

Early intervention protocol

- Which churches have contacted the diocese directly with concerns about viability;
- which churches has the diocese been aware of for a while, and;
- which churches have the deaneries through *Shaping for Mission* identified as no longer being fit for purpose?

Of those, which churches cannot be saved because of a combination of repair needs, small congregations, and low finances?

More information should be gathered on these three areas, and the option for a church to make an argument for saving should be included.

Of those remaining that are of concern, consider the following:

Does the worshipping congregation have the energy to invest in looking at new solutions and trying any that might be appropriate?

No

Yes

- Is the church growing in mission?
- Is it accessible and does it have suitable facilities?
- Could a worshipping community share its building with a different denomination?
- With the right support could a building have other purposes that might supplement its income and make it more attractive to funders (community organisations, café, post office etc.)?
- Could your church either individually or as part of a group engage in church tourism?
- Can it improve its environmental offering on the path towards net zero carbon by 2030?
- Would another model of church help (e.g. Festival Church)?
- Are there other options that could be considered (e.g. sharing, leasing, closure)?

If any of the bullet points can be answered Yes, the church to engage with diocesan resources to explore possible solutions. If No is answered to the questions above, then consider the option of closure.

Consider the process of closure

Including: public consultation; what alternative use can be made of the building; is it saleable; would a church of a different denomination like to use it? Refer to AMPC (Area Mission & Pastoral Committee); see Closing Consecrated Church Buildings diocesan guidance.