**
- v. Diocesan Governance and Support**

i. Vocations and Leadership

⁸ SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely

⁹ E.g.: Fresh Expressions of Church, Resourcing Church, or Intercultural Worshipping Communities

We need to discern, train develop, and support sufficient leaders to lead and support Minister Communities that can deliver on the *Three Key Questions* and five *Strategic Priorities* of the diocese. Each worshipping community will have a focal minister who may be lay or ordained.

The Minister Community formation process will more fully discern local leadership capacity and gaps in service of this strategy. **Below are some indicative numbers only.** These will be updated as the Minister Community formation process continues to develop but are offered to give a sense of what the anticipated leadership needs will be. The plans which follow are based on numbers in this ballpark although will scale up or down as more precise information is known.

The Leadership Requirements (BLACK – existing, RED likely new leaders needed)

Leaders of Worshipping Communities (WC)			
Existing Communities	300		
	25	Stipended OM Clergy	Exact numbers to be finalised as Minister Community formation develops
	55	Other Stipended Clergy	
	20	Self Supporting Ordained Ministers– portfolio and bi-vocational roles – 5 existing 15 new people	
	220	Lay leaders as Focal Ministers (we have 200 licensed lay leaders but will need circa 133 new leaders to replace retirements by 2030)	
<i>Other ministry leaders in existing worshipping communities</i>	TBA	Evidence and experience highlights the range of pastoral, missional, sacramental and practical ministries needed for any worshipping community to flourish, alongside the legal requirements to function effectively as a charity. This includes everything from Churchwardens to Readers, Treasurers to Evangelists. Research highlights a strong correlation between the number of people in positions of leadership and the turnover (i.e. more new people) with healthier, growing churches. We are also aware in some parts of the diocese that there are already significant gaps in the leadership required to function effectively as Trustees. The Minister Community formation process will highlight more precisely what the gap is in leadership capacity but we anticipate this will be in the hundreds over the next decade and have designed these interventions and support accordingly.	
New Communities	100		
IWC	20	Requires 10 new ordained and 10 new lay leaders with IWC vision	
		Requires 20-25 new funded leaders (one per a Minister Community) alongside a wide range of new volunteer leaders (around 400) as detailed in the intergenerational section. Which of each are the leaders of new worshipping communities and which support the mission and ministry that feeds into or emerges from will be discerned by the Minister Community Process. For these purposes it is assumed 50 leaders of new communities	
IG	50		
RC	10	Requires 10 new Lay Leaders supported by Catalyst	
Fx	20	Requires 20 new Lay Pioneers (and 2 OPMs)	
Grand Total 'Focal Ministers'	400		

<i>Chaplains</i>	25	<i>19 ordained and 6 lay</i>	
<i>Curates in Training</i>	18	<i>12 stipended and 6 self-supporting</i>	Currently 17 stipended & 6 self-supporting

Ministry is mutual and collaborative; all ministries are valued equally; and the local worshipping community or school, is the context in which vocations should be grown and nurtured. The role of the diocese is to encourage and resource this process, share stories and celebrate God at work among us, communicate our shared values and facilitate the process for discernment, training, and ongoing support for ministry.

Therefore...

- a) we will continue to **remove** as many **obstacles and barriers** to people offering for ministry as we can safely do so, seeking to be simpler, humbler and bolder in our vocational processes. Without this and a step change on discipleship, recent intakes suggest we won't achieve the required levels of lay leadership.
- b) Each Minster Community (and the Cathedral) will have an **identified leadership and vocations lead** within their core leadership team.
- c) we will be discerning, training and supporting an average of **12 stipendiary curates and an increasing number of Self Supporting Ordained curates** at any one time.
- d) we will be discerning, training and supporting a **focal minister for every church** that has a current or future spiritual life.
- e) we will be growing vocations resulting in **ordained, lay licensed and Locally Authorised Ministers sufficient for the need of ministry in individual Minster Communities, across the diocese and within the national church.**
- f) we will **grow the diversity of our leaders to appropriate levels** that reflect the communities we serve, across all areas of ministry and leadership.
- g) we will be providing **discipling support and resource to each and every Minster Community** as well as **proactively working on developing and maintaining a diocesan culture of prayer and spirituality.**
- h) we will be providing **ongoing ministry development** including a programme of learning and development, coaching, pastoral supervision (individual for clergy and group for lay leaders (missional supervision)) and other wellbeing specific support and interventions. This will ensure a flourishing in shared ministry with appropriate accountability, support and safeguarding. Likewise maintaining ongoing flex and agility to continue to develop and change with the changing needs of ministry.
- i) we will be discerning, and providing ongoing equipping and resourcing of **an Oversight Minister for every Minster Community**

How will this be done?

The following two pages contain a summary of the main specific actions as part of this plan. It is recognised within the restraints of addressing the diocesan deficit a funding gap exists and existing areas of work to support the strategy will be jeopardised and capacity for reprioritisation and expansion proposed will be very difficult and require seeking additional financial support from elsewhere. At the time of writing, these conversations are ongoing.

#	Outcomes	Focus	Detail	Investment	Phase/ Funded
1	G,B, C,D,E	Discipleship Resourcing to Minster Communities to enable each to prioritise and focus energy on this foundational area.	Launch of new discipleship resources and redesign of Journey in Faith Course to online platform Prioritise discipleship as key to a culture shift where ministry is seen as a shared responsibility and everyone's calling.	Funded 2024 and Journey in Faith Course shift to be complete by December 2026	Funded except for 9
2	A	Review Processes	Overhaul vocations processes to simplify and streamline Although work has been done on this area recently, we are still not generating anything like the numbers we need for the reshaped ministry model	Small group to review innovations elsewhere and recommend revisions by June 25	Funded
3	B,D, E, H	Expanded Diocesan Leadership Programme (2A)	Currently covering 400 leaders needs to expand to cover 700 extra over next 5 years and then 60 pa to maintain	£10,000 p.a. for 5 years and £5000 p.a. for 3 years	P1,2,3
4	D	Focal Ministry Development	Adoption of CPAS Focal Ministry training as introductory and baseline training	£1000 p.a. for 8 years	P1
5	I, B, H	Oversight Ministry Development Programme	Delivered through an ongoing Community of Leadership approach	Head of Learning and Ministry Development time plus input from Bishops	Funded
6	E, H	Group Pastoral Supervision for Lay Ministers	Will take time to grow and then will be maintained	£10000 p.a. for 5 years to train group facilitators/ supervisors	P1
7	F, H	Programme of Cultural Competence	Developing cultural intelligence, the posture of humility and skills of cultural competence	Covered in Intercultural worshipping Community and Reconciling Communities sections	P1 & 2

				Investment required shown in other section.	
8	D, E, H	Lay led planting (expansion of the Catalyst programme)	Covered in New Communities section	Investment required shown in other section.	P2
9	All	Online resource development	Shifting centrally delivered L&D resources onto new online Hub for sustainable local resourcing in MCs	Employment of Course Designer - 4 years at £35k plus on costs (plus content from Diocesan vocations Enabler, Diocesan director of Ordinands, Head of Learning and Ministry Development – already funded)	P1
10	F, H, E, D	20 Fx New Communities Pioneer Development (inc in New Comm)	Innovation Fund - £2000 per WC	£40,000 across 8 years	P1,2,3
11	C, F	Increase in SSOM	Fund 5 Caleb style (could be local version) pathways pa for 4 years. IME 2 programme already redesigned for SSOM accessibility. Consider innovative ways to recruit and resource younger bi-vocational candidates.	£9000 p.p., £45,000 p.a., £140k total £0	P1
12	F, H, D	Increased diversity across leaders and ministries	Tailored discernment & training pathway funding for diverse trainees to resource leadership pathways across all of our project, strategic priorities and church traditions.	Enhanced learning support £5000 p.p., 2.5 p.a. for 5 years	P2
13	H,E,G	Embedding and maintaining a culture of spirituality and prayer	Applying learning from the Community of the Tree of Life to deepen the depth of discipleship across the diocese to realise a self-sustaining church within reach of every individual	To continue to explore with Launde Abbey and other partners how best to further develop this (in time for any diocesan wide DIP in 2-3 years)	??

ii. **Safeguarding**

The strategic priorities for 2022-27 are:

SP1 Prevention

Prevention is about ensuring that church settings in the Diocese *have in place a range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.*

The main areas identified under this priority are recruitment, messaging, supervision and management, activities, and buildings.

This means that

- paid staff and volunteers are recruited in line with the Safer Recruitment and People Management Practice Guidance and that appropriate supervision and management is in place.
- Awareness raising and promotion of safeguarding takes place using a range of materials and methods, and safeguarding is regularly discussed in meetings and activities of various kinds.
- Activities and buildings are properly risk assessed and there is discussion and understanding of boundaries regarding touch.

SP2 Culture, Leadership and Capacity

This priority focuses on *securing the safe and healthy culture, effective leadership, resourcing and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.*

This is about ensuring that safeguarding goes beyond procedures as these on their own are not enough.

In practice this means that

- Healthy culture is understood and promoted, people feel safe, and poor culture is challenged.
- The Safeguarding Oversight Group provides effective oversight and challenge.
- Leaders care about safeguarding, are able to demonstrate this, build their knowledge, and address issues appropriately.
- There is sufficient capacity to undertake the work that needs to be done.

SP3 Recognising, assessing and managing risk

This priority focuses on identifying, managing and assessing risk so that *processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes.*

This means identifying efficiently what is and isn't a safeguarding matter, ensuring risk assessments are in place along with safeguarding agreements where appropriate, while working in partnership to achieve this and meeting the requirements of data protection legislation.

This means that

- Safeguarding concerns are identified and responded to quickly.
- Risk assessment is undertaken in accordance with Practice Guidance with a sample being reviewed.
- Agreements are put in place, implemented and reviewed appropriately.
- Personal data is handled in line with legislation.
- Partnership working with statutory agencies is effective.

SP4 Victims and Survivors

This priority seeks to place victims and survivors at the centre of safeguarding responses and to ensure that they experience the Church's responses as helpful.

Responding well to disclosures and providing support are key to this, as are effective engagement with victims and survivors and ensuring the appropriateness of theological responses.

This means that

- Responses to safeguarding disclosures are handled sensitively and effectively in line with practice guidance.
- Support is always offered without avoidable delays.
- There is good engagement and partnership working with victims and survivors.
- Scripture and theology are used solely for the purposes of care and support.

SP5 Learning, Supervision and Support

This priority emphasises the importance of training, professional development, support and supervision for roles within the Church.

This operates at different levels for different roles: everybody needs safeguarding learning to an appropriate level, while clergy and other ministers and Safeguarding Teams need specific forms of supervision and support.

This means that

- Everybody gets an appropriate level of safeguarding training and development that has an impact on beliefs and values.
- Safeguarding training is kept up to date.
- Safeguarding supervision and support is available to clergy and other ministers and safeguarding is covered in Ministerial Development Reviews.
- Members of safeguarding teams are effectively inducted into their roles, suitably supported and supervised and undertake appropriate continuing professional development.

The strategy was adopted by the Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group in March 2023 and is subject to regular review.

iii. Minster Communities

The process of forming and Minster Community has three phases.

1. **Preparing.** In this phase the aim is for worshipping communities to get to know themselves and those around them better - gathering the information and data we need to be able to take the next steps together. It is about building trust in each other and in God, and about building a firm foundation. So this early work is done in church groups and **then** shared wider with each other. There are tools and processes to guide this, including Storyboards and Conversation Prompts which help churches to express the current realities of their church life such as buildings, finance, mission, ministry and more. Towards the end of this phase there are conversations about which church communities should join to form the Minster Community Groupings, for the next phase of the process. Phase 1 should take around 6-7 months.
2. **Forming.** In this phase the proposed Minster Community grouping focuses on more detailed work that establishes the current reality in the churches and begins to think about future possibilities for a Minster Community. Much of this work is done by smaller working groups. This phase will culminate in a proposal being written, by a coordinating group made up of both clergy and lay people drawn from across the area, based on that work done by the smaller groups. The proposal will form the basis of the Minster Community and will outline its aims, its shared mission and the initial steps it wishes to take to make that a reality. This part of the process will take another 7-8 months, meaning phase 1&2 together take around 12-14 months.

To move from phase 2 to phase 3 this proposal must be agreed upon by the PCCs, the Joint Archdeacon’s Mission Committee and the Bishop’s Council.

3. **Living.** This phase begins with a launch service and then the newly formed Minster Community begins to live together and act upon the words of the proposal. This is when things like governance, deployment of resources and vocations are worked through. At this stage the leadership team of the Minster Community is formed and they take on the responsibility of implementing the proposal. Phase 3 will be ongoing so we can’t put a timeframe on it but it would be hoped that some of those governance structures and deployment conversations will have taken place in the first 12 months of living as a Minster Community.



Minster Communities and Diocesan Investment Proposal

As part of the formation process for each Minster Community, a ‘Missional Design’ will be completed, initially specific to intergenerational/Growing Faith work and then later in the process to the strategic priorities and local plans as a whole. These documents are an essential part of the Diocesan Investment Proposal application process.

Diocesan support will be available to both assist Minster Communities in this and also in providing templates of key aspects, for example, job description and terms and conditions for a Growing Faith lead. The Missional Design plans will need to follow this national template:

1. Summary
2. Why <X Minster Community>, why now?

- a. Overview of any history
- b. Challenges you are addressing
- c. Opportunities available
3. Outcomes and impact
 - a. Grid showing clearly how the outcomes for the MC contribute to your diocesan priorities and overall outcomes
4. Missional design
 - a. Clear vision of the future
 - b. Overview of what you will do
 - c. Overview of how what you will do will address the challenges and result in the future vision
 - d. Detailed missional design for the elements you are seeking investment for Including: discipleship pathway & theory of change
5. Sustainability plan
6. Risks & assumptions – overview with detail in an appendix
7. Resources required with clear indication of which are covered by the investment
8. Timescales – overview here, with detailed 1 year plan as an appendix
9. Budget – overview here, with detailed budget as an appendix
10. Appendices:
 - a. Detailed year 1 plan
 - b. Risk assessment
 - c. Comms plan
 - d. Detailed project budget for SMMI investment
 - e. Job descriptions

The draft timeline for Minster Community formation is as below:

Location	# of MCs	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027
Launde	1	Q2 GF proposal												
Pilot 3	1	Draft Proposals	JAMC											
Area 1	2			Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC								
Area 2	2	Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC										
Area 2	2		Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC									
Area 3	8				Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC							
Area 4	3						Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC					
Area 5	3											Working Groups	Draft Proposals	JAMC
Total per quarter			2	2	2	2	8		3					3
Cutumative # of GF workers online				4	6	8	16		19					22
Assumptions:	Quarter means end of that Quarter, this currently assumes no slippage from external factors.													

iv. Church Buildings

Where are we?

Our church buildings matter! Every church building is unique and is embedded within a particular place. They serve as a place for worship, ministry and outreach in mission, a witness to God's

306 church buildings legally open for worship

91% of these are listed historic buildings

presence and as a focal point for local communities. Sufficient provision and capacity for building care is about people because it's an inescapable part of church life and faith in the Church of England and whilst they offer big opportunities for mission, buildings also make big demands upon the faithful people within our congregations and communities. Indeed, much of our mission and ministry takes place in church buildings and our historic church buildings attract visits from pilgrims and heritage lovers, as well as from school groups who also benefit from the large community space offered by church buildings. Church buildings are recognised and valued as sacred spaces where worship and prayer has been offered often for many centuries.

All buildings decay and need repair. It is often very challenging to secure funds to repair church buildings and many church repair projects cannot be undertaken without securing grants. It is, therefore, a testimony to the dedication of volunteers that our buildings are as well maintained as they are, with the majority being in fair condition

<p>Cost of outstanding repairs (QI): 2021: £19,668,972 2023: £22,434,516</p>	<p>Condition of buildings, June 2023: Good: 1 (3 in 2021) Fair: 232 (229 in 2021) Poor: 50 (55 in 2021) Very Bad: 18 (16 in 2021) <i>Categories are based upon National Fabric Survey 2013</i></p>
<p>On Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register: 34 buildings (3 have closed in last 12 years)</p>	
<p>Church Buildings Team: One full-time role, one part-time role Plus an additional three year post fully funded by Historic England linked to specific parts of work</p>	<p>Eco-Communities: Support needed for churches working towards the Net Carbon Zero target and aligning with the Eco Communities strategic priority. There is no current additional capacity to do this</p>

We are aware of a growing number of churches who are facing pressing questions about the immediate viability of their building for various reasons including lack of Church Officers/PCC members or volunteers more generally, very limited income, and/or daunting repair costs. It is essential that facing these issues forms part of the strategy for the positive reasons stated above, but also because if it doesn't then there is a very real danger that dealing with church buildings issues will be a very serious distraction from the work of implementing the rest of the strategy.

At the same time a steady stream of parishes continue to develop their buildings as a local centre of worship and mission and/or community hubs, often requiring significant support from the Church Buildings Team.

The Church Buildings Team support and accompany PCCs through this wide range of repair, maintenance and development processes, tailored to local need. A summary of these has been prepared and is available on request.

What is needed?

There are three key challenges with church buildings:

1. Enabling the buildings to be an effective sustainable base for worship and mission in the 21st century
2. Ongoing challenge of maintaining & repairing buildings
3. Questions over the viability of the church building including who holds responsibility for its care when the PCC can no longer do that

The strategic approach to church buildings outlined aims to cope with this wide range of situations and enables us to provide appropriate support to parishes, recognizing their context and the 'season' they are in. Instead of predetermining an outcome, this strategy and support should enable congregations and their local communities to care for their buildings, to develop them and to make decisions concerning their future. This approach reflects the local discernment of the Minster Community formation process, which includes a focus on church buildings.

Strategic Principles to guide work on Church Buildings

The following strategic principles are proposed to frame the diocesan strategy for church buildings: The three key challenges lead to three strands of work relating to church buildings, although at times there may be more than one occurring in discussions about a church building. These are:

1. Care of the building fabric
2. Making material changes to the church building and/or its contents
3. Questions round the future sustainability of the church building and/or associated buildings

There is a further area (4) – all matters relating to churchyards.

All four areas noted above include legal processes which need to be fulfilled by diocesan staff who are required by statute to fulfill these functions. The Church Buildings Team and the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) will continue to support parishes through well-established pathways for 1, 2 and 4

We aim to empower and encourage imaginative and honest local conversations, within current parishes and within Minster Communities about long-term use and care of their church buildings, providing in-person facilitation, advice and support in relation to the pathways that might be followed by parishes, including:

- Exploration of Festival Church status for one or more church buildings as part of an agreed and balanced plan for ministry and mission in that group;
- exploration of adaptations to develop church buildings missionally as community hubs;
- exploration of additional/alternative uses for church buildings;
- support for parishes with churches that have not yet re-opened after temporary closure during the Covid-19 lockdown;
- support for the process of formal closure of a church building as a place of worship where other routes are not possible and this is requested by the PCC.

We recognise that failing to plan for the likely significant increase in the number of requests for conversations described above will lead to more buildings which are effectively stuck 'in limbo' (i.e no-one on the PCC and no incumbent). We therefore propose an intentional approach to facilitate transformation so as to enable places to become 'unstuck', which will need resourcing.

Where possible we aim to keep church buildings open, noting also the cost of closing a church places a potentially significant financial burden on the DBF. Nonetheless, there needs to be evidence that the local community values an open place of worship and that there is mission potential.

We will establish a clear pathway for buildings that are at risk of becoming stuck 'in limbo'.

We seek to be informed about, and work with but also be prepared to challenge where necessary, the national direction of travel, taking early advantage of national schemes for funding of church building repairs and national church initiatives for enabling efficient management of the care of church buildings.

We aim to increase capacity to secure external funding to maintain our buildings which can enable parishes (and therefore the diocese) to be more financially sustainable

We will continue to collaborate with other stakeholders (e.g. Historic England, LeicesterShire Historic Church Trust, National Churches Trust). We will be pro-active in securing partnerships with other organisations to increase capacity and /or resources for sustaining church buildings at local level, within an Minster Community or at central level.

We will consider how we do things and how we describe them because this makes a lasting difference e.g. acknowledging that closure can involve grief, but it doesn't equal failure.

Recognising that local community members are a stakeholder and have a vital role in keeping church buildings open as places of worship, we will;

- ensure that there are resources and support for parishes to engage with local community with the hope of enabling some Friends Groups/Action Groups/ Local Trusts to be set up and sustained
- Disapply Church Representation Rules where appropriate to allow non-communicants onto PCCs.

We will continue to fulfil our statutory requirements with respect to the care of church buildings and will advise parishes to fulfil theirs, while promoting a better understanding of the purpose and value of QIs.

We will continue to gather data on church building condition in order to understand the state of our buildings so that we provide evidence to support the need for external funding.

We recognise the need to develop resources/pathways to support conversations about groups of church buildings within Minster Communities. Increased capacity will be required to enable these conversations about the future of church buildings at group level (i.e. Minster Communities) and at individual parish level.

We aim to support PCCs towards meeting the Net Carbon Zero targets and aligning with the Eco-Communities strategic priority. This will only be achievable if significant additional resources and capacity become available – see the Eco-Communities plan in Appendix E for more.

We will encourage PCCs to keep church buildings open to the public as far as reasonably possible, as this is key to maintaining public interest.

Strategic priorities for church buildings

In the consultation in January 2024, people were invited to comment on a number of possible options for strategic church buildings support and development. The feedback offered on these was developed into a full options appraisal. Due to its length it is not included here but is available on request from the Church Buildings Team. In the light of this, out of the many possible ways to approach the issue of church buildings, our priorities will be

- Support local discernment around the future of church buildings within Minster Communities, focusing particularly on helping churches which are 'stuck' to become unstuck
- Seek wherever possible to keep buildings open, as part of Minster Communities
- Promote the option of becoming a Festival church within Minster Communities wherever appropriate
- Support engagement with local communities to set up 'Friends of' groups
- Enable non-communicants to join PCCs where applicable
- Provide adequate support for the closure process where there is no other viable option.
- We aim to encourage, support and enable collaboration in respect of care of church buildings between parishes within Minster Communities

In order to achieve all of this, there is a need for investment in the Church Buildings Team to increase capacity for providing the intensive support that is needed. Work has already started on how to address the main areas of need, which include:

- supporting churches who seek to grow as Festival Churches,
- supporting churches whose building development is of especial importance in realising the aspirations both for an accessible worshipping community to be within reach of every young people in the Diocese and a worshipping community within the physical bounds of each housing estate (comprising more than 500 units of social housing), and
- additional support for churches who are exploring the viability of their building.

Work will continue on developing these options during 2025 in anticipation of inclusion in a future Diocesan Investment Proposal.

v. Diocesan Governance and Support

This section relates to the DBF only and is primarily intended for use by the Trustee Board, committees which report to the Board and diocesan officers who serve these bodies. It draws on the paper 'Support for Ministry: Principles' of 16 June 2021 which was the result of work done as part of the Shaped by God Together process.

References in what follows to 'the overall diocesan strategy' should be understood as including support of the *Three Key Questions*, the five *Strategic Priorities* and the national 'vision and values'.

What is 'Diocesan Support'?

For the purposes of this paper, 'Diocesan Support' includes a number of different activities which fall within the remit of the DBF, such as:

- Supporting the ministry of the Bishop(s)
- Support for parishes, their clergy, officers and members of the worshipping community, recognising that supporting our lay and ordained ministers enables them in turn to support others in and beyond the Church
- Playing our part in the national church
- Meeting the essential costs arising from the existence of the diocese as an organisation
- Supporting certain ministries which are not parish-based but which are most appropriately organised from a central diocesan base

Principles for the future

- 1 We will continue to fulfil our statutory obligations, including:
 - Payment of applicable stipends (including NI and pension), housing costs for incumbents and curates
 - Payment of stipends (including NI and pension), housing costs and expenses for the Archdeacons
 - Costs of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor/Officer and other essential members of the Safeguarding team, DSOG and other essential associated activities
 - Provision of support for statutory committees (e.g. DAC, Board of Patronage, Vacancy in See) and the salary of the Director of Education
 - Contributions to the National Church (Votes 1-5) mandated by General Synod
 - Payment of retainers to the Chancellor and Diocesan Registrar as required by General Synod
- 2 We will manage our financial resources, including investment assets and diocesan-owned property including Glebe, as efficiently as possible within our ethical guidelines so as to maintain value and maximise net returns.
- 3 We will work in partnership with the St Philip's Centre, Launde Abbey, parishes, schools and others where this best serves the overall diocesan strategy and will outsource work where that is more efficient, effective and economical.

- 4 We will manage our commercial activities at St Martins House and St Martins Lodge to maximise net income so far as that is consistent with our missional and operational needs.
- 5 We will review all grants and subscriptions to third parties to ensure that their continuation is consistent with the overall diocesan strategy.
- 6 We will review all other expenditure ('pay' and 'non-pay') to identify and implement efficiencies and economies.
- 7 The DBF will seek to work actively with the DBE, Bishop's Lodge and the Cathedral to identify and implement economies of scale through sharing of support activities.
- 8 In the medium term we will seek to further shape the management and support structure for DBF employees (including those working for St Martins House and St Martins Lodge) to embed appropriate efficiencies and consistency of practice.
- 9 All non-parochial ministry roles will be reviewed to ensure that their continuation is consistent with the overall diocesan strategy.
- 10 We will maintain a modest provision in the budget for innovation and pilot projects that meet criteria such as:
 - Are supportive of the overall diocesan strategy
 - Are time-limited
 - Have a cap on net cost
 - Have been fully risk-assessed
 - Are transitional and will remove obstacles to, or create new capacity for, mission and ministry
 - Have the potential to lead to worthwhile savings or additional income
 - Provide 'proof of concept' for work that will be eligible for grants
 - Will be kept under regular review to provide assurance of being on-track
 - Are subject to agreed change management processes (including clear exit strategies)
- 11 Apart from the above, we will only undertake new work when it is consistent with the overall diocesan strategy and is *either* fully funded by grants, restricted donations and/or new income that it can reasonably be expected to generate *or* replaces other activity in such a way that the net diocesan expenditure budget is not increased.
- 12 Any proposal for recruitment will include an evaluation of whether the work could be adequately undertaken by a suitably qualified volunteer or in other ways that would reduce the cost.
- 13 These principles and their effectiveness will be reviewed annually by the Trustee Board and the outcomes of the review will be reported to the Diocesan Synod.

Appendix H – Lowest Income Communities Funding: Policy for Strategic use within Minster Communities

Summary Version

Full Policy Document Approved by DBF Trustees in June 2023

Lowest Income Communities (LInC) Funding is a grant given from the national Church of England to the diocese for the purpose of providing ministry within our most deprived communities.

Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that the LInC funding is being used for its intended purpose – to support the provision of ministry in the most deprived communities in the diocese.
- To significantly increase the awareness amongst these communities, and the wider diocese, of the existence and purpose of LInC funding.
- To enable these communities to have a significant say in decisions about what their ministry need is and how the LInC funding is used to meet these needs.

Underpinning Principles

Transparency: People in parishes across the diocese need to know about LInC funding and its use

Simplicity: This money rightly belongs to those communities on whose behalf it is granted to the diocese, therefore any process for deciding its use must not be a barrier to those parishes' access to or use of the funding.

Consultation: Local people are best placed to determine their needs and make the decision as to how the LInC allocation is used locally.

Allocation/eligibility: Explicit commitment that this money gets to where it is supposed to be used, by ensuring clear method of allocation and communication of allocation to those parishes.

Method of Allocation

LInC allocations are made to parishes containing communities within the 20% most deprived in the country. This includes those with overall levels of deprivation, but also with a recognition that some parishes contain “pockets” of significant deprivation:

- a) Those parishes that are in the 20% most deprived in the country according to IMD¹⁰ ranking
- b) Those parishes that contain smaller areas of population (LSOAs¹¹) that are within the 20% most deprived in the country.

We have chosen to focus on data relating to the population of the whole parish, rather than consider congregational data, parish financial data, or other demographic data relating to religious affiliation because this is true to the mission and calling of the Church of England to minister to the whole of the parish – the “cure of souls”. The size of deprived population within parishes varies greatly and this is taken into account in the allocation calculation.

Implementation of this Policy

LInC Funding is already integrated into the diocesan budget and supports ministry in deprived parishes. Therefore, there will be a transition period of approximately 2-3 years while this policy is implemented.

- a) LInC funding is integrated into conversations about cost of ministry and ministry provision planning within the Minster Community formation process. Therefore, there will be a period of transition as Minster Communities are formed. Any recruitment will take place within the context of DBF agreed recruitment policies.

¹⁰ Index of Multiple Deprivation

¹¹ Lower Super Output Areas – small areas with population of approximately 1500 people)

- b) Minster Communities are asked to agree what ministry is needed and how they propose that this should be provided. In Minster Communities including parishes with a LInC funding allocation, this will include deciding how this will be used. The clear expectation is that LInC funding provides ministry specifically within deprived communities and this must be demonstrably true in practice (it cannot simply subsidise ministry generally within a Minster Community). This forms part of the Minster Community proposal.
- c) There are three types of capacity need that LInC funding may support: leadership for mission; specific skills for the “nuts and bolts” running of churches; developing work with children, families and youth. It is notable that 32% of the under 18yrs population of the diocese live within our most deprived parishes¹². Roles supported by LInC funding can be, but do not have to be, stipendiary clergy posts.
- d) If there is more than one parish with a LInC allocation within the Minster Community, they could pool their allocations to support a role that works across all their deprived communities. LInC funding could be used to support one of the core stipendiary posts within an MC, if this cost could not otherwise be met, but this role would need to focus particularly on deprived communities.

Outcome

As is our hope for all parishes across the diocese, our hope is to provide ministry within these parish communities that enables the growth of God’s Kingdom, as seen through the numbers of disciples of Christ, the depth of discipleship and loving service of the world.

The national church asks us to identify an outcome that we aim to achieve through the use of our LInC funding. We are expected to report on this each year. It must be demonstrably aligned to the national Vision and Strategy. We hope to see a positive growth trend in these parishes collectively over the coming years. However, while we rejoice that some of the parishes receiving LInC allocations are growing, we recognise the general trajectory of decline across the Church of England. We anticipate it being several years before net growth might be seen. This still represents significant growth as a steady growth in new members will be needed to balance the inevitable loss of people through the declining health of old age and death, and the fact that many of these communities are very transitory populations. Our aspirational aim is for a combined 3% growth by the fourth year. We will measure this primarily through the total Worshipping Community size, with a second indicator being the total number of Occasional Offices. Both of these are already collected through annual Statistics for Mission returns.

Appendix I – Programme Management in support of our strategy

Work ongoing.

Appendix J – Operations and admin support for Minster Communities briefing paper

The formation of a Minster Community opens the opportunity for closer collaborative working between its member churches. The creation of agreements that enable the sharing of ministerial resources across the whole community has the potential to light a fire of innovation and imaginative development in the parishes.

One of the elements needed to release this exciting potential is the vision to capitalise on economies of scale, both financially and in the management of human and physical resources.

¹² The 22 parishes in the diocese that are in the 20% most deprived in the country.

There is a need to ensure that the ministers in the Minster Community, at both parish and Minster Community level, are released to do the work to which God has called them. This in turn requires the management of operations across the Minster Community to be focussed on enabling church leaders, whether lay or ordained, volunteers or paid, to grow discipleship and loving service to their communities.

Each Minster Community will potentially have four or more ministers making up the Minster Community leadership team. One of these ministers is likely to have responsibility for overseeing operations across the Minster Community.

Operations Lead – the role

The role is that of a strategic leader, taking the vision created by the leadership team and bringing together all the resources required to make that vision a reality. Having responsibility for the coordination of operations management and being the person who holds the strategic overview of the management of operations across the community, this role must be held within the MC leadership team.

Church Consultant John Truscott in his article *Appointing an Operations Manager* suggests five key purposes for the role of Operations Lead:

- **To turn vision into reality.**
 - Drawing up a strategic plan for leadership approval
 - Actioning the plan
 - Enabling the Minster Community to move from vision to plan to achievement

- **To enable continual change for effectiveness**
 - Monitoring and applying continuous improvements to ongoing processes
 - Being seen as a catalyst for change and growth
 - Guiding people through change

- **To manage people well**
 - People are the most valuable resource for a church and by extension for a Minster Community
 - Relationship building with the people in the Minster Community, whether paid or volunteers, will probably be the most important as well as the most challenging aspect of the role
 - Establishing the best structures and systems that enable and release others for ministry whilst providing the most efficient use of the human resources

- **To co-ordinate all aspects of organization**
 - Ensuring that time and effort is spent across the Minster Community in pursuit of the common aims
 - Encouraging innovation whilst considering the resource implications

- **To release the pastoral staff for church growth**
 - Here there is a difference between the role of Operations Lead and Administrator that needs to be noticed and firmly held. Both roles can have the effect of releasing others to ministry, however, the role of the Operations lead is more in the line of the Disciples in Acts 6, selecting 7 deacons to carry out the day to day ministry and ensuring it was delivered equitably and efficiently, thereby enabling the Disciples to continue their work growing their number.

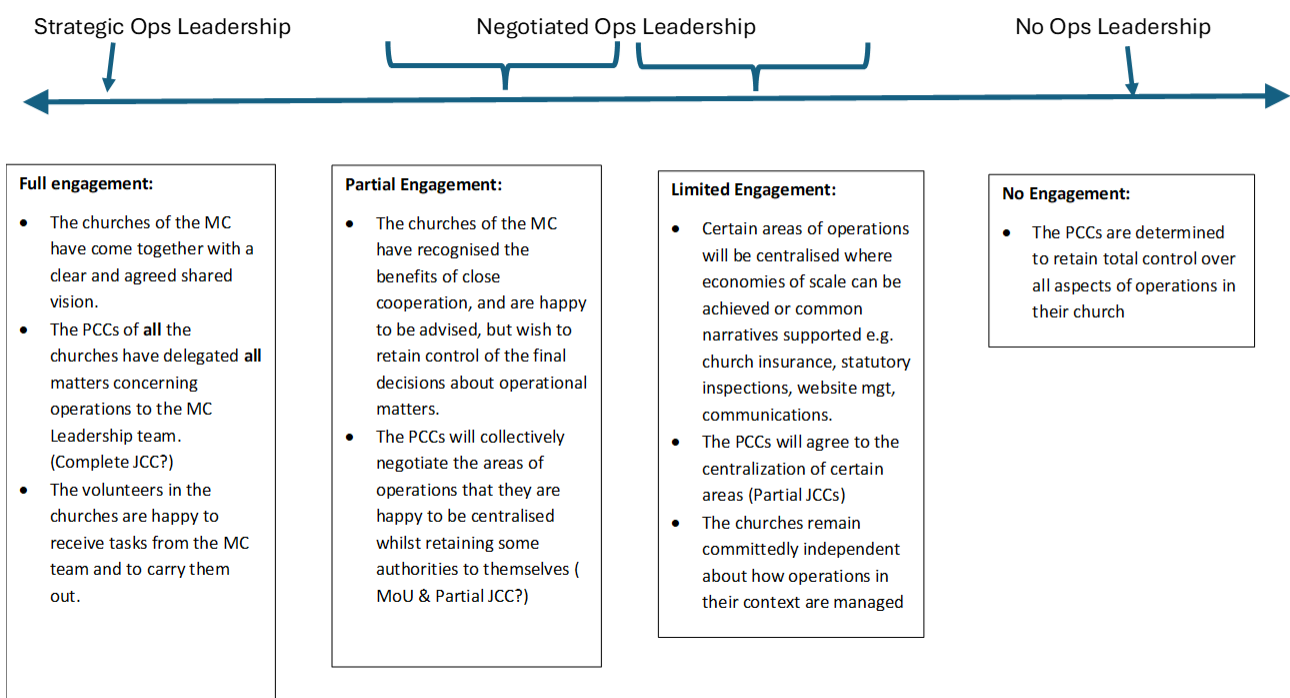
The actual responsibilities of the post holder in each context will differ, but having the skills and the passion to engage with these purposes will be essential in the person who takes on this role.

Operations Lead – the person

It is not the intention here to be at all prescriptive about the person specification for this role. The five key purposes imply a high degree of competence in those areas, but in addition it should be noted that, in its role of releasing other ministers into the roles that God has called them to, it is itself ministry, and sits alongside other forms of ministry. Far from being a ‘super administrator’ the Operations Lead will need to have the people skills to be able to translate the vision into something that has meaning for volunteers and ministers alike, the organisational skills to be able to manage several areas of work simultaneously, and the energy and faith-based commitment to be able to lead and support people through change.

Administration

One of the cries for help that is often heard from the parishes is for help with tasks such as faculty applications, grant applications and fundraising. There are also a large number of administrative tasks that could be undertaken by a skilled administrator, thus relieving the burden on church volunteers and ministers. It needs to be clear that this is not the role of the Operations Lead, indeed failure to provide adequate administrative support could make the Operations Lead role very difficult to sustain.



Possible areas of work

The following list is not intended to be either comprehensive or prescriptive, but merely to suggest some possible areas of work that could be centralised to relieve the work load for ministers and church volunteers:

1. Communications:

- Sharing the cost and responsibility for a web presence. Supporting smaller churches by managing the process of keeping pages updated.
- Implementing shared communication systems may add too much complexity and cost for the realisable benefits, but could assist in simplifying shared ministry rotas etc.

2. **Maintenance Contracts:**
 - Bring statutory testing contracts together could realise some cost benefits and make it easier to ensure compliance.
 - Care would need to be taken not to disenfranchise volunteers, such as Church Wardens.
3. **Shared resources / Equipment**
 - Expensive equipment requirements, such as photocopiers and large printers, could be centralised and be made available to all churches
4. **Insurance**
 - Whilst the idea of accessing economies of scale through multi parish contracts with insurance companies is attractive, the reality is that it is probably difficult to achieve due to the very varied and context specific nature of church buildings insurance.
 - Employers liability insurance may be an area that could be centralised.
5. **Policies**
 - Churches are now required to have policies on many areas. Some are well understood, such as safeguarding, but still require lots of coordination. There is existing support available from central diocesan sources for areas such as Human Resource Management and Employment Law. Other areas, for example areas of Health and Safety legislation are rarely considered and therefore often overlooked. Some centralised coordination could be of considerable help to individual churches.
6. **Safeguarding**
 - A Minster Community will need to ensure strong strategic oversight of Safeguarding across all the churches. Whilst ultimate responsibility is likely to sit with the Oversight Minister, it may be that ensuring compliance with reporting and monitoring requirements could fall within the remit of the Operations Lead.

The extent to which operations in these areas can be harmonized sufficiently to enable efficiency gains will differ in every case, and it will be the decision of the Operations Lead in each Minster Community to consider the practicalities.