

Dioceses Commission

Review of the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds, Sheffield and Wakefield

Interim Progress Report, July 2011

1 The Place of this Interim Report in the Overall Process

- 1.1 The process leading towards approval by the General Synod of a reorganisation scheme prepared by the Dioceses Commission under section 6(3) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 consists of four main stages:
1. consultation with the interested parties;
 2. publication of a draft scheme,
together with a report containing:
 - a statement of the effect of the proposals on the mission of the Church of England, and
 - a detailed estimate of the financial effect of the proposals,followed by consultation with interested parties (3-6 months);
 3. publication of a final draft scheme and report as above,
followed by consideration by the relevant diocesan synods;
 4. consideration by the General Synod.
- 1.2 Before stage 1 above, the Dioceses Commission conducted a review of the four dioceses concerned and of their boundaries with the Diocese of York. The Review Team took oral evidence from well over 200 people and received a large amount of written evidence. Publication of the report of this review marked the beginning of stage 1 above, which consisted of a consultation period ending on 9 May 2011 (later extended, for corporate responses from diocesan bodies, to 6 June 2011). By definition, what was sought at this first stage was a response ‘in principle’ – in advance of the preparation of a draft scheme and the associated statement on its effect on mission and detailed estimate of its financial effect.
- 1.3 Following completion of the first stage of consultation, the Commission’s task is: to decide whether to prepare a draft reorganisation scheme; and if so, to decide what its contents should be and prepare the report on the scheme’s effect on mission and its financial effect. As indicated below, the Commission has decided to prepare two draft reorganization schemes. It has begun the work involved, but has not yet completed it.
- 1.4 This interim report sets out the Commission’s conclusions on some of the most fundamental questions it has had to address. It is not looking for responses at this stage. Publication of draft schemes and accompanying reports in October will mark the beginning of the second stage of the process outlined above and it is during the ensuing consultation period that responses will be helpful.
- 1.5 The consultation period will begin on 1 November 2011 and conclude on 30 April 2012. (Six months is the maximum period of formal consultation which the Measure allows.)

2 A Single Diocese divided into Episcopal Areas

- 2.1 In its report, the Commission proposed that it should prepare a reorganisation scheme to replace the three dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield with a single new diocese. It invited responses in principle to this recommendation.
- 2.2 The diocesan synods of all three dioceses voted in favour of the preparation of a reorganisation scheme. **The Commission has decided to prepare a draft reorganisation scheme.**
- 2.3 The Commission noted isolated calls for a single Diocese of York embracing all of Yorkshire, but has received no evidence that overturns the conclusion in section 4.1 of its report that such a diocese would not be feasible.
- 2.4 There were also isolated calls for a diocese covering South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the western half of North Yorkshire (ie including the Diocese of Sheffield but not the Diocese of York). None of these came from within the Diocese of Sheffield, however, and many more respondents endorsed the Commission's judgement that South Yorkshire is a distinct community and should continue to have its own diocese (para. 4.2.7).
- 2.5 The Commission also noted some support for each of three 'two-diocese' solutions for the area covered by the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield that were considered but rejected in sections 6.2 and 6.3 of its report:
- a diocese for West Yorkshire and a diocese covering the western half of North Yorkshire and significant areas of the Diocese of York;
 - a diocese covering the area of the existing dioceses of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds but excluding the Diocese of Wakefield;
 - a division of the Diocese of Wakefield between the existing dioceses of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds (with Calderdale and Kirklees going to Bradford and Wakefield itself going to Ripon & Leeds).
- 2.6 The Commission has looked again at these options, but has decided to resist them for the reasons given in its original report, which will be further elaborated in the October 2011 report. On the basis of the responses that the Commission has received, its sense is that there is more support within the area of the three dioceses as a whole for a single diocese than for any other solution that has been proposed. The Commission also noted that the Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield diocesan synods specifically endorsed the creation of a single diocese, while the Bradford diocesan synod did not take a formal vote on that issue. **The Commission has decided that the draft scheme it is preparing should provide for the creation of a single new diocese to replace the three dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield.**
- 2.7 The associated report will therefore contain:
- a statement of the effect of the replacement of the three dioceses with a single diocese on the mission of the Church of England, and
 - a detailed estimate of the financial effect of the creation of a single diocese.

- 2.8 The Commission also proposed that the new diocese should be divided into episcopal areas. This proposal has been widely welcomed and **the Commission has therefore decided to prepare draft instruments for the creation of episcopal areas for publication in October 2011.**
- 2.9 The Commission is still working on the details of the draft reorganization scheme, which will be published in October 2011. These details relate to some important issues, including:
- the diocesan see (and hence the name of the diocese);
 - questions concerning the three cathedrals;
 - the number of archdeaconries and their precise boundaries.

3 The Boundaries of the New Diocese

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 In Chapter 9 of its report, the Commission made proposals about the boundaries of the proposed new diocese. It proposed that changes to the new diocese's boundaries should be made by a second reorganisation scheme (which would be considered by the diocesan synod of the new diocese and the diocesan synods of all the neighbouring dioceses concerned).
- 3.1.2 The Commission proposed that certain named parishes should be transferred from or to the new diocese. Responses were sought from the incumbent or priest in charge and the Parochial Church Council of each of these parishes. Again, by definition, what was sought at this first stage was a response 'in principle' – in advance of the preparation of a draft scheme and the associated statement on its effect on mission and detailed estimate of its financial effect.
- 3.1.3 In order for the financial estimate in particular to be prepared, those assisting the Commission will need to seek detailed information from the dioceses concerned. It therefore seems right to indicate publicly at this stage which parishes the Commission has decided to include in the draft second reorganisation scheme.

3.2 County Durham Parishes

- 3.2.1 The Commission recommended that five parishes in County Durham be transferred to the Diocese of Durham.
- 3.2.2 The PCC of Romalldkirk voted in favour of the recommendation, but the PCC of the more northerly parish of Laithkirk voted against. As these two parishes form a united benefice either both or neither must be included in a reorganization scheme. The Commission has not received evidence which challenges its view that it would be more appropriate for these parishes to form part of the Diocese of Durham. **The Commission has decided to include Romalldkirk and Laithkirk in the draft scheme.**
- 3.2.3 The PCC of Startforth with Rokeby and Brignall voted against the recommendation. Startforth lies immediately adjacent to Barnard Castle on the other side of the River

Tees, and the Commission received evidence both for and against the transfer of this parish to the Diocese of Durham. The balance of the evidence does not prove that the Commission's initial view was wrong. **The Commission has decided to include the parish of Startforth with Rokeby and Brignall in the draft scheme.** (This decision will be reviewed in the light of responses to the draft scheme.)

- 3.2.4 Since the Commission discussed the responses, it has been informed that the PCC of Bowes voted against transfer of the parish to the Diocese of Durham. However, it has received no evidence challenging its view that such a transfer should take place. If Startforth with Rokeby and Brignall were to be transferred, consideration would need to be given to whether Bowes should also be transferred (not least because, although Bowes is contiguous with Barningham, the A66 which is its main link with Yorkshire passes through the former parish). The Commission would welcome further evidence on this point. **Meanwhile, the Commission has decided to include the parish of Bowes in the draft scheme.** (This decision will similarly be reviewed in the light of responses to the draft scheme.)
- 3.2.5 The PCC of Wycliffe voted against this recommendation and the Commission has received no further submissions in favour of it. As its position in relation to the scheme is not related to that of any of the other parishes, **the Commission has decided not to include the Parish of Wycliffe in the draft scheme.**

3.3 *Parishes in Cumbria*

- 3.3.1 The Commission recommended that the following parishes be transferred to the Diocese of Carlisle: Sedbergh, Cautley and Garsdale; Dent with Cowgill; Firbank; Howgill; Killington.
- 3.3.2 The responses that the Commission has received all support this recommendation. **The Commission has decided to include the five parishes listed above in the draft scheme.**

3.4 *Parishes in Lancashire*

- 3.4.1 The Commission invited the twelve parishes in the Diocese of Bradford that are in Lancashire formally to consider, in the light of the proposal to create a Ripon Episcopal Area within a new diocese with its diocesan office in Leeds, whether their own mission and that of the Church of Lancashire would be strengthened by their being transferred to the Diocese of Blackburn.
- 3.4.2 Earby and Kelbrook are in the Skipton Deanery and the Borough of Pendle. As noted in the Commission's report (para. 9.2.2), they have close links with the area around Skipton and one third of the parish of Earby is still in Yorkshire. The PCCs of these parishes voted *nem. con.* against a transfer. **The Commission has concluded that Earby and Kelbrook should remain in the new diocese.**
- 3.4.3 Bracewell and Barnoldswick are also in the Skipton Deanery and the Borough of Pendle. Bracewell PCC voted against a transfer by a majority, while Barnoldswick PCC did not take a vote. Both indicated that they had insufficient information to take a final decision. **The Commission has decided that Bracewell and Barnoldswick**

should be included in the draft scheme, so that the PCCs can give further consideration to the question in the light of the statements about mission and finance that will accompany the draft scheme.

3.4.5 Tosside forms part of a united benefice with Long Preston in Yorkshire. This means that a transfer would need to be effected by the dioceses concerned under the Pastoral Measure. Part of the parish and indeed part of the village is still in Yorkshire. The PCC voted *nem. con.* against a transfer. **The Commission has concluded that Tosside should remain in the new diocese.**

3.4.6 The other seven parishes are in the Bowland Deanery and form part of the Ribble Valley Borough. All of the churches are closer to Clitheroe than to Skipton and Settle, and much closer to Blackburn Cathedral than Bradford Cathedral (the nearest cathedral in the new diocese). Mitton PCC voted unanimously for a transfer. Gisburn PCC voted in favour *nem. con.*, but the majority of those present abstained. Grindleton and Bolton by Bowland PCCs voted against by a majority, but indicated that they had insufficient information to take a final decision. Waddington PCC voted against, but the majority of those present abstained. Slaidburn PCC wished to have further details before submitting a response. Hurst Green PCC also recorded no vote. **The Commission has decided that the parishes of Hurst Green, Mitton, Waddington, Grindleton, Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn and Slaidburn should be included in the draft scheme, so that the PCCs can give further consideration to the question in the light of the statements about mission and finance that will accompany the draft scheme.**

3.5 *Parishes in the Borough of Barnsley (South Yorkshire)*

3.5.1 The Commission recommended that the Barnsley Deanery (the northern half of the Borough of Barnsley, which is in South Yorkshire) be transferred to the Diocese of Sheffield.

3.5.2 This recommendation has received a very mixed response, from within the deanery and beyond it. Of the twenty PCCs:

- eleven voted against the recommendation,
- five voted in favour,
- one did not vote but suggested that whole of the Borough should be in one diocese or the other,
- three submitted no response.

Of the eight parishes that are contiguous with Sheffield Diocese parishes, three voted in favour and two against, while three did not submit a response. The Deanery Synod voted against the resolution, though there was some support for it in the House of Laity. The Borough Council made a submission arguing against a transfer.

3.5.3 While the varied response confirms that there was an issue that needed to be considered, it is also clear that there is not a majority within the deanery in favour of transferring the deanery to the Diocese of Sheffield. **The Commission has decided that the greater part of the Barnsley Deanery should remain in the new diocese.**

3.5.4 The Commission noted that the PCCs of three of the four westernmost parishes in the deanery voted in favour of a transfer:

- Penistone
- Hoylandswaine
- Silkstone with Stainborough¹

3.5.5 It was pointed out that Penistone is linked by public transport to Sheffield but not to Wakefield. The PCC of the fourth parish, Thurlstone, voted against, but cited its links not to Barnsley but to Kirklees (which, under our proposals, would be in a different episcopal area). Because Thurlstone and Penistone form a united benefice, either both or neither must be included in a reorganization scheme.

3.5.6 **The Commission has decided to include in the draft scheme a transfer of the parishes of Penistone, Thurlstone, Hoylandswaine and Silkstone with Stainborough to the Diocese of Sheffield.** (This decision will be reviewed in the light of responses to the draft scheme.)

3.5.7 The Report said in para. 9.10.17:

‘It was also put to us that, if the Borough of Barnsley continued to be divided between dioceses, the boundary should run through open country rather than through the built-up area as it does at present. This would be achieved by transferring some or all of the parishes of Ardsley, Kendray, Worsbrough Dale, Worsbrough Common and Worsbrough from the Diocese of Sheffield to the Barnsley Deanery. If our recommendation were not to gain sufficient support, the views of the parishes named in this paragraph about the most appropriate boundary within the Borough would need to be sought.’

3.5.8 The Commission has received submissions which argue that the links of Ardsley and Kendray (in the Wath Deanery) to Darfield and to the Dearne Valley generally mean that both parishes should remain in the Diocese of Sheffield. The Commission has decided not to propose a transfer of Ardsley and Kendray to the new diocese. Worsbrough parish (in the Tankersley Deanery) forms part of a united benefice with the non-contiguous parish of Elsecar (on the southern boundary of the Borough of Barnsley); it therefore could not be transferred by a reorganization scheme.

3.5.9 The Commission is seeking the views of the clergy and PCCs of the parishes of Worsbrough Common and Worsbrough Dale (which are in the Tankersley Deanery) as to whether it might, in principle, be more sensible if the diocesan boundary to run to the south of them, so that they would be in the same diocese as the centre of Barnsley. **The Commission will decide in the light of their responses whether to include a transfer of those parishes to the new diocese in the draft scheme, so**

¹ It has been pointed out that this statement is incorrect. The PCC of Silkstone with Stainborough in fact voted in against a transfer to the Diocese of Sheffield. We apologise for this error. The Commission will look again at the recommendation in para. 3.5.6 below before the draft scheme is published.

that the PCCs can give further consideration to the question in the light of the statements about mission and finance that will accompany the draft scheme.

3.6 The Boundary between the New Diocese and the Diocese of York

- 3.6.1 The Commission invited the PCCs of six parishes to consider whether it would be appropriate for them to be transferred to the Mowbray Deanery of the Diocese of York.
- 3.6.2 Four of the parishes form part of the ten-parish benefice of Richmond East. This means that a transfer would need to be effected under the Pastoral Measure. Though three of the PCCs voted unanimously against a transfer, they indicated that they required further information before taking a final decision. A fourth did not vote.
- 3.6.3 Two of the parishes form the Lower Swale benefice. The PCCs voted unanimously against a transfer.
- 3.6.4 Because action under the Pastoral Measure would be needed in respect of some of these parishes, and in view of the requests for further information, **the Commission considers that it would be more appropriate to wait until it has completed its review of the Diocese of York before inviting the PCCs to consider this matter further. The Commission has therefore decided not to include these parishes in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.5 The Commission recommended that Boston Spa and four adjacent parishes in the City of Leeds that lie east of the A1(M) should remain in the Diocese of York. Four of the PCCs voted unanimously in favour of this recommendation; one did not record a vote. **The Commission confirms that it will not include these parishes in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.6 The Commission recommended that the parishes of Aberford and Micklefield, which are in the City of Leeds and west of the A1(M), be transferred from the Diocese of York to the new diocese. The PCCs voted unanimously against the recommendation. **The Commission considers that it would be more appropriate to wait until it has completed its review of the Diocese of York before inviting the PCCs to consider this matter further. The Commission has therefore decided not to include these parishes in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.7 The Commission recommended that the parish of Ledsham with Fairburn, most of which is in the City of Leeds and west of the A1(M), be transferred from the Diocese of York to the new diocese. The PCC voted unanimously against the recommendation. It was pointed out that while the greater part of the parish's area and three of its four churches are in the City of Leeds, the majority of the population live in Fairburn, which is in the Selby District. **The Commission accepts the force of this point. It has therefore decided not to include this parish in the draft scheme.**

- 3.6.8 The parishes of Kirk Smeaton and Womersley are in the Selby District but lie south of the M62. The Commission recommended that they should remain in the new diocese and the PCCs endorsed this recommendation unanimously. **The Commission confirms that it will not include these parishes in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.9 The Commission invited the parish of Brotherton to consider whether it would be more appropriate for it to remain in the new diocese or to be transferred to the Diocese of York. The PCC voted unanimously to remain in the new diocese. **The Commission has therefore decided not to include this parish in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.10 The Commission invited the Archdeacons of Pontefract and York and the parishes of Kellington, Birkin and Haddlesey to consider where the boundary between the two archdeaconries should be drawn.
- 3.6.11 Kellington PCC voted to stay in the new diocese and sent a response stressing that though it is in the Selby District its links are predominantly with West Yorkshire. This was endorsed by the Archdeacon of Pontefract. **The Commission has therefore decided not to include Kellington in the draft scheme.**
- 3.6.12 No response was received from Birkin, which lies between the greater part of the parish of Kellington (to the east) and its detached part (to the west), and is also contiguous with Brotherton and Womersley. Haddlesey voted unanimously to stay in the Diocese of York. These parishes form part of a united benefice with Hambleton, so a transfer would need to be effected under the Pastoral Measure. **The Commission considers that it would be more appropriate to wait until it has completed its review of the Diocese of York before considering the position of these two parishes further. The Commission has therefore decided not to include these parishes in the draft scheme.**

3.7 The Boundary between the Diocese of Sheffield and the Dioceses of York and Lincoln

- 3.7.1 The Commission recommended that eight parishes that are in the East Riding of Yorkshire and Eastoft (which is in Lincolnshire) should be transferred from the Diocese of Sheffield to the Dioceses of York and Lincoln respectively.
- 3.7.2 The views of the parishes were divided. The PCCs of Goole, the four Marshland parishes, Airmyn and Great Snaith voted unanimously against the recommendation. The PCC of Hook (the easternmost parish, which has a church school) voted unanimously in favour, while the PCC of Rawcliffe was evenly divided in its voting.
- 3.7.3 The Commission notes that some of the parishes have a stronger affinity with Selby than with other parts of the East Riding. **The Commission considers that it would be more appropriate to wait until it has completed its review of the Diocese of York before considering the position of these parishes further. The Commission has therefore decided not to include these parishes in the draft scheme.**

3.8 Summary

3.8.1 The Commission is therefore preparing a draft scheme, with associated statements about the effect of the proposed transfers on the mission of the Church of England and their financial effect.

3.8.2 The following parishes will be included in this draft scheme:

Romaldkirk
Laithkirk
Bowes
Startforth with Rokeby and Brignall
Sedbergh, Cautley and Garsdale
Dent with Cowgill
Firbank
Howgill
Killington
Hurst Green
Mitton
Waddington
Slaidburn
Bolton by Bowland
Grindleton
Gisburn
Barnoldswick
Bracewell
Penistone
Thurlstone
Hoylandswaine
Silkstone with Stainborough

Full details of the proposed transfers are set out in Annex A.

3.8.3 There will be a further round of consultation with the PCCs, incumbents and priests in charge of these parishes after publication of the draft scheme in October, and the Commission will decide in the light of the responses whether to include each parish in the final version of the scheme.

3.8.4 The Commission is seeking the views of the incumbent and PCCs of Worsbrough Common and Worsbrough Dale as to whether it might, in principle, be more sensible for the diocesan boundary to run to the south of them, so that they would be in the same diocese as the centre of Barnsley.

3.8.5 The Commission has decided *not* to include the following parishes in a draft scheme:

- Wycliffe;
- Earby, Kelbrook;
- Parishes in the Barnsley Deanery not mentioned in para. 3.8.2 above;
- Boston Spa, Bramham, Clifford, Thorpe Arch, Walton;
- Ledsham with Fairburn;
- Brotherton, Kellington, Kirk Smeaton, Womersley.

3.8.6 The Commission will return to the question of the precise boundaries between the new diocese and the Diocese of York and between the Diocese of Sheffield and the Dioceses of York and Lincoln, in relation to the other parishes mentioned in recommendations in Chapter 9 of the 2010 report, when it has completed its review of the Diocese of York.

On behalf of the Commission

MICHAEL CLARKE
Chair

21 July 2011

ANNEX A

Parishes to be included in a draft reorganization scheme transferring parishes between the proposed new diocese and neighbouring dioceses

	Current Diocese	Current Adnry	Current Deanery	Parish	Benefice	New Diocese	New Adnry	New Deanery
1	Ripon & Leeds	Richmond	Richmond	Laithkirk Romaldkirk Bowes Startforth and Rokeby with Brignall	Romaldkirk with Laithkirk Romaldkirk with Laithkirk Startforth and Bowes and Rokeby with Brignall Startforth and Bowes and Rokeby with Brignall	Durham	Auckland	Barnard Castle
2	Bradford	Craven	Ewecross	Howgill Firbank Killington Sedbergh, Cautley and Garsdale Dent with Cowgill	Firbank, Howgill and Killington Firbank, Howgill and Killington Firbank, Howgill and Killington Sedbergh, Cautley and Garsdale Dent with Cowgill	Carlisle	Westmorland and Furness	Kendal
3	Bradford	Craven	Bowland	Slaidburn Saint John the Evangelist, Hurst Green Mitton Waddington Grindleton Bolton by Bowland Gisburn	Slaidburn Hurst Green and Mitton Hurst Green and Mitton Waddington Bolton by Bowland with Grindleton Bolton by Bowland with Grindleton Gisburn	Blackburn	Blackburn	Whalley
4	Bradford	Craven	Skipton	Barnoldswick Bracewell	Barnoldswick with Bracewell Barnoldswick with Bracewell	Blackburn	Blackburn	Pendle
5	Wakefield	Pontefract	Barnsley	Penistone Saint Saviour, Thurlstone Hoylandswaine Silkstone with Stainborough	Penistone and Thurlstone Penistone and Thurlstone Hoylandswaine and Silkstone with Stainborough Hoylandswaine and Silkstone with Stainborough	Sheffield	Doncaster	Tankersley