

RESOURCING BISHOPS

CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

Note by the Archbishops' Consultations Group

1. The Review Group on Bishops' Needs and Resources, chaired by Professor Anthony Mellows, was appointed by the Archbishops in May 2000 with the following terms of reference:

“To assess the staff and other resources which are needed now and which are likely to be needed in the next decade in order to provide adequate and efficient administrative and other support for the ministry of Bishops (both Diocesan and Suffragan); to assess the cost of providing such support; to assess the resource implications for the Church Commissioners and the wider Church; and to make recommendations to the Archbishops”.

The Group submitted its report to the Archbishops in February this year; the text was published on 8 June 2001 under the title *Resourcing Bishops*. The Review Group is now at work on its second report on the subject of the Archbishops' own needs and resources and it is expected that this second report will be issued in the course of 2002.

2. The Archbishops arranged for *Resourcing Bishops* to be widely circulated at the time of publication in order that a programme of consultation could be carried out on the Report. A Consultations Group has been established by Their Graces to co-ordinate this phase of the process and, in the light of views expressed by the various interested parties, to formulate appropriate advice to Their Graces on possible future reform. The Consultations Group consists of:

Stephen Bampfylde (Chair) (member of the Archbishops' Council)
The Bishop of Bristol
The Bishop of Hull
Viscountess Brentford (Third Church Estates Commissioner)
Canon Bob Baker (member of the Mellows Group and Archbishops' Council)

Sallie Bassham (member of the Bishoprics & Cathedrals Committee)

Mrs Hilary Hullah (the Bishop of Ramsbury's wife)

Revd Michael Wedgeworth (Diocesan Secretary, Blackburn)

A diocesan bishop's wife is to be appointed shortly.

3. The Consultations Group is therefore seeking through this debate to hear the General Synod's views on the analysis and recommendations presented in *Resourcing Bishops* in order to widen the consultative process and to inform the Group's development of some outline proposals on how particular recommendations might be implemented. The Group will consult on its outline proposals with bishops and others early in 2002, allowing the Consultations Group to bring recommendations to the Archbishops by April 2002.

4. If the outcome of the consultation process indicates that significant reforms along the lines envisaged by *Resourcing Bishops* are to be implemented, it is likely that the next stages of the process would have the following kind of shape:

December 2001	End of consultation upon the report
January-March 2002	Consultation on models of implementation.
April 2002	Strategic decisions to be made by the Archbishops in the light of views expressed on main changes to be implemented;
July 2002	Introduce draft legislation; introduce any agreed administrative changes which can be implemented immediately;
October 2002	Agree new financial and administrative arrangements (& any transitional measures);
January 2003	Introduce new financial/administrative arrangements;

Jan/June 2003

Legal changes to take effect (depending when legislation is approved).

5. The fundamental findings of the Review with respect to current resourcing arrangements are reflected in the summary at 1.1 in the text (pages 1-2). In essence, these are that bishops are currently adequately resourced (there is no over-provision) but that the system whereby bishops' various needs are supplied from the Centre is not the most efficient or equitable that could be devised. The authors of the Report believe that certain reforms could produce a new system which would be more effective in meeting the actual needs experienced by individual bishops and better value for money for the Church.
6. The essence of the Report's vision for the future is contained in the 20 keynote recommendations at 1.4 in the text (pages 2 – 4). It is envisaged that bishops could be better supported in future through the use of block grants supplied by the Church Commissioners to each diocesan bishop for the resourcing of bishops in his diocese. Dioceses would be asked to provide administrative support in managing the devolved funds, as well as possibly supplementing the monies provided from central level where they might wish and be able to do so. In delivering resourcing this way, the Review Group felt that funds available could be used locally in the most cost effective way, more closely matching the priorities and plans of bishops and their dioceses. It is recommended that administrative savings which could be made at the Church Commissioners' office through a move to devolution should then allow them to make additional sums available to the Archbishops' Council for selective apportionment to dioceses.
7. *Resourcing Bishops* does not claim to offer a detailed blueprint for the construction and future operation of a devolved episcopal funding system. Rather it advances an argument for the principle of moving to a devolved system and acknowledges that, if such a reform was felt by the Church to be right, further thought would then be required to develop the details, not least in relation to the formula which might be used to offer an objective assessment of the financial needs of episcopal ministry in each diocese. In carrying out the consultation exercise, the principle of devolution

and its practical outworking are clearly central to the Group's recommendations.

8. The Consultations Group will wish to listen carefully to the views offered by the Synod on the substance of the Report and the way ahead for episcopal resourcing. In the light of Synodical debate, we shall then be reflecting on the views of all the relevant constituencies as we prepare provisional proposals which we will be sharing with the House of Bishops and more widely in January 2002.

Stephen Bampfylde (Chairman)
On behalf of the Consultations Group

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