

Planting Strategy

DIOCESE OF DURHAM

ADOPTED BY BISHOP'S COUNCIL 9TH JUNE 2021.

Diocese of Durham Proposed Church Planting Strategy

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Definition	3
3. Context	3
4. Strategy	4
5. Goals:	5
6. Strategic Principles.....	5
7. Protocols.....	6
8. Finance	6
9. Reporting and Monitoring	6
Church Planting Development Team purpose and make up:	7
10. Policy application	7
Appendix.....	8
1. Planting Protocols	8
a. Planting a congregation within the parish	8
b. Planting outside the parish	8
c. Planting into another parish (Starting a new congregation alongside an existing)	9
2. Funding Allocation Process.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Future Funding Options (Post STF)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Crowdfunding	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Sow To Grow	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Introduction

This strategy is the formalising of our planting learning and aspirations since the first SDF bid (Missional Leadership for Growth) was written in 2016 with an expectation of five new congregations. With the appointment of the Growth Team additional resource was added which has accelerated the process. Planting curates have been identified and are now in a regular planting curate ‘huddle’. Mixed Mode ordinands are engaging with planting theory and practical opportunity. IME 4 – 7 planting sessions for each year group are in process.

A growing partnership with Cranmer Hall and Lindisfarne College of Theology is developing. Energy in the wider diocese is growing with well attended webinars, and one to ones coaching and support. Our first plants in a decade are now established and Bishop’s Council have consistently approved strategic development funding applications to grow this further.

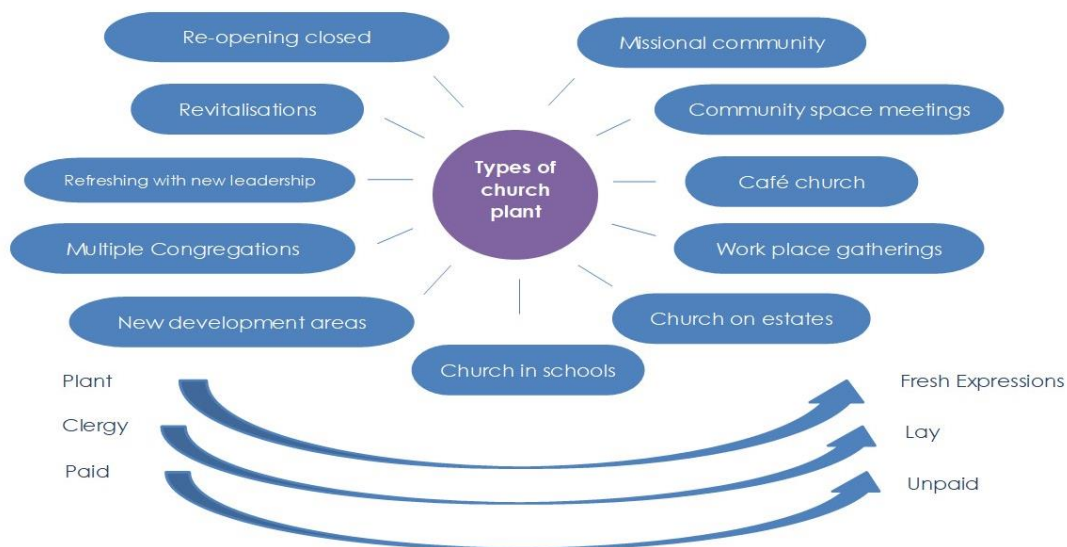
This strategy will ‘sit’ behind the big picture ‘Energising Growth’ priority document. It will be a tool to enable healthy collaboration across structures, processes and agreed priority areas. Goals and

outcome baselines are identified in the ‘Energising Growth’ strategic document, where baseline dates refer to specific Strategic Development Fund bids that is noted.

2. Definition

Church planting is a process that results in a new Christian community being established.

- It includes every tradition present within the Church of England, is inclusive and outward looking.
- It can include a new service, new worship centre or fresh expression created within an existing building or church programme.
- It can include a new gathering established in a school or community centre, or maybe a missional community with local people touching the lives of local people through social transformation and faith sharing.
- It can include a larger church giving away her people and sharing her missional approach with a smaller church through a process described as ‘revitalisation’.
- The common thread is a longing to reach the unchurched with the transformative gospel of Jesus.



3. Context

Church planting is part of the DNA of Durham diocese with successive waves of planting occurring in response to societal change. The rapid population growth of the nineteenth century was the last sustained period of planting though some new build churches including local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs) did take place in the second half of the twentieth century.

By the 1990s the focus had shifted towards an acceptance of a new narrative. This argued that religious practice was nationally in decline and so was the Church of England. This narrative insisted that this decline is inevitable and would happen regardless of anything that might be done. Described as the ‘declinism heresy’ by +Philip North it led to the normalization of decline and the exhortations by some clergy to let the church come to an end. The decline in fiscal liquidity, stipendiary clergy, and occasional offices have lent themselves to this narrative.

Despite this narrative of decline, planting was not unknown in this diocese. Chester Le Street, Washington Oxclose, and Woodhouse Close in Bishop Auckland were all examples of new church plants being established in the second half of the twentieth century. By the first two decades of the twenty first century fresh expressions, the growth of Alpha, a variety of reports, initiatives, and a shift in training emphases to include pioneer ministry began to have an impact. The first ‘revitalisation’ (though not termed as that at the time) of the twenty-first century was at Stockton Parish Church (SPC).

With the advent of Strategic Development Funding and the national learning around resource churches the diocese actively supported the planting of a small team into St. George's Gateshead in 2016. The church experienced a similar growth trajectory to SPC with over 150 gathering to worship each Sunday by 2019. Many of these were new believers.

Drawing on our learning from the above the diocese embarked on a journey of partnership with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and by 2018 had identified and designated four further churches as resource churches. Oxclose, St. Nic's Durham, SPC and St. Anne's Bishop Auckland. In 2020 All Saint's Preston on Tees and Harton with Cleadon Park joined this family. Oxclose and St. Anne's Bishop Auckland were themselves small scale revitalisation programmes.

In 2021 a renewed wave of planting began with a BMO enabled Wynyard plant into a school supported by All Saint's and a revitalisation, also supported by All Saint's into St. Paul's Stockton. A BMO was also implemented in Gateshead Deanery to support two planned plants from St. George's with further plants planned by SPC and St Nic's. Additionally, SDF funding has enabled seven Communities of Hope, (with seven more planned) a small to small planting model designed for low income communities.

The SDF funded Waymark process and consultation resulted in Diocesan Synod adopting four strategic priorities. Engaging children and young people, Energising growth, Challenging poverty, and Caring for creation. These four priorities have informed this strategy, subsequently it is anticipated that this strategy will inform the development of all the priorities.

4. Strategy

- a. **Governance:** The church planting strategy will be overseen by the Director of Strategy for Growth, supported by the Church Planting Development Team and accountable to the Bishops and Bishop's Council in consultation with the Archdeacons.
- b. **Strategy:** We are committed to a strategic focus that will identify and equip churches that can be early adopters of planting in each Deanery. Plants will then be locally identified to include both location and personnel. The following will be key factors for consideration:
 - **Lay leaders:** Can we develop local leaders? What needs to be locally identified and enabled to make this happen?
 - **Deanery Planning:** How does the planting strategy thread through planning assumptions, expectations, and outcomes?
 - **Location:** Where are the gaps? Do all major centres of population have a thriving worshipping community, including new housing estates? Is the plan sustainable? What is the strength of Anglican and non-Anglican churches locally? Are the poorest and most vulnerable communities being served?
 - **Tradition:** Are we representing a wide mix of Anglican traditions accessible to all communities in the Diocese?
 - **Expertise:** Does an identified planting church have skills and vision for a particular demographic?
 - **Buildings:** Are there adequate buildings available for the purpose of the worshipping communities? (Schools, Community Buildings, Church Buildings etc.)
 - **Congregation members:** Are there clusters of committed members who may transfer to join a new plant?
 - **Vacancy:** Are there any strategic vacancies available?
- c. **Training and support:** We are committed to -
 - The development of lay leadership training opportunities through the 'Cultivate' program (see appendix 2 for planning details).

- The development of learning communities with accompanying ‘huddles’ and network support groups through the ‘Cultivate’ program (see appendix 2 for planning details).
 - An emphasis on supporting lay leaders as essential mission partners in each plant through the ‘Cultivate’ program (see appendix 2 for planning details).
 - An aligning of training to include Mixed Mode (Cranmer) and IME 4 – 7 to support the planting goals and share the learning.
 - An aligning of stipend allocation with growth and planting opportunities through collaboration with the prioritization process.
 - The sharing of training resources, opportunities and practice across all diocesan teams.
- d. **Culture:** As a Diocese we will develop a visionary culture of church planting that is defined by:
- **Prayer**– We are committed to engagement with the Holy Spirit as senior partner. The outcomes are God dependant, listening and responding as God leads. Church growth begins in prayer.
 - **Generosity of Spirit** – We are committed to developing a culture of ‘giving away’ in terms of gifting and resources. Praying for one another, giving to one another, learning from one another and sharing with one another.
 - **Empowerment** – We are committed to making church health, growth and planting a “whole church” endeavour. We will establish systems and cultures which are effective in releasing leaders at every level and creating an environment whereby we can plant healthy churches which plant healthy churches.
 - **Creativity** – We are committed to reaching people we have never reached, which will require innovative “out of the box” thinking. We will establish an online resource hub with a simple ‘resource, create, connect’ framework, which will create an opportunity for creative engagement through shared learning, linked resources, and connecting people for mutuality and support.
 - **Risk Taking** – We recognise that plants are founded in faith. We will embrace failure as learning and limitations as opportunities. We are committed to disruptive change. This strategy assumes that the Church is God’s Plan A for the transformation of our communities, and there is no Plan B.
 - **Celebration** – We are committed to: Building a community of pioneers and leaders who serve the needs of the Kingdom over their own; rejoicing together over the small things as steps to the big; developing a community of church planters who celebrate the value of evaluated experience; shared learning, elevating, and supporting each other publicly and privately.

5. Goals:

- a. **Churches**
 - A mixed ecology of 100 new congregations by 2029 reflecting the breadth of our definition.
- b. **Leadership**
 - 450 lay and ordained leaders equipped and supported between 2016 and 2029.
- c. **Sustainability**
 - 50 Partner churches (including but not exclusive to churches that are planted) to commit to financially and prayerfully supporting church planting across the Diocese.
 - Every plant to establish a ‘sow to grow’ fund to support the next plant
 - Every independent plant (one with either its own PCC or BMO board) is committed to the guided pledge system.

6. Strategic Principles

The planting strategy is built around six key principles.

- a. **Safe:** Ensuring that all plants and planting churches are safe places for all people of all ages, abilities, and aspirations, emphasising the centrality of safeguarding.

- b. **Health:** Ensuring the development of health in existing churches as the route to healthy replication.
- c. **Leadership:** Engaging and training church members with locally discerned leadership capacity with a focus on the development of young leaders.
- d. **Collaboration:** Exploring the goal of developing planting partnerships across churches, including ecumenical partners, and other diocese through both resourcing (human, finance, shared learning) and prayer.
- e. **Diversity:** Embracing a diversity of church planting models across the diocese, with a variety of stylistic, cultural and theological backgrounds.
- f. **Evangelism:** Emphasising that the planting of churches is not about making church more convenient or attractive for the 1% of church attenders, but about reaching the 99% of those not currently in church.

7. Protocols

Core Protocol: Planting must be done collaboratively and with transparency, so no party is surprised or offended. However, the key motivating concern is for those outside the institutional church.

All processes and protocols will be rooted in prayer. 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.' For protocol step by step detail see Appendix 1.

8. Finance

This financial model plans to make planting something that is reproducible, accessible and attractive to almost any church in the Diocese. As such, the financing packages are designed as seed-funding, to be used over a 9-18 month process of planting development. We anticipate that initial funding will come through national programmes to include Strategic Development Funding and Strategic Transformation Funding. In the long term we are committed to developing a locally sustainable model.

- Churches with high levels of unrestricted reserves are unlikely to be considered for funding, likewise churches unable to meet the parish pledge without good cause. In the case of the latter an application to the planting panel could form part of a recovery plan.
- Churches applying for funding will be expected to participate in the 'Health for Growth Learning Community', as well as registering a small team for the 'Plant Course'. They will also be asked to present their Planting Plan to a panel which will evaluate and portion seed funding accordingly.
- The panel will include a representative from the board of finance, Planting Project Manager, Director of Strategy for Growth, and a representative of the Planting Group and MDM team. The Diocesan Secretary has the right to attend at any time and must be informed of process and outcomes for each application in order to support the decisions made.
- The emphasis on sustainability moves the diocese away from SDF and focuses on localised and small-scale funding to initiate planting across the Deaneries.

For a more detailed breakdown of the funding streams, please refer to Appendix 2: Funding Allocation Process

9. Reporting and Monitoring

Proper governance sits with Bishop's Council with reports against milestones and KPIs to form part of the following:

- a. Aces Group (Energising Growth): The Aces group will receive, compile and present reports to Bishop's Council against the agreed KPIs in the 'Energising Growth' strategic document that reflect those in this document.
- b. Strategic Development Funding reports will continue to be presented to Bishop's Council with two reports for 'Growing Durham Diocese' and two for 'Growing Hope' to include milestones and KPIs to be provided each year.

June 2021

- c. Bishop's Council has the right to request additional or supplementary reports at any time.
- d. The reports are to be compiled by the relevant project managers with the support of the Church Planting development team.

Church Planting Development Team purpose and make up:

- The team is to be formed of practitioners both lay and ordained with individuals coopted on for specific purposes and periods and will be led by the Planting Project Manager and accountable to the Director of Strategy for Growth.

The team will:

- Monitor progress of the church planting strategy against KPI, ensuring the health and continued evolution of the process of awakening, identifying, equipping and releasing churches to plant.
- Report against the KPIs in the 'Energising Growth' document.
- Provide teaching, coaching and facilitation of planting training schemes (including learning communities, huddles, and mentoring).
- Meet for quarterly reviews of progress and strategic direction.
- Review, evaluate and monitor church planting proposals.
- Support the presentation of those proposals to the funding panel.
- Support the development of models, systems and structures that promote sustainability for long-term planting and growth culture in the diocese.

10. Policy application

This policy is to be a prism (alongside others) through which the following processes and priorities are viewed.

- Prioritisation Process
- Deanery Planning
- Clergy recruitment
- Curacy Placements
- IME 4 - 7
- Lay training
- Continuing Ministerial Education
- Closed Churches Committee
- DAC advice
- Mixed Mode strategy and placements
- Discernment and vocation
- Engaging Children and young people
- Challenging poverty
- Caring for creation

Appendix

1. Planting Protocols

Source: The following protocols draw on the House of Bishops' guidelines on planting and diocesan experience. They are not expected to be linear in outworking. They are supported by the Church Planting Project Manager with additional support from the Church Planting Development Team.

a. Planting a congregation within the parish

Legal Authority: The PCC is the governing body and to that end:

- PCC authorisation and support are required.

If financial support, additional training etc. is not required then the planting parish is invited to share their plans with Planting Project Manager to support the central team in understanding what is happening locally.

- A scoping of the opportunities for social transformation is completed..
- Consideration is given to how the plant plans to reach underrepresented groups within the mother church (e.g., families and children)
- It is good practice to consult with ecumenical partners and neighbouring parishes.
- The planting church needs to check with its insurers that it is fully covered outside the church building on a more permanent basis.
- The planting church may consider linking with national partners to increase support, resource and advice available.

If financial support, additional training, or the expectation that the plant will become an administratively independent church is planned then a conversation with the Planting Project Manager takes place.

- Consultation with the Area Dean, Archdeacon and Bishop, is facilitated by the Planting Project Manager.
- A scoping of the opportunities for social transformation is completed.
- A commitment to registering as an Eco church is undertaken.
- Consideration is given to how the plant plans to reach underrepresented groups within the mother church (e.g., families and children)
- It is good practice to consult with ecumenical partners and neighbouring parishes.
- The planting church needs to check with its insurers that it is fully covered outside the church building on a more permanent basis.
- The planting church may consider linking with national partners to increase support, resource and advice available.

b. Planting outside the parish

Legal authority will be held by the Bishop and to that end:

Revitalisation¹

- Initial conversations with the Director of Strategy for Growth and/or Planting Project Manager.

¹ • This is the process of introducing new missional energy. This may happen with a new incumbent, such as a curate trained as a planting curate, or a lay-led team, and may include members of a larger church joining the plant to provide support and energy.

• Revitalisation may be initiated by members of the diocesan senior team in conversation with local leadership of the affected churches and are governed by both the strategic needs of the Deanery or Diocese and by opportunities that arise from a vacancy or pastoral reorganization.

• Sometimes a local church will see an opportunity to develop a partnership with a smaller church facing closure so may initiate.

- Early conversations facilitated by the above with Bishops, Diocesan Support team and Archdeacons.
- PCC Support in both the sending and 'receiving' church is forthcoming.
- Budgets confirmed and sources clarified.
- A stakeholder 'map' is created.
- Conversation with the potential planting curate or lay leader – establishing willingness and vision.
- Conversation with the sending church and receiving church.
- Consultation with Area Dean and Lay Chair.
- Consultation with identified stakeholders.
- Once an in-principle agreement is possible, further details on vision, people, finance, and process can be worked through by the 'sending and receiving churches' to produce a Memorandum of Understanding between the sending church and receiving church.
- Further communication with the Deanery and other stakeholders is ongoing and proactive.
- A commitment to become an Eco church is agreed.
- The opportunities for social transformation are scoped.
- Consideration is given to how the plant plans to reach underrepresented groups within the wider church (e.g., families and children)
- A time line is agreed and shared with key stakeholders.
- All necessary insurances in place and team supported through training.
- Plant is actioned.
- Planning revision is ongoing with revisions shared and learning taken forward.
- Time line is actioned with regular review points agreed

c. [Planting into another parish \(Starting a new congregation alongside an existing\)](#)

Legal authority will be held by the Bishop and to that end:

- Initial conversation with Director of Strategy for Growth and/or Planting Project Manager.
- Early conversations facilitated by the above with Bishops, Diocesan Support team and Archdeacons.
- Budgets confirmed and sources clarified.
- PCC support in the 'sending' church is confirmed.
- Legal framework (Bishop's Mission Order) scoped and board agreed.
- Legal permissions and processes consulted on and put in place (This includes a Bishop's Mission Order or Pastoral Reorganisation)
- PCC support in the 'receiving' parish is sought as the ideal but is not essential.
- A stakeholder 'map' is created, and engagement scoped and acted upon.
- Consultation with Area Dean and Lay Chair.
- A timeline is agreed and shared with key stakeholders.
- A commitment to become an Eco church is agreed.
- The opportunities for social transformation are scoped and planned.
- Consideration is given to how the plant plans to reach underrepresented groups within the wider church (e.g., families and children)
- Conversation with the potential planting curate or lay leader – establishing willingness and vision.
- Communication with the Deanery and other stakeholders is ongoing and proactive.
- All necessary insurances in place and team supported through training.

June 2021

- Plant is actioned.
- Planning revision is ongoing with revisions shared and learning taken forward.
- Timeline is actioned with regular review points agreed and reported on.