

Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee

Deanery Pastoral Plans: Overview

Introduction

In 2018 as part of amendments made to the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, deanery planning was granted statutory status by including provisions for the creation of Deanery Pastoral Plans (dPPs). The intention was to provide a more robust approach to deanery planning, extending the scope and purpose of the existing Deanery Mission Action Plan (dMAP) to help both the Diocese and Deanery adopt and support a more strategic approach planning, particularly for areas in need of widescale or complex change, preparing the way for pastoral reorganisation.

A dPP can be prepared to cover a specific area within a Deanery, or to cover the entire Deanery itself, depending on local needs. Discussion should take place with the Archdeacon from the beginning to explore options and ensure appropriate support is in place.

The fundamental principles underpinning dPPs are firstly to engage with all those most closely affected by potential changes from the outset; to include them throughout the planning process, from the initial exploratory stages through to the formation of the final plan itself, adapting the thinking as conversations develop. Secondly, the preparation of dPPs should be strategically approached and evidence based. Ensuring aspirations are set within real contexts, with clear purpose and resource.

Adopting this approach seeks to flush out and address any issues during the planning stages, which might otherwise present themselves later on during the formal stages of the pastoral reorganisation process. Having a carefully executed and approved dPP increases the chances of related proposals for pastoral reorganisation carrying a '*presumption of favour*' should the Church Commissioners' *Mission, Pastoral and Church Building Committee* need to consider any representations submitted during the final public consultation stage of the process (see our [Visual Progression of a Pastoral Scheme](#) document).

It should be noted that dPPs are not mandatory and may not always be appropriate, as they involve considerable time and careful preparation. However, experience shows that, where it is needed, meaningful change comes where effective proposals to meet real needs are identified with the support and engagement of all those involved. The approach set out in this guidance is therefore recommended good practice to follow wherever complex change is being considered.

How does a dPP achieve legal status?

- **Full consultation with all *Interested Parties* before approval**
 - The views of the *Interested Parties* should be an integral part of the dPP as it evolves
 - All *Interested Parties* should be made aware of the statutory nature of the process (that this process could form the basis from which to develop formal proposals for pastoral reorganization at a later stage).
- **Approval by Deanery synod**
 - this may require two meetings, one to present the plan and one to vote on it
 - Minutes from the meeting will be required to submit to the *Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee (DMPC)*, as evidence of approval.

- Meeting for any office holders (with the DMPC) who might be dispossessed (where applicable), *and*
- Approval by the DMPC

In general terms a DPP should:

- ❖ Relate to the wider diocesan mission planning context (Becoming a more [Christ-like Church](#))
- ❖ Have regard to any diocesan-wide parameters set by the Bishop, Diocesan Synod and DMPC
- ❖ It should indicate how any reorganisation proposed will further the mission of the Church within the deanery – mission in this context meaning “the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”.
- ❖ Be comprehensive in scope (covering deployment of clergy and lay workers, use of buildings, financial resources, potential for Fresh Expressions and ecumenical working)
- ❖ Be evidence based to back up conclusions.
- ❖ Fulfil the consultation requirements and have been approved by the deanery synod(s) concerned (as well as the DMPC).
- ❖ Have the widest possible engagement with and ownership by clergy and parishes and community bodies

Implementation

1. **Why** is there need for a review/ plan and **What** are the objectives of doing this?
 - i. Set the context
 - ii. Review outcomes of any previous plans
 - iii. Identify the needs to be addressed and timescales
 - iv. Have a broad overview - Consideration of Parish objectives, deanery objectives, diocesan objectives and how objectives support furthering the mission of the church more widely
2. **How** should the process be approached? The key principles that should guide the process are:
 - i. evidence/ needs-based – first step is information gathering
 - ii. engagement – take people on the journey with you.
 - iii. measurable – how could the success of meeting the objectives be evaluated?
 - iv. open-ended (in terms of outcome) – whilst there might be (a) clear objective(s) to meet, how the objective(s) is/ are met remains open and should be informed by the views gathered throughout the process. Alternatively, where a deanery have a proposed plan upon which to base consultation on, it must be made clear that this is still in the developmental stages and the deanery should allow for it to be revised based on the engagement and feedback received.
3. **Who should be involved?**
 - i. Decide who will lead the review (recommendation should be a Deanery member/ group)
 - ii. Consider inviting an external *Critical Friend* to accompany the planning process and help challenge the deanery in their reflections.
 - iii. Who to consult with:
 - a. All interested Parties (check with Pastoral Secretary for full list) – **required**
 - b. Wider community (LA/ ecumenical and community groups/ schools) – desirable

4. What needs to be done?

- i. Update community audit (resources, clergy, people, buildings + wider community partnerships – look outside the immediate worshipping community)
- ii. Community survey – seek people’s views on what is important, what is needed, and what might be missing locally.
- iii. Introduce the concepts underpinning why the planning is needed and what the objectives of the planning are.
- iv. Encourage engagement, explain the relevance and significance of the process, that dPPs have legal status and may inform formal proposals for pastoral reorganisation later on (and may provide a presumption in favour).
- v. Consult and record - who was included, how consultation took place, what responses were given, and crucially how the responses were addressed/ how they impacted the final plan.

5. Detail

- The specific details of the aims and outcomes, and what should be included is not prescribed, as this should be flexible to reflect local needs and priorities in order for it to be successful in its individual context. It should, however, reflect:
 - the overall objectives underpinning the planning,
 - the Diocesan Vision to become a more *Christ-like Church, and*
 - how the plan will further “the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”

N.B: Future proposals only receive a ‘presumption in favour’ if their provisions directly correspond with the scope of the plan itself

- i. Good practice is to be as broad as is realistically achievable and should include all aspects which might be included in subsequent Pastoral Schemes.

Aspects to include:	Aspects to consider:
Clergy/ (Lay) Ministry	Timescales
Patronage	Potential barriers
Buildings (churches/ LPoW/ parsonage houses/ deanery or benefice offices etc.)	Anticipated changes (environmental/ resources-related)
Governance (possible re-structuring)	Partnerships beyond CoE (schools, ecumenical and community groups and bodies)