The Emerging Church of England is the name of different strands of work which together will help leaders in every diocese to discern the shape, life and activity of the Church of England in the 2020s. The main aim of the Emerging Church of England is to follow a shared vision - to become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church that is Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped.

This work began before the coronavirus pandemic but has been intensified and adapted in light of the changing circumstances. The work is to:

- **Review our strategic context:** the Church and the impact of the social, political and economic world around us
- **Determine key strategic priorities for the next ten years** through a shared Vision and Strategy
- **Deliver simpler governance structures**
- **Transform our national operating model for the future** i.e. the practical ways the Church is organised and functions.

The work is overseen by a Coordinating Group, chaired by the Bishop of Manchester and made up of members of the Church Commissioners, the Archbishops' Council and the House of Bishops. Its job is to recommend proposals to the governing bodies to ensure the necessary changes happen at the right time, as well as ensuring the different areas of work join up well.

Four groups - Vision & Strategy, Recovery, Governance, and Transforming Effectiveness - have been tasked with consulting the wider Church, providing recommendations and guidance, and transparently communicating their progress and findings.

### Vision and Strategy

Since April 2020 we have been developing the Vision and Strategy, starting from a variety of consultations across the Church. We have seen the development of one vision, three priorities and six bold outcomes. The Vision and Strategy is an invitation to dioceses and parishes, cathedrals and chaplaincies to examine, develop and maybe even change existing strategies and processes in the light of these ideas.

Our next steps are now to shape the strategic actions that will help us fulfil our Vision, grow the Church, enable more people to know Christ, develop narratives of hope, and make a difference in the world.

- Find out about [A vision for the Church of England in the 2020s](#)

### Recovery

The Recovery Group, led by the Bishop of London, looks at how to respond to and interpret changing government advice on church buildings and services. Its responsibilities also include supporting churches in reaching out to existing and new worshippers through digital means; the Church of England's response to social need; and the wellbeing of church and communities.

- For more information about the work of the Recovery Group see [GS Misc 1249 (paras 28-33)](#)
Governance Review

The Governance review working group, led by the Bishop of Leeds and established but the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, was set up to explore options for simpler and more effective governance, The ultimate aim is to provide more transparent and accountable governance for the Church at parish, diocesan and national level.

The group has recommended changes to the Church’s national governance structures. These recommendations are being considered by the Church’s governance bodies during Autumn 2021. The main recommendation of the Governance Review Group is to reduce the number of the national governance entities by merging the oversight of most of the Church’s national activities into a single body.

- Recommendations made for Church of England Governance Reform (14 September, 2021)

Transforming Effectiveness

The Transforming Effectiveness Workstream of the Emerging Church Programme asks what the local Church needs to flourish, and then asks what of that can only or best happen nationally, what should happen at diocesan, regional, network or other levels, and what should not happen at all.

It began with a wide ranging consultation across the Church and is in the process of seeking to provide recommendations in three areas: Simpler National Church Institutions (NCIs), Simpler Support for Dioceses and Worshipping Communities and a Humbler and Simpler Church. This stream of work is led by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and flows from the Vision and Strategy workstream, and the Governance workstream.

Transforming Effectiveness Q&A

What are the guiding principles being used for Transforming Effectiveness

The following principles are guiding our approach and decision-making:

- Interrogate everything against two questions: Does this enable the flourishing of the local church and/or does this make the Church of England more coherent and effective in its national role?
- Relationships and their quality are key, including trust and confidence.
- Distribute and locate functions for greatest effectiveness, e.g. identify things that only need to be done once, and in one place, for the sake of the whole.
Clarity of functions, priorities and accountability is essential across the Church.

Each national function should have a single team and single governance and accountability structure.

Being humbler means creating a servant and listening ethos across the whole church, including the 'national'.

Harness the power of sharing knowledge and discerning the right expertise wherever it exists and facilitate networked learning across the Church.

Support functions are to be designed to support the developing mixed ecology of Church.

Solutions encourage innovation and change over time.

Look to be more efficient across the whole Church and not just move costs.

What does simpler support for dioceses and worshipping communities look like?

Working closely with church and diocesan leaders, the focus of this work is to look at how we might be able to free up worshipping communities and dioceses for mission by alleviating some of the administrative burdens and better supporting clergy and lay leaders in the running of their communities, easing the financial burden where possible. This includes making access to services as easy as possible, and joining up with existing facilities such as Parish Buying and the Parish Giving Scheme.

What are the National Church Institutions (NCIs)?

The National Church Institutions are a number of bodies which undertake work for the Church of England. Its purpose is to support the mission and ministries of the Church by working with those who serve in parishes, dioceses, schools and other ministries, and with partners at a national and international level.

The NCIs are separate legal entities, but they are a common employer. The present arrangements were established under the National Institutions Measure 1998. The seven NCIs are: The Archbishops' Council; Bishopthorpe Palace; The Church Commissioners; The Church of England Central Services; The Church of England Pensions Board; Lambeth Palace; National Society for Promoting Religious Education.

What does Simpler NCIs mean?

It refers to the changes being made to simplify the structures of the NCIs, specifically: to bring functions together to support the Church’s Vision and strategic priorities for the 2020s, use resources more effectively, improve processes, and reduce costs. Currently we are looking at how functions can be joined up across six areas (Vision & Strategy, Ministry, Education & Growing Faith, Faith & Public Life, Data, and Buildings), with changes mindful of what the final governance model is determined to be.