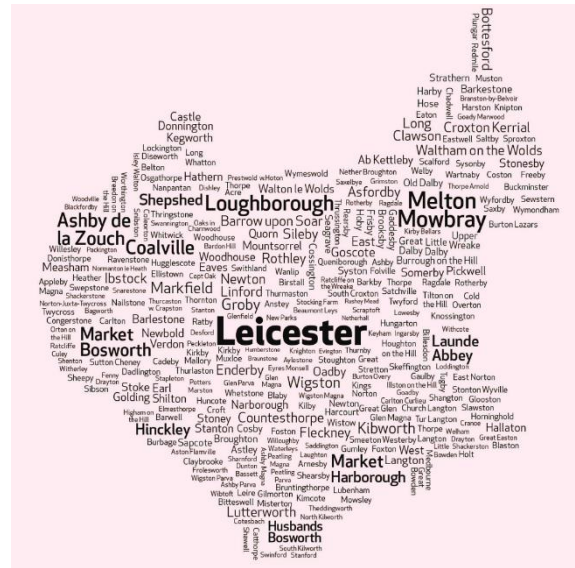




Diocesan Strategy

For agreement Sept 2024



A note on who this document is for

This document is intended for three main groups:

- Those part of diocesan decision-making bodies, such as Diocesan Synod, Bishop’s Council, Diocesan Trustees, with whom responsibility rests to discern, scrutinise and agree any diocesan strategy and monitor its effective implementation;
- Staff employed by ‘the Diocese’ (in effect DBF, DBE and Cathedral), the bodies and councils that support or oversee their work, and diocesan strategic partners (such as Launde Abbey, the St Philip’s Centre, Leicester Cathedral or Together Leicester) so as to support and guide their work in service of the wider Anglican church in Leicester and Leicestershire;
- The national Church of England (technically the ‘National Church Institutions’) to which we belong as a Diocese and with which we seek further partnership as part of its implementation.

In a spirit of mutual belonging and transparency, this document and its appendices will be available through the diocesan website for any and all in our churches and communities to engage with but **it is not written in a form which it is expected all will engage with.** A separate communications plan is being developed so as to communicate key parts of the strategy in more appropriate and succinct ways for those in parishes, schools, chaplaincies and the wider community at the right time.



Introduction

1,080,900. That's the number of people living in Leicester and Leicestershire - as of the last census in 2021. Not merely a line on a chart or number on a website but one million, eighty thousand, nine hundred people made in the image of God. One million, eighty thousand, nine hundred parishioners living, working or studying in one of the parishes of the Diocese.

This strategy is about renewing our collective hope as communities where God is known, loved and worshipped, where people encounter the wonder of the eternal as we are renewed in prayer and service, and where all can find welcome and dignity as children of God.

This strategy isn't about the survival of the Church of England in Leicester and Leicestershire. It is about 1,080,900 people who, as churches, schools, Cathedral and chaplaincies we in the Diocese of Leicester are called to love, serve with and reach with the good news of Jesus Christ - good news that brings hope, offers life and transforms every life and community for the better. It aims to offer a compelling yet realistic vision of the future.

None of this is possible without over 15,000 worshippers praying and ministering together as part of over 400 time-honoured and new churches, or the 23,000 students in 97 Church of England schools partnering in serving our communities, or extensive chaplaincy work in its many forms. It is why the people of God - lay and ordained, paid and unpaid - sacrifice so much in service of God and others.

In the context of major changes within society and the church over the past decade, changes likely only to accelerate over the coming decade, what might this look in ten years time? In 2034 will we have retreated into fewer, smaller, older communities struggling to keep the lights on, or is another future possible? We believe God has good plans for us – a future marked by a humble confidence, centred not on ourselves, but with each us renewed to shine as lights amongst the 1,080,900 parishioners God has placed us amidst.

This strategy is about helping us as worshipping communities, that through deepening our experience of loving God and being loved by him, we may grow in size, depth, reach and love; Monday to Sunday disciples of Jesus Christ, learning from one another in hopeful, humble curiosity. It is about working towards a 2034 where existing, and many more new, churches help us better reflect the communities we serve – accessible, vibrant and diverse churches of all ages and cultures led by people of all ages and cultures. A future marked by partnerships - blessed by our different perspectives and experiences as we lead our communities in being places of reconciliation and restoration. Schools, churches and households growing in faith and sharing hope. Churches, Cathedral and chaplaincies working with communities to be places safe for all, and where all can find life, as we enjoy evermore of God's creation together and walk lightly but purposefully into each week.

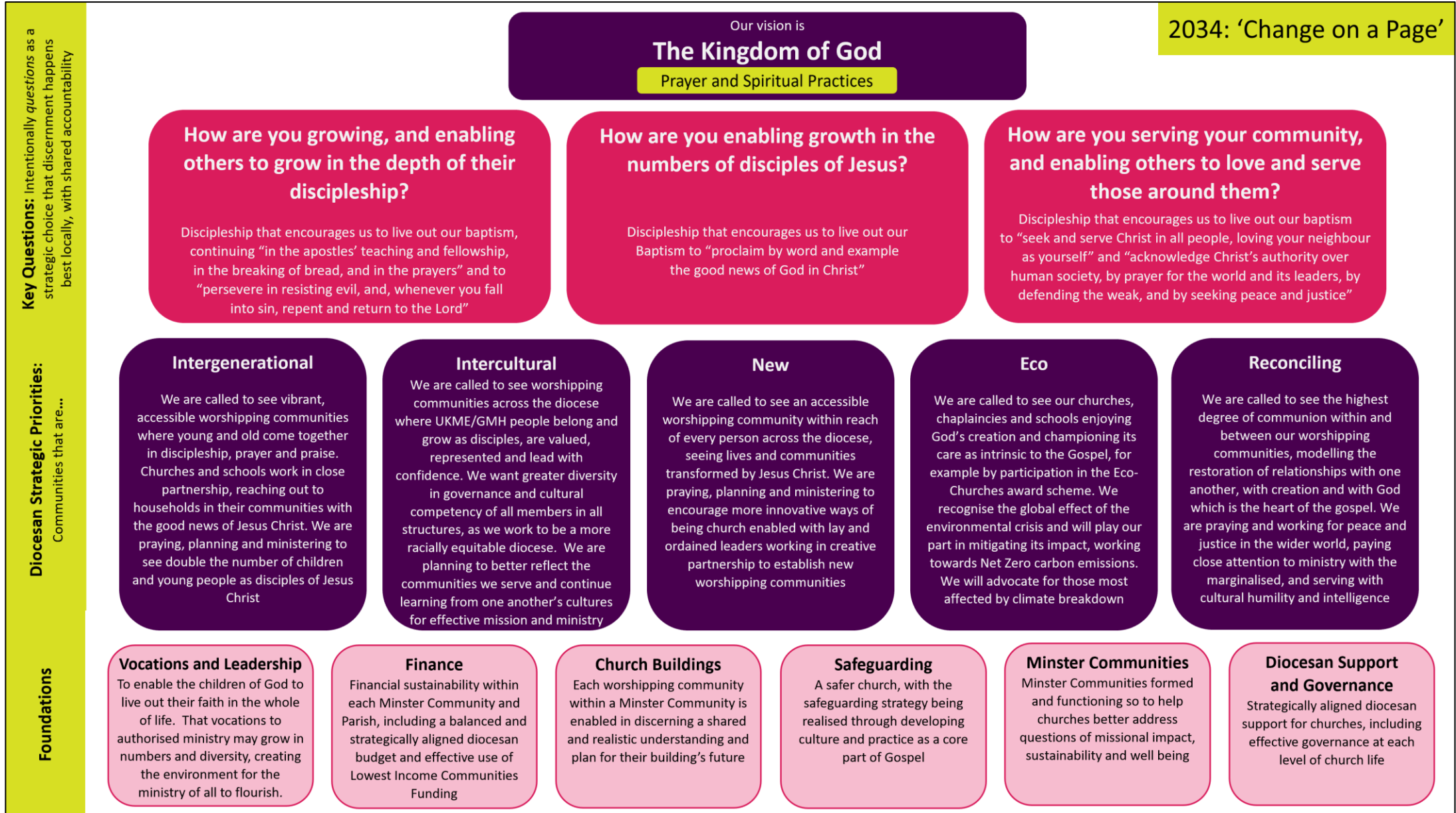
Jesus put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

Matthew 13:31-32

In this strategy, the questions we ask ourselves, the priorities we chose and the foundations on which we build are about helping us pray, plan and walk into this future. We are not all called to every part of it but, like an orchestra, we are each called to play our part in creating a symphony of worship and praise, service and witness, that the world will know who God is and that God is for them, our 1,080,900 friends and family, classmates and colleagues, our neighbours.



Below is a summary of what we are working towards, with success measures and action plan for each Strategic Priority / Foundation in what follows:



1. Diocesan Missional Vision to 2034

Our Diocesan Vision

Our vision is the Kingdom of God. As we pray 'Your Kingdom come' we attend to the spiritual practices that deepen our faith and encourage our worshipping communities so that we are both inspired and empowered to partner in God's mission of grace in our time and place. With renewed focus, priorities and plans outlined in this strategy, we are praying for every community, context and culture in Leicester and Leicestershire to know more of the Kingdom of God come near. As with the images of the Kingdom of God offered by Jesus Christ, such growth often starts small and fragile, yet in that God can and does bring growth beyond anything we might imagine.

Strategically we have found, and in this strategy commit ourselves afresh to the principle, that often the best people to discern *how* this happens in each context are those in that context. Our approach is to ask *Three Key Questions* of each worshipping community, supporting one another to listen well to God and context, to plan intentionally in response, and then hold each other to loving account for what God has called us to. They are intentionally framed as questions to honour this incarnational principle. Whilst the expectation is each can be observed in every context, we will be blessed by the diversity of that fruit.

To give renewed focus to these questions for the next phase of our life together, this strategy further *grounds* these questions theologically in our baptismal promises, and further *describes*, in tangible terms, what we anticipate the fruit of living in these questions will look like by 2034 across our churches, schools and chaplaincies. This is summarised on the 'Change on a Page', with details and accompanying plans later in this strategy.

How are you growing, and enabling others to grow in the depth of their discipleship?

Discipleship that encourages us to live out our baptism, continuing "in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" and to "persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord"

How are you enabling growth in the numbers of disciples of Jesus?

Discipleship that encourages us to live out our Baptism to "proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ"

How are you serving your community, and enabling others to love and serve those around them?

Discipleship that encourages us to live out our baptism to "seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself" and "acknowledge Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice"

It is significant that although some of the plans to support them are new, the *Three Key Questions* and intent behind them are long established. This is not about fresh vision in the sense of a major new direction, but after a number of very demanding years for churches and those supporting them, to help us address the hard things, encouraged at what God is doing amongst us and that, in the grace of God, a good and blessed future awaits.

These *Three Key Questions*, as an expression of what the Kingdom of God looks like, form the basis on which all that follows is built.

Our Diocesan Strategic Priorities

To support us in responding to the *Three Key Questions*, *five Strategic Priorities* have been discerned. With finite resources, over-stretched communities, and wellbeing challenges for lay and ordained leaders exacerbated by Covid-19, these help us focus how to best use what we have sustainably so local church communities can flourish and grow healthily for many years to come.



The progress of recent years encourages us that we are on the way towards these, with renewed focus, plans and resourcing help us further realise them by 2034:

- Intergenerational** We are called to see vibrant, accessible worshipping communities where young and old come together in discipleship, prayer and praise. Churches and schools work in close partnership, reaching out to households in their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are praying, planning and ministering to see double the number of children and young people as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Intercultural** We are called to see worshipping communities across the diocese where UKME/GMH 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
- New** 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.
- Eco** 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.
- Reconciling** We are called to see the highest degree of communion within and between our worshipping communities, modelling the restoration of relationships with one another, with creation and with God which is the heart of the gospel. We are praying and working for peace and justice in the wider world, paying close attention to ministry with the marginalised, and serving with cultural humility and intelligence.

Each *Strategic Priority*, supported by prayer and on-going spiritual discernment, is accompanied by its own action plan, which details the tangible difference we expect to see in 2034 alongside an integrated and sustainable plan to help churches, schools and chaplaincies journey towards those goals. The overall strategy integrates these plans, paying attention to how they overlap and intersect and potential areas for them to be derailed. The ways these priorities interact are often the places of gold.

It is not expected every church will engage fully with all five priorities by themselves. Rather, by working in partnership, the fruits will be more fully seen. Like much of this strategy, it is often to make explicit and value what was already implicit, rather than only establishing new obligations.

What will this look like?

The biblical story reveals the Kingdom of God becoming present in unexpected ways and in surprising places. Our focus, therefore, is to intentionally enable our worshipping communities to become more attentive and responsive to the signs of the Kingdom through encouraging and resourcing practices that develop spiritual depth and fill community life with prayer. From this focus on health, not just growth, the people of God will bear witness to the grace of God in the world as outlined in the *Three Key Questions* and *five Strategic Priorities*. The summary of tangible impact are not therefore *targets* but *Kingdom consequences* we are working towards.



In summary form below, they are a mixture of outcomes and outputs, of impactful change in itself and proxies to indicate the kind of deeper change that is not always measurable in itself, and of lead and lag indicators. They are collated here as one to give a tangible sense of what we hope to look like in 2034 but the nuances between cause and effect and how each relates is detailed more fully in the specific plans later in this strategy and in accompanying appendices for each Strategic Priority area and a separate Appendix on measurement. The detail also includes points on the way to help us celebrate God at work and track progress towards 2034.

Goals and measures can be spiritual indicators of where we feel God is calling us and the change we look to see. It is important to note that what we measure can be an indicator of what we treasure. They are not merely human tools but used well can be gifts in discernment, helping us lift our eyes to the mission of God come near, at the same time as we maintain prayerful attention to the unexpected movements of the Spirit.

Historically, as churches, we have often been focused on counting with the underlying question 'how many'. These types of conversations tend to focus on scarcity and addressing it – do we have enough, how can we get more? In this strategy, the proposal is to shift the focus **from counting to measuring** – where the question shifts from 'how many' to 'how far – how far have we come over the past year towards our calling'. Measuring still involves counting, but even when some of the data gathered is the same as when counted, it is put to radically different use. It is about shifting to more of a learning and change conversation. These are not targets to reach, but an indication of the scale of our missional aspiration for which we plan. It involved a conscious and deliberate paradigm shift so as to reject any use of counting or targets being used to inappropriately drive leaders or fostering senses of shame or failure, and instead committing together to measure what matters so as to adapt practice in light of learning.

As each Minster Community forms they will be invited to consider the scale of impact they hope to have within each of the strategic priorities and related outcomes noted below. Rather than 'growth targets' being given to Minster Communities, the locally-led, diocesan-supported Minster Community formation process allows each context to discern what this looks like in each unique place. During 2025 and 2026 these will be collected into a 'grass roots up', tangible expression of the scale of change we are working towards across the Diocese as a whole. In turn, these numbers and plans to realise them will form the basis on which additional investment will be sought from the national Church.

Although the Cathedral will not be part of a specific Minster Community, keenness has been expressed to mirror this same process of discernment around *Strategic Priorities* and outcomes.

To give some diocesan wide indication of the quantum of that change, evidence, experience, research and plans allow us to offer some initial spectrums of what is hoped to be seen. With the exception of those around children and young people, where work is more developed, they are offered indicatively, to be confirmed as Minster Communities form.

Taken as a whole our strategic plans lead us to expect, hope and pray that, in God's grace and by the Spirit's leading, by 2034 we will see:

- ❖ **3,000-5,000 new disciples of Jesus Christ, including,**
 - **at least a doubling in the number of children and young people from 900 to 1,800;**
 - **a significant increase in UKME/GMH people as part of new or existing time-honoured worshipping communities;**
 - **These numbers are new people not net change.** The overall size of existing worshipping communities is likely to continue to decline given the age profile of worshippers, even as we expect and work towards many new disciples as part of parishes.



- ❖ **500-1,000 new authorised ministers (lay and ordained), including:**
 - **Focal Ministers of existing worshipping communities,**
 - **Leaders and leadership teams in new worshipping communities, and**
 - **a significant increase in volunteers working with children and young people.**
 - See Appendix Gi for a more detailed breakdown.

- ❖ **Increasing and sustained service in the communities we are set**
 - The national Church is currently working on a common national measurement to see the impact and scale of community service. This will hopefully be in place during 2025 and on its basis this measure will be updated;
 - In the interim this will be as shown by growing number of life event groups or courses led/partnered in such as debt counselling, foodbanks, parenting courses, toddler groups, dementia cafes, and many more. Summary information will be gathered through the annual Statistics for Mission returns (as was previously the case).

For more information on measurement and the new national measurement framework in which this sits, see Appendix F.

These overall three outcomes are related to and emerge from the outcomes and outputs developed in each of the *five Strategic Priorities*:

Intergenerational

See Appendix A for more details

- ❖ a flourishing church within reach of every young person* and deepening relationships across churches, schools and households (*see Appendix A for definition), *leading to >*
- ❖ a doubling in the number of children and young people as disciples of Jesus Christ by 2034, *supported by >*
- ❖ 400 new volunteers recruited, trained, and commissioned to work with children and young people across churches and schools and a designated Growing Faith lead as a key strategic and sustainable role in each Minister Community. This number includes children and young people regularly planning and leading worship in school and/or church, as well as being empowered in leadership roles within their Minister communities.
- ❖ See Appendix A for more details, alongside additional 'lead indicators'.

Intercultural

See Appendix B for more details

- ❖ A significant increase in the number of UKME/GMH people part of worshipping communities, so we better represent the communities we serve, many of which will be children and young people.
- ❖ Each Minister Community having an intercultural champion with further development of UKME/GMH vocations, lay and ordained.
- ❖ Realising the success metrics from the Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy, including training, diversity of Diocesan governance structures and leadership roles within Minister Communities, UKME/GMH Vocations target, lay and ordained.

New

See Appendix C for more details

- ❖ 100 new worshipping communities helping parishes better reflect and serve their communities (see Appendix C and F for the breakdown between intercultural, intergenerational, church plants and fresh expressions of Church).
- ❖ This includes developing a worshipping community within the physical bounds of every housing estate in the Diocese where there is not currently one (based on parish returns analysed by the national church; housing estate comprising more than 500 units of social housing).
- ❖ More leadership capacity and diversity via Catalyst.



Eco

See Appendix D for more details

To become a Gold-Eco Diocese by the end of 2034 (Silver by end of 2028).

The award itself is not the goal so as much as an Eco-Church award being an effective, established and widely understood vehicle for the constituent work that makes it up and the effect such work has.¹

Reconciling

See Appendix E for more details

- ❖ 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 that their gifts are valued.

As outcomes specific to this strategic priority are harder to measure, work is ongoing to learn from other dioceses as to how best to approach this.

2. Where are we now?

Facts are our friends. Data, though, never tells the whole story and is rarely complete or perfect. The data presented below is offered to give a snapshot of key demographic, missional and financial health and its trajectory over recent years so this strategy can build on what is working well and address challenges that could derail mission in ministry.

Throughout this document additional data is then offered in connection with the area being discussed. Each offers a further part of the overall picture of what God is doing, with no one part sufficient in isolation. Where possible, what is measured is the same or similar to what will be measured in the years to come, as outlined in Appendix F, allowing us to be encouraged or challenged by progress. This is offered in a spirit of moving from a focus on counting (what have we got) to measuring (how far have we come and what are we learning as we journey).

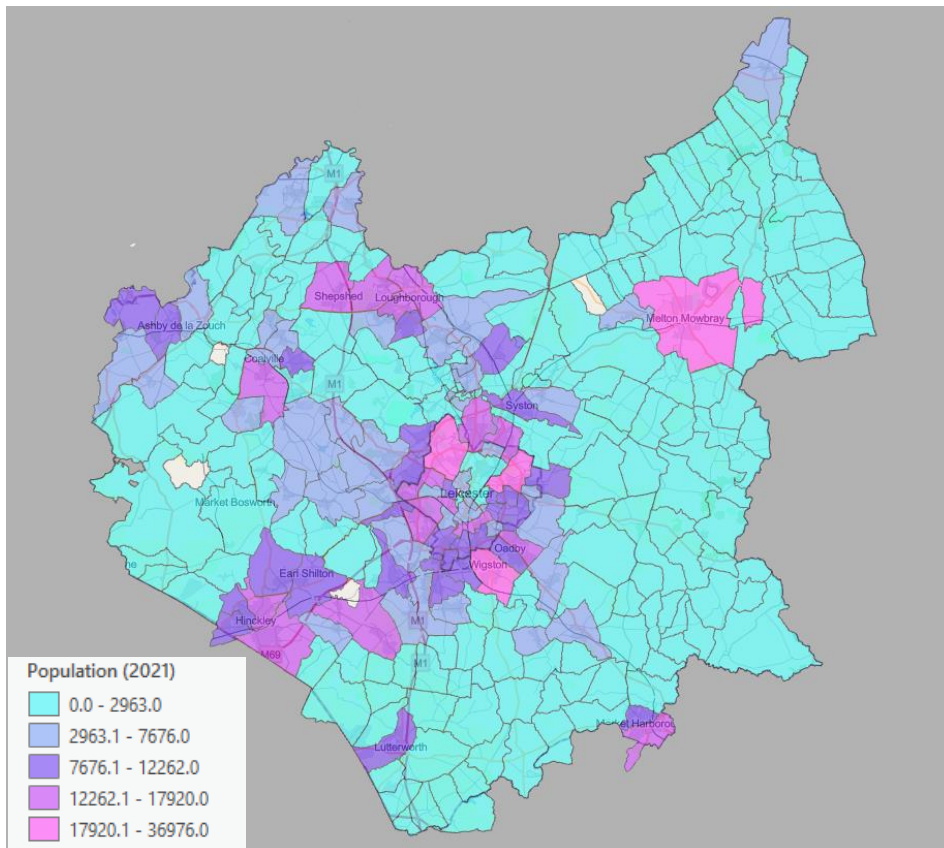
Population density by Parish

It is important to note **population growth** in some local authority areas in the Diocese is amongst the quickest in the region. Harborough District grew more quickly than any other East or West Midlands local authority between 2011 and 2021 (14.3%). Leicester city grew by 11.8%, Charnwood by 10.7% and Blaby by 9.6% in the same timeframe (compared with a national average of 6.3%).

Taken from the 2021 census. The darker the colour, the denser the population

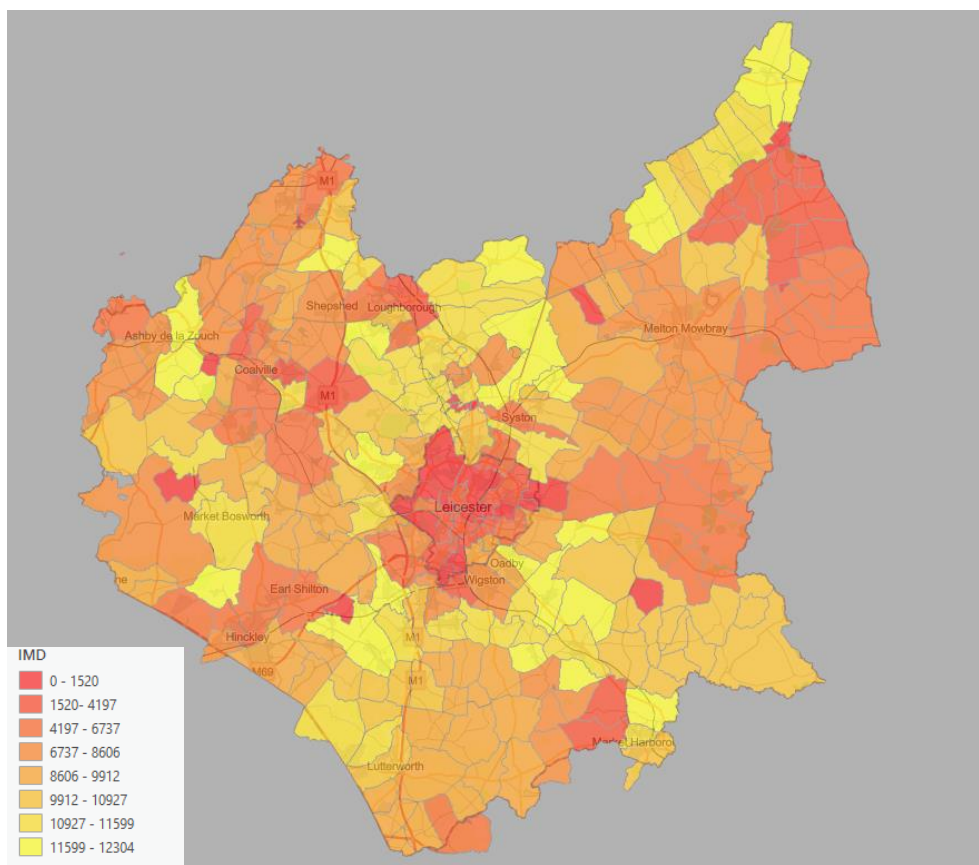
¹ Being an Eco-Diocese is the sum of much work across parishes, schools and diocesan staff in the areas of: Set %'s of individual Eco Church awards* (inc housing and church buildings), Schools and education, Carbon reduction (including work towards supporting the Church of England's commitment to be Net Carbon Zero by 2030 as per measurable action plan), Ownership and Policy, Training and development, St Martins House, Finance and investments, Collaboration with community partners, Celebrating Creation, and Land.





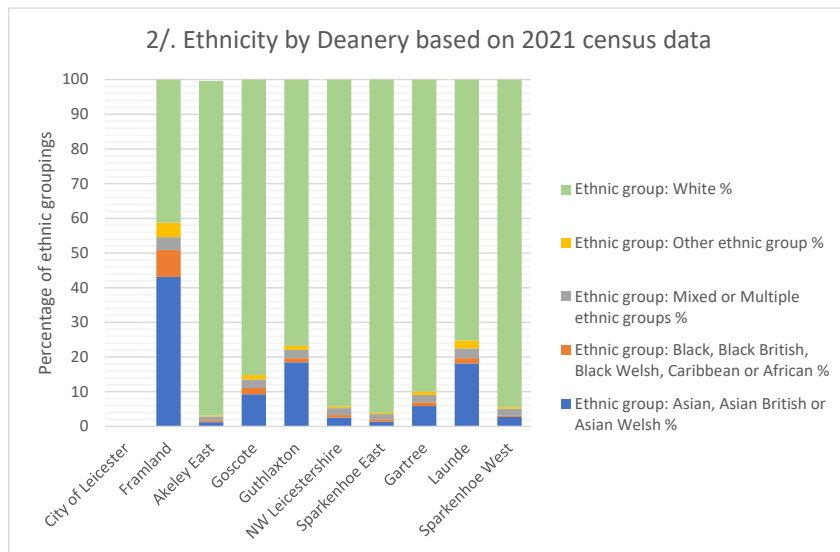
Deprivation by Parish

Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation which combines financial deprivation, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment. Taken from the 2022 dataset, the darker the ranking, the more deprivation is present in a given parish.



Ethnicity by Deanery

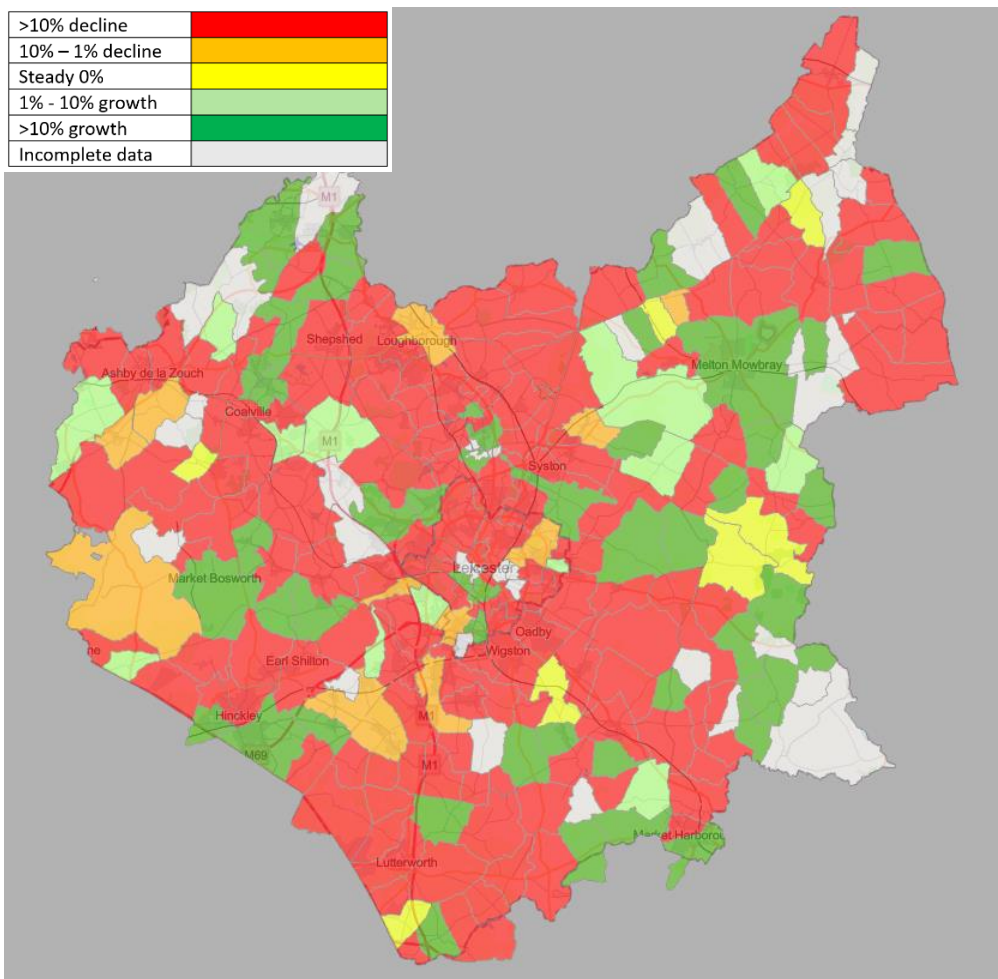
Using the same categories as the UK Census.



It is important to note the ethnic diversity of both our city and county is increasing. Census data shows that in the city of Leicester 40.9% of people identified as White in 2021, compared with 50.5% in 2011. This is ahead of the national trend, where 81.7% of the population now identify as White, compared to 86% in 2011.

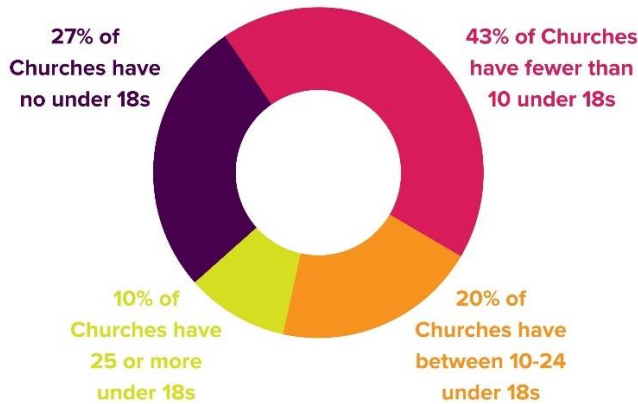
Changes in number of worshippers

Net change in the overall size of worshipping communities, parish by parish, 2018 to 2022.



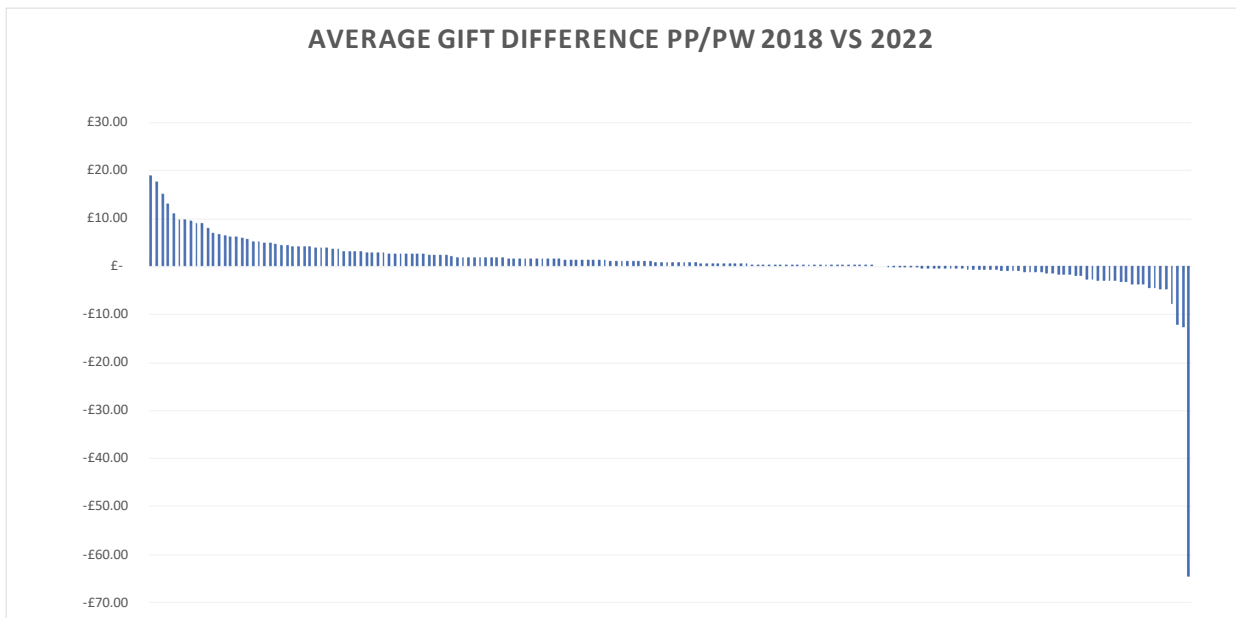
Children and young people in churches

Census data shows there are more than 224,000 people under 20 years old living in the Diocese, yet only 0.4% of these are part of one of the churches of the Diocese



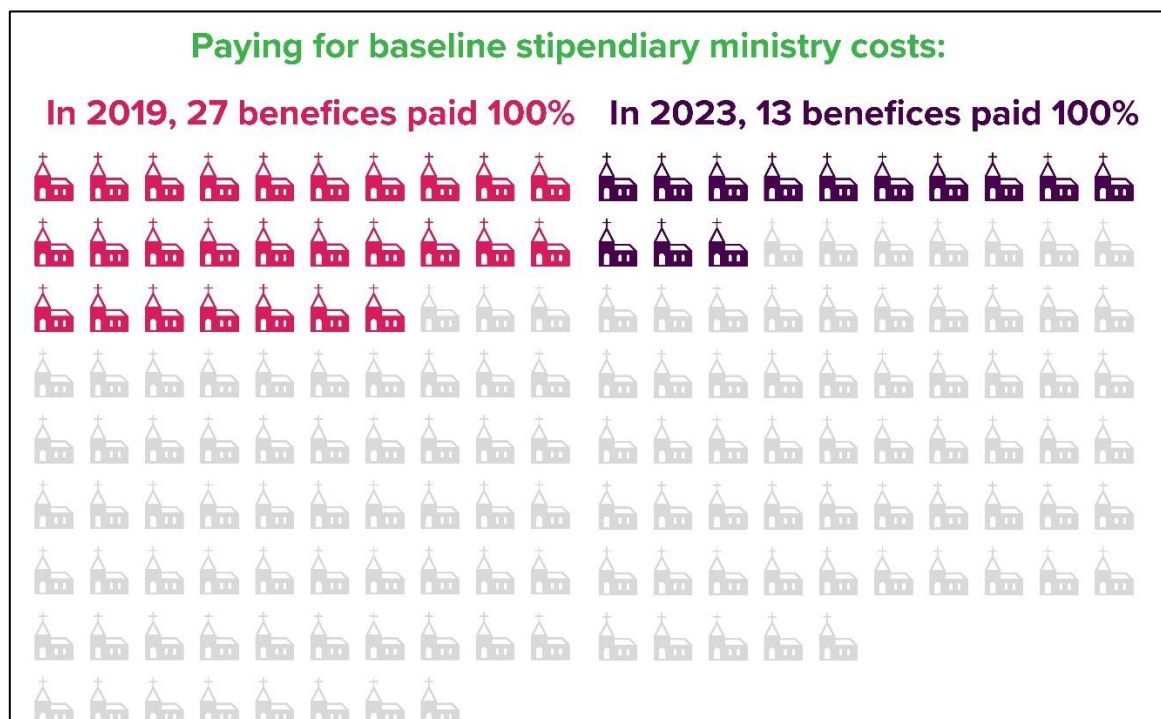
Giving in Parishes

This chart shows average changes in giving per person per week. Each bar represents a church for which data was available. The amount is the actual amount given, i.e. it does not take inflation into account (which for the same time period totalled 15%). As detailed in section 3, the total number of givers over the same period decreased from 9,600 to 7,600 people, though increases in individual giving, other income and reducing costs meant parishes made a combined surplus over the same period of £3.1m net.



Benefices covering the cost of ministry

This shows how many benefices were covering the cost of their baseline stipendiary ministry costs through their Parish Contribution (i.e. stipend, National Insurance, pension and housing, excluding curates, their share of diocesan support, operations or training of lay or ordained ministers – in 2023 this was £58,553 per a full-time stipendiary clergyperson). N.B. Cathedral ministry costs are not included as not paid for by the diocese.



This excludes any parishes that had stipendiary ministry in place in these previous years but were in vacancy in 2023, thereby mitigating any potential negative impact of vacancy on Parish Contributions

3. Key challenges

Listening deeply to and learning from one another's experiences and contexts, which is both grounded in data and brought to life in anecdote, is at the heart of our diocesan culture and practice. In Spring 2021, a diocesan wide listening process for Shaped by God Together, which led to the agreement to form Minster Communities, provided space for over 400 intentional conversations on the future of mission and ministry across the full range of diocesan contexts, eliciting over 80,000 words of feedback from participants. These were robustly analysed and continue to significantly inform much of this strategy. They in turn are being brought further to life by the Minister Community formation process, which invites each context to look at its stories, data, opportunities and challenges so as to discern their preferred and promised future.

Alongside this, in January 2024, almost a hundred people from the six main diocesan decision-making bodies, such as Diocesan Synod, gathered to inform this next phase of strategy development. They worked through a lengthy workbook, offering further feedback which has significantly shaped this strategy. A further dynamic, as highlighted by covid, are challenges, as yet unknown, which will impact us in the coming decade, and being agile enough to respond.

Taken together, with the summary of data presented in section 1 and the ongoing listening that the Bishop's Leadership Team engages with as part of its normal day-to-day ministry, these highlight some key missional, people and financial challenges which this strategy seeks to address:

Missional

Alongside much effective and transformative mission and ministry, the listening and data highlights some significant challenges. As the maps in section 1 highlight, significantly more churches have declined in size between 2018 and 2022 than have grown, with the overall size of worshipping



communities across the Diocese falling from 18,200 in 2018 to 14,500 in 2022 (20% fall in five years). The rate of numerical decline is steeper in all measures of average Sunday and weekly attendance in under 18s, adults and as a whole. The Diocese of Leicester is not alone in this - with the average age of an Anglican in England rising from 39 in 1980 to late 60s today, such a change in age profile, whilst the wisdom of the years brings many blessings, also has inevitable consequences for the size of worshipping communities, lay leadership and giving. The extended Covid-19 lockdown in Leicester has no doubt also had a significant impact, although the long term trajectory indicates it has affected the pace of change more than its overall direction.

Amongst new churches, for example, in our Resourcing Church programme, significant numerical growth has been seen in fresh expressions of Church, church plants and 'grafts' into neighbouring parishes, alongside the rate of decline within the original 'sending' communities being noticeably less than in the Diocese as a whole.

As shown in section 1, a very small proportion of children and young people in our county and city are part of an Anglican worshipping community, although a significantly greater proportion are part of a Church of England school, with diocesan schools responsible for educating 1 in 7 of all school children in Leicestershire and Leicester.

People

Many churches express a lack of volunteers (as reflected in a 40% drop in volunteering in wider society over recent years and generational changes in patterns of volunteering), leadership capacity and/or a shortage of clergy, and challenges around clergy wellbeing as having a significant impact on mission and ministry. A growing number of lay leaders no longer feel able to serve in key roles within their church having done so faithfully for many years; often with no one to pass the baton on to.

Recent research by the diocesan Lay Ministry Council underscored the importance and challenge in releasing lay people into ministry, alongside providing sufficient support and pastoral supervision. This is coupled with our belief that vocation is Monday to Sunday, to be lived out in the places we work, play and study, as well as in more overtly church contexts. The lack of people often means we struggle to focus on the things to which we feel called to focus.

This is set in the context of the Church being called to be a community of reconciliation, to show the world both the gift of diversity and the gift of unity as a reflection of the God we worship. Conflict can be a sign of passion but also be destructive. Collaborative working is often hard, especially in contexts where leaders are used more autonomous patterns of ministry, and teams ministering across different leadership styles and theological and contextual differences.

The Intercultural Worshipping Communities programme gives signs for hope, for example in the significant proportion of all diocesan confirmations in recent years being amongst people from the Global Majority Heritage. That said, worshipping communities do not yet represent the communities they serve in almost all demographics.

Financial

Our historic assets and reserves, held both locally and by the Diocese as a whole, are considerably more than the vast majority of dioceses across the world. Yet, we face a diocesan structural deficit which, without significant and urgent action, will lead us to be technically bankrupt in around five years.

As the data at section 1 highlights, most individual givers are giving increasingly generously and sacrificially to churches, even in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, with the average giving per week across the Diocese increasing from £11 in 2018 to £11.50 in 2022. At the same time the total number of regular givers has fallen by 2,000 people (to 7,600) during the same period. Such a fall is indicative of the Church of England as a whole (30% reduction in regular givers since



2013). This has meant total regular (i.e. planned) giving in parishes has steadily fallen from £5.1m in 2018 to £4.6m in 2022.

This in turn has led to continued, real term falls in Parish Contribution. If Parish Contributions increases had only matched inflation since 2014 (i.e. no real terms increases), that would have eliminated almost all of the £2.6m diocesan structural deficit which now causes us to face some hard decisions (as discussed in section 6). As shown in section 1, in 2023 only 13 benefices covered the cost of direct ministry received (comprising 14% of parishes). This is a fall from 27 benefices (or 43% of parishes) in 2019. Over the same period savings in costs, reductions in Parish Contributions and income from other sources meant the average amount of reserves held has increased. In 2022 parishes of the diocese reported a combined overall surplus of £900,000, and since 2018 combined annual parish surpluses have totalled £3.1m.

These missional, people and financial challenges are not silo-ed, however, with significant overlap between them. For example, the listening and consultation exercises, and the raw data, underscores how church buildings are both a beloved sign and enabler of local missional presence, part of our inheritance as the Church of England and a key tool in addressing our responsibilities to grow as eco-communities being better stewards of God's creation, and, at the same time, congregations are finding them increasingly hard to maintain. Church buildings, like many areas of our life, are a challenge that stretches across missional, people and financial categories, with all three needing to be addressed to support a viable, effective and sustainable church building for many years to come.

The impact of closing a church building is felt deeply within a community, such decisions often take many years of consultation (also requiring significant diocesan support) and are therefore nearly always at the instigation of the Parish community. Of secondary, but not entirely insignificant, impact, is the financial cost to the Diocese with liability for legally required essential maintenance and insurance passing to the Diocese after a building is legally closed for public worship. Analysis indicates if, for example, 20 church buildings are closed over the next 10 years the additional cost to the Diocese would be in the region of £1.4m to £1.6m, with likely sales based on previous experience only reaching a total £300,000, potentially further increasing our deficit.

Of the 306 church buildings open for worship, 91% are listed. A total of 3 church buildings have closed for public worship over the last 12 years, with 34 currently on Historic England's Risk Register. In total, over £22m of repairs are outstanding, alongside a number of churches developing significant plans for updating facilities to better serve the community in mission.

4. Realising the vision whilst addressing the challenges

As summarised on the 'Change on a Page', our approach to realising our calling whilst addressing significant missional, people and financial challenges comes in two parts as outlined below.

Flowing through and supporting these two parts are the prayer and spiritual practices that keep us and our communities focused on God and on God's Kingdom. As we face the challenge of change that comes with the implementation of this strategy, prayer-filled lives will help us discern, give us resilience, draw us together, remind us who we are, change the spiritual climate around us and keep us in touch with God's love for us and for others.

Strategic Priorities These form the basis of our future missional priorities. Each Strategic Priority has clear leadership (see section 7: Readiness for Change) and an agreed strategic plan (summaries in appendix A-E).

It is not expected every congregation will embody all *five strategic priorities*, but by working in partnership across Minster Communities all five will form a significant part of our shared response to the *Three Key Questions* across the Diocese as a whole.



The gold is often in the interrelationship between them. For example, a parish without many younger disciples might decide to better serve its parishioners by developing a new worshipping community focused on the needs of young people in the context of a church school which contains students from many different cultures, many of whom see the climate emergency as such an existential crisis that a new church that doesn't take its climate responsibilities seriously isn't one they would like to be part of.

Such an example, which is one of many possibles, draws on all *five Strategic Priorities* and would not be possible in a silo based approach. Therefore to build on close existing working practices and structures, section 7 and Appendix I details not just how the day to day implementation of our strategic priority plans will work but pays special attention to programme wider support for the integration of each part of the overall plan.

Foundations

To be able to answer the *Three Key Questions* effectively and fruitfully focus on the *five Strategic Priorities*, this strategy seeks to address robustly the key missional, people and financial challenges outlined above.

In doing this we have developed plans in six significant areas both of mitigation but also of opportunity and calling. These foundations are not ends in themselves, but critical components in creating and cultivating the right environment for churches and communities to flourish.

Appendices A-E (Strategic Priorities) and G (Foundations) include more detail of *how* action plans help us work towards what God is calling. What follows is a brief *summary* of the principles and an overview of the thinking in each. As per the Change on a Page, *Strategic Priorities* are shown in purple, *Foundations* in pink.

Intergenerational Communities in 2034

We are called to see vibrant, accessible worshipping communities where young and old come together in discipleship, prayer and praise. Churches and schools work in close partnership, reaching out to households in their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are praying, planning and ministering to see double the number of children and young people as disciples of Jesus Christ

Growing Faith is our response to both the Diocesan intergenerational community priority and national vision and strategy bold outcomes.

Growing Faith seeks to put children, young people, and families (CYF) instinctively at the heart of all the mission and ministry of the Church, by connecting the spheres of church, school, and household, and intentionally bringing generations together in mutual discipleship (intergenerational).

We have a vision to see a flourishing CYF ministry within reach of every child and young person (CYP) in the Diocese of Leicester, leading to a doubling of the number of children and young people as disciples, as we seek to become a church which fully represents the communities we serve in both age and diversity, mirroring the image of the world around us.

This means supporting Minster Communities and the Cathedral to:

- Move from *Multigenerational* or *Cross-generational* communities to *Intergenerational* communities where CYP have voice and agency and there is mutual discipleship;



- Recognise whilst there is not a 'one size fits all' model for flourishing CYF ministry, there are common habits that if embedded lead to effective CYF mission and ministry. These start in **Prayer**: **P**rioritise well, **R**esource intentionally, **A**dapt our approach to fit the context and involve everyone (**Y**ou);
- Listen well to the voice of children and young people, especially in partnership with schools (building on the data in sections 1 and 3)

Through shared planning, adapted for context and supported by the Diocesan Investment Proposal, in God's grace, we expect fruit in all three of the Key Questions: a doubling in the number of children and young people as disciples of Jesus (numbers), through the growth of flourishing CYF ministries **within reach** of every child and young person (depth), supported by new volunteers and practitioners, and strategic CYF leadership in each Minster Community (loving service). **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)
- **Invitational** – 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)

This will be realised by supporting each Minster Community to develop a plan specific to their context that identifies what they already have and what they need. We hope to secure national funding to support Growing Faith work in Minster Communities over the coming years. This may include funding for Growing Faith ministry roles, which may be lay or ordained (as per the Minster Community framework agreed by Diocesan Synod). Further detail can be found in Appendix A.

Intercultural Communities in 2034

We are called to see worshipping communities across the diocese where UKME/GMH 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

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.

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 diocese² 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

² Inc separately the Cathedral



dominant cultural assumptions of whiteness and the way it continues to have a negative impact on those of UKME/GMH heritage³. One of the outputs has been a recent successful application to the national Racial Justice Unit for funding for the creation of the post of Director for Racial Justice. This will allow more energy and resources to be dedicated to this area of work going forward and the implementation of DRES.

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

Our theory of change in addressing these challenges is built upon the proven and successful models the IWC project has employed: investment in a historically under resourced area of mission and ministry has led to growth. The change detailed in Appendix B is dependent on continued central capacity to resource and equip mission, ministry and vocational development. Central capacity in turn supports the intercultural champion in each Minster Community, alongside the significant proposed investment in training in areas such as cross-cultural evangelism, intercultural preaching or culturally competent leadership. Done well this will naturally lead to the numerical growth envisaged.

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 UKME/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.

A detailed plan outlining both sustainability, outcomes and measures is detailed in Appendix B with a summary in section 2 above. It includes a mixture of lead and lag indicators and incorporates success measures from both the IWC Project and Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy.

New Communities in 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.

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 chose to

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



cease as demographics change, buildings cease 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, service and relevance as it is about a simple growth in numbers. It is about ensuring we have a worshipping community accessible to every person in the diocese – all 1,080,900 people, including developing a worshipping community within the physical bounds of every housing estate in the diocese where there is not currently one. What *accessible* means for our context is further defined in Appendix C and is developed in partnership with the intercultural and intergenerational priorities.

In 2010 the diocese embarked on a journey which 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**. At the end of the initial five-year SDF funded project in 2019, 75 current fresh expressions of Church were identified as being 'fully church' (with many more on the way), collectively comprising 1 in 4 of all worshippers in the Diocese.

This was further developed by the **resourcing church project, which saw six of our larger churches/teams** 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. This has seen almost 40 new worshipping communities form or be on the way to forming, many larger church plants or grafts alongside some fresh expressions of Church. The plan at Appendix C seeks to further embed the most missionally and financially sustainable of these alongside drawing on learning as part of this and the **IWC project** around the importance of fostering creativity, generosity and entrepreneurial leadership.

Building on this and seeking to further embed this envisioned step change as part of the diocesan strategy, 2023 saw the launch of **Catalyst** as a learning, support and mentoring community. Over several years lay church planters journey together through a learning pathway. The strategic plan seeks to both further develop this as a diocesan wide resource for the coming decade and further develop the emerging network of lay church planters focused around the eco-church priority.

As this priority will now be predominantly developed through Minister Communities, the approach detailed further in the Appendix **support and enables teams in Minister Communities to further develop new communities, with on average four new worshipping communities forming over the next ten years per a Minister Community** (the exact number and form specific to each Minister Community to be discerned as part of that Minister Community's formation process).

Integration across the Strategic Priorities is key with 100 new worshipping communities envisioned across new, intergenerational (including a swathe of school orientated/based worshipping communities), intercultural and eco priorities. This includes continuing to pay close attention to both new housebuilding and reviewing any housing estates without a worshipping community physically meeting within its bounds as part of the Minister Community formation process.

Eco-Communities in 2034

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 the Cathedral) which recognises and embodies caring for and enjoying 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 responsibility to all creation
- **Justice** to recognise the global effect of the environmental crisis and to advocate for those most affected by climate breakdown

The overall goal is to become a Gold-Eco Diocese by the end of 2034 (Silver by end of 2028 and originally Bronze by end of 2024, although we are ahead of schedule and this was awarded in April 2024). An Eco-Church award is not the goal in itself but gives an established mechanism for conversations and action across parishes, schools and diocesan staff in the areas of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ➤ Individual Eco Church awards | ➤ Training and development |
| ➤ Schools and education | ➤ St Martins House |
| ➤ Carbon reduction (including work towards supporting the Church of England's commitment to be Net Zero by 2030) | ➤ Finance and investments |
| ➤ Ownership and Policy | ➤ Collaboration with community partners |
| | ➤ Celebrating Creation |
| | ➤ Land |

Our strategic plan builds on and seeks to deliver the November 2019 Diocesan Synod commitment to becoming an Eco-Diocese, the December 2021 adoption of a diocesan environment policy and the March 2024 Net Zero Carbon Action Plan. It involves triaging support to make the most difference, for example initially working more with the 20% of churches who collectively contribute to over 50% of carbon emissions. It can be found at Appendix D.

Reconciling Communities in 2034

We are called to see the highest degree of communion within and between our worshipping communities, modelling the restoration of relationships with one another, with creation and with God which is the heart of the gospel. We are praying and working for peace and justice in the wider world, paying close attention to ministry with the marginalised, and serving with cultural humility and intelligence

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



encouraging 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

Further details on the three sections above are in Appendix E.

The Vocations and Leadership Foundation, summarised below and detailed in Appendix G envisages significant joined up work across the Reconciling Communities Strategic Priority and the Vocations and Leadership Foundation around developing greater resilience both in individual leaders and across communities.

Turning to the six Foundations which support all five *Strategic Priorities* and *Three Key Questions*:

Vocations and Leadership

Our plans:

- enable the children of God to live out their faith in the whole of life
- support vocations to authorised ministry to grow in numbers and diversity, especially those leading local church communities
- create the environment for the ministry of all to flourish

Appendix G contains a summary of the action plan for discerning, training, developing, and supporting sufficient leaders to lead and support Minster Communities, that can discern the *Three Key Questions*, and deliver the outcomes associated with these and the *five Strategic Priorities* of the diocese. It also contains a summary of the analysis of 'the leadership need' to help both existing worshipping communities thrive and new communities form and grow with appropriate pastoral, missional and sacramental leadership. It should be read in conjunction with the People Plan at section 6. The ministry of all God's people to live out faith in the world emerges from a deepening life in God supported by spiritual practices grown in worshipping communities.

Ministry is mutual and collaborative; all ministries are valued equally; and the local worshipping community 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. Our work with vocations seeks to honour both the paradigm shifts articulated in the Church of England report *Setting God's People Free*. Namely, the shift in focus from ordained to lay and ordained and the shift from predominantly considering lay ministry in a church setting to also encouraging and valuing lay ministry Monday to Sunday as an essential expression of discipleship and a critical part of responding to our missional calling.

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 Ministers 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**

Safeguarding

Our plans:

- help us live as a safer church through developing culture and practice as a core part of Gospel
- realise the diocesan safeguarding strategy, along with wider national church plans towards greater independence

The Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group adopted a five year strategy in June 2023. The strategy sets out the context in which safeguarding provision takes place and the vision of what a safe church looks like. Strategic priorities are identified and are supported by a business plan for each year of the strategy period.

The Diocese of Leicester and Leicester Cathedral follow the Church of England safeguarding policy, Promoting A Safer Church and the Safeguarding Strategy builds on the five foundations and six core principles contained in it, which can be found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>

Our vision is that all worshipping communities in the Diocese of Leicester will be safe places where people can flourish. The Diocese and Cathedral have decided to use as strategic priorities the five standards identified by the National Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework, which are as follows:

- Prevention
- Culture, Leadership and Capacity
- Recognising, assessing and managing risk
- Victims and Survivors
- Learning, Supervision and Support

The strategy is supported by a business plan which is informed by the action plans resulting from the local and national Past Cases Review 2 reports and by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommendations.

It should be noted that the Safeguarding Strategy was adopted prior to the Wilkinson and Jay Reports which appear likely to bring significant change to safeguarding provision in the Church of England. The strategy is therefore subject to change in the light of these developments.

Greater detail of the 2022-27 strategic priorities for Safeguarding can be found in Appendix Gii



Minster Communities

Our plans:

- support the ongoing formation of Minister Communities so to help churches better address questions of missional impact, sustainability and well being
- help resource under-resourced Strategic Priorities within Minister Communities

Minster Communities are geographical groups of parish churches, fresh expressions of church and schools who work together in mission and are led by a diverse ministry team of ordained and lay ministers. Following an extensive diocesan-wide listening exercise, the framework was approved by Diocesan Synod in October 2021 and is now being rolled out across the Diocese. The current timetable plans for all churches to have started the process by the Minster Community formation process by the end of 2024.

What are the reasons behind the move to Minster Communities?

- The world around us and the society we live in has changed significantly over recent years and continues to change. We need to continually learn how God is reshaping us to engage with the changing world, as we live out our faith and seek to grow in numbers of disciples, depth of discipleship and loving service of the world
- We are seeking to prioritise our work with children, young people and families, especially through partnership with our schools
- The pastoral burden on clergy, lay ministers and church officers is better and more efficiently addressed by working more collaboratively and with the support of colleagues
- The wellbeing of clergy, lay ministers, church officers and volunteers. We have heard time and time again that we cannot continue as we are, and simply stretch our resources ever thinner.
- Our financial challenges are significant
- In short, it was discerned as the most effective way of churches and schools relating together in addressing the missional, financial and people challenges outlined in Section 3.

What will Minster Communities achieve?

The framework includes a clear prioritisation of work with children, young people and families. This will be resourced through the shift to at least one quarter of paid ministry roles across the diocese being focused on Growing Faith ministry, as outlined in the Intergenerational Strategic Priority action plan and the People Plan in Section 6. The process of forming Minster Communities is itself a key mechanism through which we equip parishes to develop and implement their local missional plans. This is supported by a renewed Diocesan Leadership Programme which has started training 400 lay and ordained leaders at a foundational level. 80 of these will receive a second stage of training at greater depth and higher skill level (see the Vocations & Leadership Foundation).

The process of forming Minster Communities involves every church undertaking a self-review of their missional health and practical challenges (through our Storyboards and Conversation Prompts tools). This is supported by the provision of data such as in Section 1. Within 6 months of formation, the Minster Community develops a coherent mission plan, covering their local geography, to strengthen and revitalise the mission of existing churches as well as explore opportunities for the new. This discernment and formation process feeds directly into the specific missional design and Diocesan Investment Proposal as outlined in the appendices H & N and accompanying Gantt chart indicating the timetable for all Minster Communities to be formed.

How are Minster Communities forming?

Our approach combines the rigours and good practice of organisational change alongside Christian discernment and community development. As a process of Christian discernment, the model we use is based on an understanding of working in complexity. We consider where we are now, whilst asking “What is possible from here?”. The conversation about possibilities is held within the boundaries of our **Three Key Questions** and **five Strategic Priorities**, and those of available people, finance and buildings. This enables each church to be engaged in facilitated conversation



to discern, with significant local agency, how diocesan strategy will be applied in each context. The different phases of the Minister Community formation process intentionally give space to address many of the questions raised in Appendix A-E and G. Appendix Giii gives a timetable for Minister Community formation and an overview of the formation process.⁴

We continue to review the formation process, making refinements to the process informed by learning. In particular we are currently reviewing how to ensure that the work needed to complete each part of the Diocesan Investment Proposal is sufficiently built into the Minister Community formation process so parishes engage in one coherent process rather than what might feel like two parallel processes. This work will be complete during 2024.

Finance

Our plans:

- support each Minister Community and Parish to work towards financial sustainability
- help us use Lowest Income Communities Funding impactfully, for the purposes intended and with local agency for areas of financial deprivation
- help us work towards a balanced and strategically aligned diocesan budget

This strategy is only possible if financial resources necessary can be prioritised and released to help fulfill its aims. This means our expenditure must match our income to avoid unsustainable finances and to maintain a stable and sufficient level of free or unrestricted reserves.

As outlined in Section 6, this involves eliminating the structural deficit through a combination of making hard decisions to reduce expenditure; increasing income through supporting parishes and Minister Communities to cover the cost of the ministry received and adapting our investments so as to maximise income. The plan works to reduce the structural deficit from £2.5m to £0 by 2028, through a staged approach to reducing expenditure and increasing income.

Alongside this whilst additional support through a Diocesan Investment Proposal cannot be used to directly address the deficit, a plan to help us work towards diocesan wide financial sustainability is an essential part in seeking additional investment from the national church.

See also Appendix H for a summary of the new Lowest Income Communities Funding policy, agreed in summer 2023. This was developed as part of Minister Community formation to ensure resources received for those areas of significant financial deprivation are wholly spent by the communities for which they are intended. It will be implemented as Minister Communities form and the financial deficit is addressed.

Church Buildings

Our plans mean

- Each worshipping community within a Minister Community is enabled in discerning a shared and realistic understanding and plan for their building's future

Church buildings serve as a place for worship, ministry and outreach in mission, a witness to God's presence and as a focal point for local communities. Church buildings are recognised and valued as sacred spaces beloved and prayed in by pilgrims, heritage lovers and school groups as well as by their congregations.

⁴ The Cathedral is not participating in the process with a view to being in a Minister Community, but seeks to follow similar patterns of ministry and be accountable to the *Three Key Questions* and five *Strategic Priorities* like everyone else



All buildings decay and need repair and keeping church buildings in a good state of repair can be very challenging. 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.

We are aware of a growing number of churches who are facing pressing questions about the immediate viability of their building for various reasons which may relate to the condition of the building, the lack of people to care for it, or the scale and cost of repairs. It is essential that facing these issues forms part 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. The under-resourced Church Buildings Team support and accompany PCCs through this wide range of repair, maintenance and development processes, tailored to local need.

There are, then, three key challenges with church buildings:

1. Enabling them to be sustainable bases for worship and mission in 21st Century
2. Ongoing challenge of maintaining and repairing buildings
3. Questions over the viability of the church building

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 above include legal processes which need to be fulfilled by the central support team. Designated staff are required by statute to fulfil these functions.

Alongside identifying principles to frame the strategy (available on request), as part of the strategy development a small group focused on church buildings have identified the following priorities for our work:

- 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.



Diocesan Support and Governance

Our plans:

- ensure diocesan support for churches is aligned with this strategic plan and the needs related to it
- support effective governance at each level of church life
- help prioritise what is possible within the resource constraints that exist

As part of the Shaped by God Together discernment process across 2020 and 2021 a series of principles for Support for Ministry were developed. These have continued to inform thinking, around what kind of diocesan support is needed, although circumstances at the time did not allow for these to be fully developed into plans. During the first half of 2024, a small group has updated and developed these principles for where we now find ourselves as a diocese and in support of this overall strategy. These are documented in Appendix G.

They note that 'Diocesan Support' includes 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, supporting the ministry of the Bishop(s), playing our part in the national church, meeting the essential costs arising from the existence of the diocese as an organisation and supporting certain ministries which are not parish-based but which are most appropriately organised from a diocesan base.

The principles give a framework to make resource allocation decisions, mindful of agreement by Diocesan Trustees and the Bishop's Leadership Team in Autumn 2023 as part of this strategy development process that "Any deficit not met by increased Parish Contributions needs to be addressed by further cuts in expenditure. Cuts in expenditure between stipendiary clergy (as they naturally move on) and diocesan paid for support staff will be in proportion to each other (with 2020 as the base year) whilst mindful of our statutory and equivalent responsibilities."

Given that, the diocese will in future only fund mandatory, essential or strategic roles. Many of the strategic roles will be time limited, for which we aim to attract external funding. As some support previously offered by paid staff is, in future, likely to be offered by volunteers or those on secondment, we will need to develop additional skills in managing and supporting those fulfilling this ministry accordingly.

In seeking to offset some of the cost of providing support for parishes, we will continue to take a proactive approach to maximising revenues from trading operations of St Martins House and St Martins Lodge. Plans are in the process of being enacted to further develop these revenues and reduce operating costs. These will be kept under close review so as to ensure that they best support our overall strategic priorities.

As well as Diocesan Support, this foundation also includes supporting effective diocesan governance. Further details of a diocesan governance review and how the implementation of its recommendations will enable more effective implementation and monitoring this strategy are detailed in section 7.

5. The People Plan: Who is needed and when?

The Shape of Ministry in Minster Communities

Each of our Minster Communities will be led and served by a ministry team. This will consist of both lay and ordained ministers, in a variety of stipendiary/paid and self-supporting/voluntary roles. All Minster Communities will need an Oversight Minister and a Growing Faith Minister. Every church will have a named Focal Minister, or in instances where no Focal Minister can be identified, a Designated Community Liaison. The exact number and type of other roles within each Minster Community will be discerned and decided within the Minster Community. The number of roles that



are stipendiary or paid will be determined by the Minster Community's ability cover the cost of those roles through Parish Contributions, and any Lowest Income Communities Funding allocation. We are hoping that the national church will invest in our diocese to support the establishment of Growing Faith roles in our Minster Communities.

Detailed information about ministry roles in Minster Communities is available here: [The Future Shape of Ministry – Ministry Roles within a Minster Community](#)

People in ministry – summary of future needs

Across all main roles within Minster Communities, some of the key gifts and skills needed are:

- Spiritual leadership of others in community
- Collaborative missional leadership
- Enabling the ministry of others
- Ability to lead through practical and cultural change

Once formed, we will have 20 – 25 Minster Communities across the Diocese. Our working assumption for planning purposes is 22. Each Minster Community will need

Core roles of: Oversight Minister

Growing Faith Minister

Mission Enabler

Operations Lead

In addition: Associate Ministers as discerned and developed locally, with diocesan training and Bishop's license.

House for Duty and self-supporting ordained ministers.

Focal Ministers as discerned and developed locally. Some of those in the roles described above may act as Focal Ministers for one or more churches.

Locally Authorised Ministers as discerned and developed locally.

Across the diocese we also plan for 12 Curates (total at any one time).

Relevant assumptions

Based on diocesan-wide financial modelling of Parish Contributions, we are planning for core DBF to fund:

65 stipendiary roles (including curates)

Up to 12 additional posts funded through Lowest Income Communities Funding.

These figures are informed by realistic assumptions including projections for Parish Contributions and inflation.

Of the available diocesan stipends, we will prioritise Oversight Ministers and Growing Faith Ministers for each Minster Community. We hope that national funding will enable us to establish the Growing Faith roles as Minster Communities form, such that they are embedded as core diocesan funded roles within 10 years.

Lowest Income Communities Funding (LInC) will be used according to the LInC Funding policy, summarised in appendix H.



What we have now (May 2024)

Stipendiary Clergy

95 diocesan funded stipendiary roles (including curates).
LInC funding currently supports the cost of 18 of these roles.

6 SDF funded stipendiary roles.

House for Duty and Self-Supporting Clergy

4 House for Duty roles

19 self-supporting clergy, 6 of whom are curates

Licensed Lay Ministers

207 licensed lay ministers

15 individuals within the discernment and training process

Locally Authorised Ministers

We can't provide accurate data on the numbers of Locally Authorised Ministers as they are being discerned and authorised at parish level and this is a developing role. The best estimate would be about 25 currently. We will seek to monitor numbers of Locally Authorised Ministers in future by utilising data that is already recorded, for example safeguarding training records.

How to get to where we need to be

Detailed work is currently underway regarding how we transition to ministry within Minister Communities, within our available resources. This includes work on relevant approaches and principles to guide appointments, vocational discernment support, ministerial development and training, and sustainability planning for current Strategic Development Fund (SDF) funded work.

Chaplaincies

We commit to continuing to support local institutions in the provision of chaplaincy. This includes chaplaincy in healthcare, prisons, emergency services, education.

Diocesan support team

A series of guiding principles for principles for the provision of diocesan support are summarised on page 24 and detailed in Appendix G. This includes a commitment that in future only mandatory, essential or strategic roles will be funded, with many of the strategic roles being time limited and for which we aim to attract external funding.

6. The Financial Sustainability Plan

The financial sustainability part of the strategy aims to provide the financial resources necessary to allow the 10-year Diocesan Strategy to be fulfilled. This means the expenditure must match the income to avoid unsustainable finances and to maintain a stable and sufficient level of free or unrestricted Reserves.

As part of the strategy development process, a finance working group have developed these financial principles to focus strategic development and multi-year budgeting:

- 1) To work towards a balanced budget each year and therefore eliminate the structural deficit



- 2) To form Minster Communities that are financially sustainable in themselves through raising enough Parish Contribution to at least fully cover the direct cost of ministry
- 3) To maintain a safe minimum level of Free Reserves
- 4) To increase the current investment yield on investments and assets including Glebe and other investment assets
- 5) To ensure expenditure is relevant to the strategic aims of the 10-year Diocesan Strategy
- 6) To review the operations and costs within and of St Martins House
- 7) To address the future liabilities of closed churches.
- 8) To support the changing patterns of ministry

A sustainable, balanced budget

We are working through plans to eliminate the structural deficit such that our annual budget is sustainable. This will ensure we are not reliant on the sale of historical assets and can maintain an appropriate level of free reserves. This is being achieved through a combination of seeking to increase income (Parish Contributions, increasing investment yields through changes in asset portfolio holdings and increasing revenues through St Martins House trading operations) alongside decreasing expenditure (reductions in numbers of stipendiary clergy and DBF expenditure stopped in non-core strategy areas).

We will seek financial investment from the national church to support the delivery of specific aspects of our diocesan strategy. Any such funding sought will be carefully budgeted, managed and have a sustainability plan embedded from the beginning. We will only apply for national funding for roles, whether lay or ordained, where we are confident that they will be fully sustainable when the funding ends. This would mean that either the role can be sustained through increased Parish Contributions, or that the role is designed to be time-limited and the work is completed within the funding period.

For specific details on sustainability of the first part of the Diocesan Investment Proposal (Intergenerational), see Appendix A. For further details of how priorities for Diocesan Support and Governance will be determined see Appendix G.

To maintain a minimum level of Free Reserves

Free Reserves are those Reserves that can be used as the diocese wishes. The level of Free Reserves has fallen since 2019 and it must be stabilized before a minimum level is reached.

The minimum level of Free Reserves should be at least 1 year of normal expenditure. This is higher than a lot of charities or not for profit organisations due to the inflexibility of a large part of the diocesan cost base including clergy stipends and statutory central and registrar charges. 1 years' worth of expenditure and therefore the minimum Free Reserve level is approximately £13-£15M by 2028 taking into account likely inflation. This is why the deficit reduction targets have been set as shown below:

Year	Budget	Actual	Free Reserves
2019	-0.3m	-1.2m	24.4m
2020	-0.2m	-2.6m	22.1m
2021	-1.2m	-1.8m	22.0m
2022	-1.6m	-1.9m	18.9m
2023	-£2.46m	-2.3m	19.9m
2024	-£2.15m*	-	17.7m
2025	-£1.5m	-	16.2m
2026	-£1m	-	15.2m



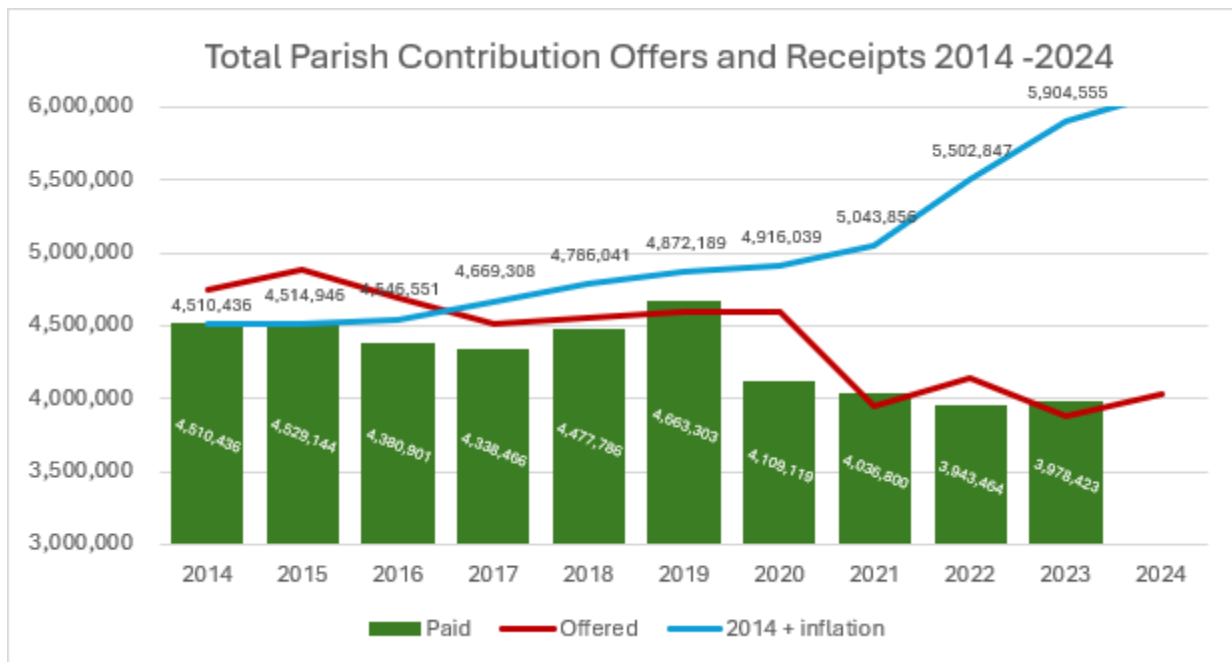
2027	-£0.5m	-	14.7m
2028	£0	-	14.7m

*inc one off savings

To support Increases in Parish Contributions

The Minster Community framework adopted by the diocese means that the shape of ministry roles will be different. Each Minster Community will have a ministry team that includes both lay and ordained ministers, and a mixture of stipendiary/paid and self-supporting/voluntary roles. As Minster Communities form, the pattern of deployment, how many roles and where, will change. The shape and size of a Minster Community ministry team will be consistent with that Minster Community's ability to financially sustain ministry through Parish Contributions. Those parishes that are amongst the most deprived receive financial support for ministry through national Lowest Income Communities Funding.

Although we began to see an increase in Parish Contributions just prior to the pandemic, Parish Contributions have declined in value and are significantly lower in value now than if they had increased in line with inflation over the last decade.



In order to ensure that ministry provision is financially sustainable now and for the future, Minster Communities need to cover the cost of ministry through Parish Contributions:

- Our minimum expectation is that Minster Communities will cover the cost of their stipendiary ministry.
- We encourage Minster Communities to work towards also contributing to the cost of providing other forms of ministry, including costs associated with self-supporting ordained ministry and licensed lay ministry.
- We hope that Minster Communities will also aspire to contributing towards the cost of training future clergy (ordinands and curates).

We are reshaping the Parish Contribution system to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This means that it will enable the costs of providing ministry within a Minster Community to be met through shared responsibility and collaboration across the churches of that Minster Community. We will seek to resource and support Minster Communities and their ministry teams in this through:



- Provision of resources such as financial data and costings
- Advice on good practice for generous giving and financial management,
- Monitoring of Parish Contribution payments and early interventions of support and challenge as appropriate

The level of support available to parishes will be commensurate with the capacity of the diocesan support team.

To review the operations and costs within St Martins House (SMH)

St Martins House is an important part of diocesan life and mission. It is far more than an HQ for Diocesan staff. It hosts the Cathedral staff, holds meetings for the wider diocese and parishes, runs a Christian bookshop and runs activities to generate income.

However, due to its diverse use, we have to review how it can best operate to effectively maximise both net income generation, the support for mission and ministry across the diocese and its outreach work. Further details of this review are included in the Diocesan Support and Governance Foundation.

Increasing Investment yields

A large portion of assets used to provide investment income for the diocese is in the form of Glebe agricultural land. This percentage of land to other assets is far higher than most other dioceses and also far higher than the allocation of assets held by the Church Commissioners.

Yearly income yields for agricultural land are very low compared to investments like shares, bonds or even cash currently. Whilst capital values and returns can be large especially if land is sold for development, this is uncertain and selling land for development has a long lead time and therefore impossible to strategically plan in terms of a wider funding of the diocese.

Therefore, the Diocese Board of Finance has agreed to proactively look to sell glebe land to convert agricultural land assets into better income yielding assets. This will take time and be necessary to phase to obtain the best sale prices but a noticeable effect on investment return will take place over the lifetime of this strategy.

It is hard to ascertain exactly what future positive impact this will have on cutting the deficit, but the diocese plans to sell on average £3m of low yielding assets / excess houses per annum over the next five years. Whilst initially about half of the proceeds will have to go to fund the deficit, over half will be reinvested in higher yielding income returns. This should increase like for like investment returns by around 3% and therefore this level of sales of low yielding assets give an extra circa £50k income in year rising rapidly to about £600k by year five of the process.

Additionally, work is in hand to adjust our housing portfolio so as to maximise investment income as the diocese will be/is now selling excess houses . This is both to provide funds for better investment yields and also the minimise the diocesan repairs budget.

Ensure expenditure is relevant to our strategic aims

An analysis of all costs is being undertaken and unfortunately hard decisions will have to be taken to cut expenditure in non-core strategy areas. This is essential to reducing and then eliminating the structural deficit.

The future budget setting process will follow a zero-based budgeting strategy where no expenditure is assumed just because it was done in the past. All expenditure will have to be



justified at the point of ask each year and be demonstrably relevant to the strategy. For further details see Appendix Gv.

Further Investment

This long-term financial strategy describes what is prudently affordable within the changes proposed to increase income and, where that is not sufficiently possible to cover the gap, decrease costs. As the chart on Parish Contribution highlights, if Parish Contributions increase to 2014 levels (plus inflation), there would be little to no deficit and the total number of roles within parishes could increase rather than decrease.

Budgetary assumptions include a modest real terms increase in Parish Contributions, but it is hoped that parishes would be able to increase contributions to a level closer to covering the cost of ministry received. If that happens then the overall headcount can be increased accordingly. Similarly, as a diocese we continue to work closely with the national church to see greater apportionment of the Church Commissioner's gain on historic assets released to dioceses to cover deficits. At the time of writing the national funding settlement for 2026-28 is not yet agreed. Any increase in funding would give potential for an increase in the number of stipendiary clergy, paid lay leaders and diocesan support to help fulfil this strategy.

7. Readiness for this change

This strategy is intended as 'everything we do' not 'another thing to do' and so is supported and integrated across the full range of diocesan staff and bodies:

Governance and Risk

To improve our processes and effectiveness, the diocese commissioned a full and thorough externally-led review of governance. Its findings were accepted in full and are in the latter stages of implementation. The headline change replaces the separate Diocesan Board of Finance Trustees and Bishop's Council with a new single Diocesan Trustee body (autumn 2024), thereby mitigating the risk of two overlapping governance bodies insufficiently scrutinising or holding responsibility, including for the strategy and its implementation. At the same time, other related changes, especially related to the Diocesan Racial Equity Strategy, are designed to ensure greater diversity in participation leading to better discernment. These changes put the diocese in a significantly strengthened position to encourage, support and monitor the strategic changes outlined here.

The diocese holds both a diocesan-wide risk register alongside those for each constituent part of this strategy. They are regularly reviewed with mitigations in place.

Engagement and Communication

As previously outlined, much of this strategy makes explicit that which was implicit, and helps us go further and faster in an existing direction rather than making a large tangential change. This approach emerged from a number of diocesan-wide listening and consultation exercises described earlier, including one of the largest ever by a diocese in the Church of England, and has helped build a wider understanding across the diocese of the need for change. This is not taken for granted - listening and learning remains at the core of our diocesan culture.

Alongside this, sits a clear communications framework. Whilst the required cost reduction measures of recent years have reduced the overall provision for Communications, our excellent Communications team have prioritised energies in the most strategic areas which, when taken with robust strategic communications plans, give delivery confidence that what is needed is in place, even if provision is more fragile than in previous years. It is important to reiterate that this document and its related plans whilst intended to be publicly available in a spirit of full transparency are written primarily for those in formal diocesan decision making bodies (e.g. Diocesan Synod), the staff that facilitate these plans and national church partners. The



communications plan outlines how key parts of the strategy are communicated in a way more appropriate for those in parishes, schools, chaplaincies and the wider community.

Thorough Integration alongside Clear Responsibilities

We have learnt from previous Strategic Development Fund (SDF) projects the importance and rhythms of holding both *clarity* of responsibilities and leadership, alongside thorough *integration*. Over a decade ago, a strategic choice was taken in delivering the Fresh Expressions of Church SDF programme to silo support into a designated team. This was effective at ensuring small, fragile new churches were not overwhelmed and so helped them grow more effectively in the early years, but as the programme progressed the lack of full integration with and between other parts of diocesan life inhibited the very growth we were working towards. That learning helped frame the Resourcing Church and then Intercultural Worshipping Communities SDF programmes, both of which were significantly more integrated from day one, whilst maintaining their own clear programme specific responsibilities and leadership.

We propose further building on this experience and learning here. Each **Foundation** and each **Strategic Priority** has a defined diocesan officer(s) with day-to-day responsibility with appropriate support and governance structures. Alongside that clarity of leadership, we intend to develop the integration between priorities and foundations further, given there is one strategy, not eleven separate programmes, and the gold is often found in the overlap of areas. This will be achieved through establishing a new programme board focused on strategic delivery.

Each Strategic Priority has a clear day to day lead, a member of the Bishop's Leadership Team who holds that portfolio and most have a designated supporting council or board. The table below reflects current arrangements, but the newly envisaged integrated group detailed above will require arrangements to be amended as we seek further integration and greater efficiency of working:

Strategic Priority	Day to day lead diocesan officer or equivalent	Existing Supporting Body, Board or Council	Bishop's Leadership Team Portfolio holder(s)
Intergenerational	Matt Long, Youth Engagement & Intergenerational Communities Enabler	Intergenerational Programme Board	Carolyn Lewis, Diocesan Director of Education and Claire Wood, Archdeacon of Loughborough
Intercultural	Jessie Tang, Intercultural Mission and Ministry Director	Intercultural Worshipping Communities Board, and the Racial Equity Unity	Saju Muthalaly, Bishop of Loughborough and Jessie Tang, Intercultural Mission and Ministry Director
New	Michael Broadley and Sami Lindsey (Resourcing Church leaders on p/t secondment with project management support)	Resourcing Churches Programme Board, and Converge	Saju Muthalaly, Bishop of Loughborough
Eco	Jonathan Kerry, Diocesan Secretary and CEO, and Richard Worsfold, Archdeacon of Leicester	Leicester Diocesan Net Zero Carbon and Eco-Communities Steering Group, and Leicester Diocesan Environment Group	Jonathan Kerry, Diocesan Secretary and CEO, and Richard Worsfold, Archdeacon of Leicester
Reconciling	Florence Gildea, Social Policy & Comms Advisor to The Bishop of Leicester	TBA?	Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester



Each Foundation has a diocesan officer(s) with clear responsibilities and a body to guide and monitor, working closely alongside colleagues. The integration work across these Foundations is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team which meets regularly, chaired by Jonathan Kerry, Diocesan Secretary and CEO.

Foundation	Diocesan officer(s)	Appropriate day to day body
Vocations and Leadership	Rob Hay, Head of Learning and Ministry Development, Liz Rawlings, Parish Transition and Ministry Development Enabler Discipleship & Vocations, and Sue Willetts, Diocesan Director of Ordinands	Regular 'Sponsoring Bishop' Team Meeting, and Lay Ministry Council
Finance	Simon Wilson, Director of Finance	DBF Trustees and associated committees
Church Buildings	Gill Elliot, Building Development Enabler and & Church Buildings Team leader	Diocesan Advisory Committee and associated committees
Safeguarding	Rachael Spiers, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group (DSOG), with independent Chair
Minster Communities	Claire Bampton, Diocesan Programme Manager and Stuart Burns, Director of Parish Transition and Ministry Development Team	Joint Archdeaconry Mission Committee, and Shaped by God Together Steering Group
Diocesan Support and Governance	Jonathan Kerry, Diocesan Secretary and CEO and Andy Brockbank, Director of Operations and Governance	Senior Management Team

Strategic Partnerships

As part of drafting this strategy, a range of conversations have taken place with some of the strategic partnerships we enjoy and rely on as a diocese. Partners, such as Launde Abbey, the St Philip's Centre and Together Leicester, are both an intrinsic part of the diocesan eco-system and also have a little more distance than some other parts, allowing them to bring perspectives which might otherwise be missed. These perspectives and their experience continue to be invaluable in discerning and responding to the way God is calling us.

Strategic partnerships such as these provide expertise, capacity, resources and networks that will help us deliver specific aspects of the plans more effectively than we can alone. In some cases, they will help cultivate the culture that underpins the necessary change.

Launde Abbey and its praying community could help us with cultivating and sustaining prayer and spiritual practice amongst new (and existing) ministers, leaders and church workers, and alongside congregations and church communities; with resilience and wellbeing in the process of change and transition; as a host for new networks and communities of practice; and as a venue for events and gatherings that benefit from prayerful hospitality set apart.

The **St Philips Centre's** expertise could feed into discussions and opportunities to learn how to live well together. The Centre's staff have expertise in developing religious literacy, including in helping Christian congregations understand how best to build relationships of trust and cooperation with people of other religious traditions. The Centre's work with schools and colleges is in high demand and could potentially provide opportunities to strengthen relationships between parish churches and local schools.

Together Leicester's experience in social action, and networks across the city and country, provide a valuable resource for congregations developing new and existing activities for loving service of the world. Although Together Leicester's current focus is on work responding to homelessness and associated issues, trustees also have expertise and experience in responding



to issues of food poverty, debt and finances, befriending schemes and much more, which they are happy to offer as helpful.

This strategy, therefore, also serves both as an invitation to each partner organisation and a reminder to the whole diocese to explore the scope and focus of partnerships that can contribute to delivering the objectives articulated here.

Strategic Programme Governance

We will develop a clear structure for the programmatic governance of the diocesan strategy. This will likely involve establishing a Strategic Programme Board which will hold programmatic oversight and responsibility for monitoring the progress on strategy implementation and delivery of strategic outcomes. We will:

- Follow the principles and good practice of governance in alignment with our recently approved new diocesan governance structure.
- Follow the principles and good practice of effective programme management, learning from our experiences of Strategic Development Fund (SDF) funded projects.
- Review the current oversight arrangements for the Strategic Priorities.
- Seek learning and possible models from other dioceses in order to inform our planning.
- Define the Strategic Programme Board's delegated authority and how it relates to other diocesan bodies (including, the Bishop's Leadership Team, Trustee Board, Bishop's Advisory Forum, etc).
- Develop transitional arrangements for the Programme Boards of our two current SDF projects (Resourcing Churches and Intercultural Worshipping Communities).
- Define the reporting processes for each element of the strategy.
- Ensure the membership is kept as small as possible, whilst still providing the requisite skills and authority needed for the effective and efficient functioning of the Board.
- Define the capacity required to support effective programme governance and develop recommendations as to how this will be resourced, including identifying anything for inclusion in the DIP.

The Foundations of this strategy will be overseen by the Senior Management Team. We will:

- Establish clear working practices and appropriate processes to enable this oversight to be effective but not burdensome for all those involved.
- Define the relationship between the Strategic Programme Board and the Senior Management Team, and how their respective functions interact.

To guide and inform this, following the adoption of this strategy by Diocesan Synod, the various strands of work outlined in the strategy and related appendices, will be drawn into a clear, timetabled, implementation plan. This plan can only be effectively drafted following ongoing discussions about the nature of the Diocesan Investment Proposal approach.

Further details can be found in Appendix I.

