



The General Synod of the Church of England has voted "not to take note" of a Report by the House of Bishops following a debate on the report earlier today on Marriage and Same Sex Relationships.

A take note debate is a neutral motion which allows Synod to discuss the content and recommendations contained in a report without committing the Synod to the formal acceptance of any matter.

The vote required simple majorities in each of the three Synodical Houses. A total of 242 people voted in favour of the report 184 against and 6 abstentions - with a majority of Synod members voting to "take note" of the report. However the report failed to obtain a simple majority in the House of Clergy.

The House of Bishops voted 43 in favour and 1 against.

The House of Clergy voted 93 in favour and 100 against with 2 abstentions.

The House of Laity voted 106 in favour and 83 against with 4 abstentions.

With the take note motion now rejected, the Bishops of the Church of England will reflect on the views expressed at the General Synod. The diversity of opinion and strong views expressed, will need to be taken account by the Bishops in their consideration of the discussion going forward.

Responding to the vote, the Rt. Revd. Graham James, the Bishop of Norwich said:

"I can guarantee that the House of Bishops will consider carefully and prayerfully all the contributions made in the debate today.

"When reports come to the General Synod they often come at the end of a process and contain recommendations. This wasn't that sort of report. The Bishops came to this debate committed to listen. Our report did not bring proposals, it brought a framework and a request for Synod to tell us what they thought. We have listened to those who have spoken, and those others who have made contributions to us directly. Our ongoing discussions will be informed by what members of Synod and the wider church have said as a result of this report."

Introducing the debate on behalf of the House of Bishops, the Bishop of Norwich said that the report did not make formal proposals but was rather suggesting frameworks where areas needed attention: "The point of a take note debate is that it enables other voices to be heard, including those who believe the framework for further consideration is mistaken or wrongly constructed and needs modification. It is not a vote for approval but an invitation to comment and engage, and the House is listening."

Setting out the difficulties facing both the House of Bishops and the wider Church in considering the report the Bishop of Norwich said: "There is no simple and easy answer to this issue beyond committing ourselves to engagement with each other when the views on what we should do are profoundly contested."

The Bishop of Willesden, the Rt. Revd. Pete Broadbent said:

"As I said at the launch of the Report such a debate is on a neutral motion. It allows Synod to discuss the content and recommendations contained in the report. The Synod has declined to take note and so the report in its present form cannot come back to Synod for discussion, though we will still have to find a way forward for the wider discussion.

"We will find this debate a continuing source of disagreement because we haven't coalesced around an end point. When we legislated for women to be bishops, even those opposed came to the view that the Church of England had to make it possible for women to be bishops in the Church of God according to our canons and formularies. In this debate, we haven't even begun to find a place where we can coalesce. The Bishops' Report acknowledges a place of starting. More conversation is needed. We don't yet know the next stage - nor yet when and whether we can bring any further report to Synod."

ENDS

[The report can be read here](#)

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/result-vote-house-bishops-report>