

- [The Commission's Role](#)
- [Boundary Reviews](#)
- [Suffragan Bishops](#)
- [Diocesan Administration – working together across boundaries](#)

Dioceses are made up of a collection of parishes looked after by a diocesan bishop, normally assisted by one or more suffragan bishop(s). So a diocese marks out the geographical extent of the bishop's role. For more information please see [Canon C18](#) paragraph 4.

There are 42 dioceses in the Church of England, many roughly equivalent in size to a county. 30 dioceses are in the Province of Canterbury; 12 in the Province of York. A [report](#) was published in 2008 looking at the historical development of the Dioceses and Episcopal Sees in England.

The scheduled meeting dates for 2023 are as follows:

Tuesday 7 March, Thursday 8 June, Monday 11 September, Monday 11 December

The Commission's Role

Diocesan boundaries sometimes need to be reviewed if they no longer serve the mission of the Church, and/or if they become out of sync with civic life. Bishops' roles and/or workload may also change over time. The Commission exists to help resolve such issues in partnership with others, and to encourage shared working across boundaries. It can initiate proposals for change.

The 10 member Commission is made up of a representative cross-section of bishops, clergy and laity. Its role is set out in [Part II of the Dioceses, Pastoral & Mission Measure 2007](#). In summary, it considers proposals to:

- Change existing provincial or diocesan boundaries;
- Change the number of bishops within a diocese;
- Continue with a suffragan bishop's post after he/she moves on, or retires - its current advice on the filling of such posts can be found [here](#).

The Commission's largest recent project involved the creation of the Diocese of Leeds in 2014 by the joining together of the former dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield. Further information about this can be found below:

Diocese of Leeds documents

- [Leeds Diocese Report 2010](#) (4.08 MB)
- [Moving towards a new Diocese for West Yorkshire and the Dales](#) (1.05 MB)
- [The Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 2013](#) (238.72 KB)
- [Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme Evaluation](#) (288.92 KB)
- [Diocesan Reorganisation: Lessons learned from the creation of the Diocese of Leeds](#) (447.18 KB)

Boundary Reviews

Diocesan boundaries can sometimes require updating to reflect changes to local communities or secular authorities that the Church seeks to serve. Small changes involving just a few parishes can be resolved locally and dealt with under a *Pastoral Scheme*; the Commission helps facilitate more wide-ranging reviews, and propose ways in which the boundaries can be re-drawn. Such proposals involve local consultation and require consideration by diocesan synods and the consent of the General Synod. The Commission has to have regard for the boundaries used by ecumenical partners, secular and civic authorities to create identifiable local communities which serve the mission of the Church.

In 2009-2014 the Commission was involved with the joining together of the former dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield to create the new diocese of Leeds. This was the first time since the 16th Century that any existing diocese had been dissolved, as opposed to the creation of new ones. Documents relating to this scheme can be found above.

The Commission retains a watching brief for boundary reviews and is engaged from time to time with local discussions, but currently has no proposals for a major boundary exercise.

Suffragan Bishops

Bishops have a dual role as leaders in mission

- Within their dioceses and
- Collectively in the wider Church.

The Commission considers the number of *suffragan bishops* and how they function within the diocese.

In the event of a suffragan retiring or moving on diocesan bishops need to

1. Obtain the consent of their *diocesan synod* or *bishop's council* to fill the post; and
2. Make a submission to the Commission.

[Read the Commission's advice.](#)

Further resource regarding senior leadership and suffragan bishops that have been produced by other bodies:

- [Faith & Order Commission \(FAOC\) report on Senior Leadership \(2015\)](#)
- [GS Misc 733 House of Bishop occasional paper on Suffragan Bishops \(2004\)](#)

Diocesan Administration – working together across boundaries

The Commission provides advice, support and encouragement for the development of joint administration schemes which involve working together across boundaries.

Many examples exist of shared administrative functions. [Read the Commission's 2018 survey.](#)

If you'd like further information about the Commission, please look at the latest Annual Report to Synod found below, or fill in the contact form below.

Reports

- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2016](#) (369.71 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2017](#) (279.17 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2018](#) (136.22 KB)
- [Review of the Sees of Beverley, Ebbsfleet, Maidstone and Richborough](#) (939.46 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2019](#) (81.57 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2020](#) (147.58 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission-Annual Report 2021 .pdf](#) (183.14 KB)
- [Dioceses Commission Annual Report 2022](#) (184.82 KB)

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