

DIOCESAN MISSION AND PASTORAL COMMITTEE REVISION

Background

In 2009, in accordance with the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, the Diocesan Synod approved a constitution for the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC), which was the successor to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee. The functions of the DMPC are now set out in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, and for ease of reference are shown in Appendix 1.

Prior to developing the 2009 constitution consideration was given to whether it would be appropriate for the Bishop's Council to take on the functions of the DMPC, as happens in a number of other dioceses. At that time it was felt that, given the work to be undertaken in Mission Action Planning, there was a significant role for a separate diocesan committee; however it was recognised that the DMPC would need to report to Bishop's Council for strategic purposes.

A number of developments have occurred over the last six years.

- Mission Action Planning has taken place and deanery and archdeaconry plans have been produced. Although it is hoped that they will be living, evolving documents, this key area of detailed oversight has now been completed.
- Bishop's Council has increasingly needed to draw together strategic consideration of the work undertaken by the DMPC with the related resource implications. The areas under consideration are central to the strategic work of the Bishop's Council. There is a danger of duplication of work with respect to matters considered by the DMPC also needing discussion by the Bishop's Council or the Board of Mission, and of key decisions needing to be passed to the Bishop's Council for consideration and approval.
- On a number of occasions, meetings of the DMPC have been cancelled due to lack of business and a number of the meetings that have taken place have been light in terms of content. The Archdeaconry committees which engage with local proposals are active and will continue, but the work of the diocesan committee could be incorporated within the work schedule of the Bishop's Council.
- There is considerable overlap between the make-up of the Bishop's Council and of the DMPC as revised to take into account the fourth archdeaconry – see Appendix Two

Archdeaconry MPCs

The archdeaconry MPCs are chaired by the archdeacons and are made up of the area deans and lay chairs from the relevant area plus the members elected to the DMPC and the Parish Development Adviser ex-officio. The Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester committees each meet two or three times a year, the Oxford committee once or twice. If the Bishop's Council took on the functions of the DMPC, one result would thus be that the 18 members of the Council elected to represent archdeaconries would also be expected to attend a small number of additional meetings each year, of the relevant archdeaconry MPC.

The archdeaconry MPCs have delegated responsibility for overseeing pastoral reorganisation, suspensions and the details of ministerial deployment in their areas. They also perform an

important function in supporting deaneries in their mission action planning. It is therefore hoped that the small additional burden in terms of extra meetings would be outweighed by the advantages of this arrangement in cementing the link between the Council's policy and financial decision-making and the archdeaconry MPCs' discussions around pastoral and mission issues.

In consultation with the DMPC, the main concern expressed was that it might limit scope for independent voices on the archdeaconry MPCs. What is therefore proposed is that it should be open to the archdeaconry MPCs, if they wish, to co-opt up to three additional members, to provide expertise or represent views felt to be absent from their existing membership.

Handling of DMPC business by the Bishop's Council

It is intended that the Bishop's Council will receive the minutes of the archdeaconry MPCs and of the New Communities Group to keep it informed of the work of those groups. DMPC business would provide a major discussion focus at two of the Council's meetings each year. Given the work load of the DMPC in recent years it is not expected that the proposed change would result in a significant increase in the Bishop's Council's business. Rather, the hope is that a more holistic understanding of the mission and pastoral context of the Diocese would have significant benefits for the Council's discussion of key financial and policy issues.

Bishop's Council therefore wish to recommend to the Diocesan Synod that from the start of the 2015–2018 triennium, the functions of the DMPC should be assumed by the Bishop's Council in the way set out above and that the membership of the Bishop's Council as DMPC and of the archdeaconry MPCs shall be as set out in Appendix Three.

Rosemary Pearce

Diocesan Secretary

APPENDIX ONE**Functions of mission and pastoral committees**

(taken from the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Part 2)

(1) In carrying out any of its functions the mission and pastoral committee shall, without prejudice to section 1, have regard to worship, mission and community as central to the life and work of the Church of England.

(2) In carrying out any of its functions the mission and pastoral committee shall also have regard to—

- (a) the financial implications for the diocese and the Church of England as a whole;
- (b) subject to subsection (5), the need to allocate appropriate spheres of work and to ensure that appropriate conditions of service are enjoyed by those employed or holding office in the diocese and, where relevant, that reasonable remuneration is provided for all those engaged in the cure of souls;
- (c) the traditions, needs and characteristics of particular parishes; and
- (d) any other aspects of the policies of the diocesan synod to which the synod has requested the committee to have regard in discharging its responsibilities.

(3) It shall be the duty of the mission and pastoral committee—

- (a) to make or assist in making better provision for the cure of souls in the diocese as a whole and, to the extent that the committee thinks appropriate, in particular parts of the diocese or in particular parishes;
- (b) from time to time, as the bishop may direct, or as the committee thinks fit, to review arrangements for pastoral supervision and care in the diocese as a whole and, to the extent that the committee thinks appropriate, in particular parts of the diocese or in particular parishes (including sharing agreements in respect of a church or parsonage house and any proposals for sharing agreements);
- (c) from time to time, as the bishop may direct, or as the committee thinks fit, to prepare strategies or proposals for carrying out the committee's functions under paragraphs (a) and (b) for submission to the bishop and the diocesan synod for their approval;
- (d) to maintain an overview of matters relating to church buildings in the diocese and their use, other than matters which are within the jurisdiction of the consistory court or within the functions of the Diocesan Advisory Committee;
- (e) in the case of listed buildings or buildings in a conservation area, to make, in accordance with section 55, every endeavour to find a suitable alternative use or suitable alternative

uses for churches which are proposed to be closed and buildings which have been closed for regular public worship in the diocese under a pastoral church buildings scheme and, in the case of any other such building, to develop proposals for the suitable alternative use or uses of the building or for the demolition of the building and the disposal of its site;

(f) where it considers it desirable, to make recommendations to the bishop in accordance with section 6 or 21 for any of the matters for which provision may be made under this Measure (other than section 50) by a pastoral scheme or order; and

(g) to carry out any other functions conferred upon a mission and pastoral committee of a diocese by any enactment.

(4) The mission and pastoral committee shall, in carrying out any of its functions, to the extent that it thinks appropriate, consult any other persons or bodies, whether within the Church of England or not, which exercise functions or carry out activities relevant to the functions of the committee.

(5) Nothing in this section shall enable the mission and pastoral committee—

(a) to exercise functions conferred on any other person or body by or under any enactment,
or

(b) to fix or alter the terms of service of any person employed or holding office in the diocese.

APPENDIX TWO**Comparison between the membership of the DMPC and the Bishop's Council**

In March 2014, the DMPC discussed changes to its membership to take into account the creation of the fourth archdeaconry, and arrived at the following scheme:

Ex-officio members

Bishops of Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester and Reading

Archdeacons of Berkshire, Buckingham, Dorchester and Oxford

Elected members

3 laity and 2 clergy each from Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester archdeaconries

2 laity and 1 clergy from Oxford archdeaconry

(The small number of additional ex-officio members are dealt with separately below.)

For comparison, the Bishop's Council's revised membership scheme agreed in May 2014 to take account of the fourth archdeaconry is as follows:

Ex-officio members

Bishops of Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester and Reading

* Dean or Sub-Dean of Christ Church

Archdeacons of Berkshire, Buckingham, Dorchester and Oxford

* Chair and Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

* Chairs of the Diocesan Synod Houses of Clergy and Laity

Elected members

3 laity and 2 clergy each from Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester archdeaconries

2 laity and 1 clergy from Oxford archdeaconry

* 3 laity from anywhere in the Diocese

Nominated members

* 4 Bishop's nominees

Overall, there is clearly considerable overlap between the make-up of the Council and of the DMPC in these revised schemes (the Council having the extra members marked with an asterisk). In particular, the elected membership from archdeaconries is exactly the same. This is significant, since

the link between the DMPC and the archdeaconry MPCs is currently provided by these elected members, who are members ex-officio of the relevant archdeaconry MPC, and the proposal is that this link should persist in the same form if the DMPC is absorbed into the Council. (This new responsibility would be highlighted ahead of the triennial elections to boards, councils and committees following the conclusion of the Diocesan Synod elections in July.)

Additional members of the DMPC

As noted above the 2009 DMPC constitution included a number of additional ex-officio members, these are as follows:

Chair of the New Communities Group

Chair of the Glebe & Buildings New Projects Group

Chair of the Fresh Expressions Group

Chair of the Diocesan Board of Patronage

Representative of the Bishop's Council Working Group on Unity

Dealing with the first three in turn:

- the New Communities Group is chaired by the Archdeacon of Oxford, was previously chaired by the Archdeacon of Buckingham, and might be expected to continue with an archdeacon as Chair for as long as it continues in its present form;
- it has been agreed in recent discussion that the New Projects Group, which gives small grants for church improvement works within the Diocese, does not need direct representation on the D PC;
- the work of the Fresh Expressions Group is now being taken forward in different ways within the Board of Mission, and the Group itself has been defunct since 2012.

The Working Group on Unity is also defunct, although in practice meetings of the DMPC have in recent years been attended by the Diocesan Ecumenical Officer; and the Board of Patronage continues to be routinely represented by its Chair. There is no statutory requirement for either to be a member, and so if the proposed changes went ahead, the Council would need to decide whether or not it would be appropriate for this representation to continue at meetings at which DMPC business was on the agenda.

APPENDIX THREE

Membership of the Bishop’s Council, acting as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee

Bishops of Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester and Reading

The Dean or Sub-Dean of Christ Church

Archdeacons of Berkshire, Buckingham, Dorchester and Oxford

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

The Chairs of the Diocesan Synod Houses of Clergy and Laity

3 laity and 2 clergy each from Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester archdeaconries

2 laity and 1 clergy person from Oxford archdeaconry

3 laity from anywhere in the Diocese

Up to 4 Bishop's nominees

Officers in attendance would include : The Diocesan Secretary

The DMPC Secretary

The Director of Finance

The Director of Glebe and Buildings

A representative of the DAC

Membership of the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees

The Area Bishop and the Archdeacon, one of whom will act as Chair, as they shall decide from time to time

1 lay and 1 clergy representative from each deanery (usually Lay Chair and Area Dean)

In the case of the Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester AMPCs the 3 laity and 2 clergy elected to the Bishop’s Council from the respective archdeaconries

In the case of the Oxford APCM the 2 laity and 1 clergy person elected to the Bishop’s Council from the Oxford archdeaconry

Up to three additional co-opted members, to provide expertise or represent views felt to be absent from their existing membership

Members *Ex- Officio*: The Parish Development Advisor, A representative of the Diocesan Board of Patronage

Officers in Attendance: Ecumenical/Multi-Faith Advisors, Associate Clergy Officer
Secretary to the Committee

