

The House of Bishops met on Wednesday March 17 2021 remotely via Zoom.

The House engaged further with a number of issues including reviewing the work to date of the Governance Review Group and a consideration of the draft report and recommendations of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Task Group.

The Bishop of Manchester, in his capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Group of the Emerging Church Groups, updated the House on the revised Terms of Reference of the Committee and the workstreams that are feeding into the work of the Coordinating Group.

This was followed by an update from the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich who updated the House on the ongoing work of the Transforming Effectiveness workstream which is looking at how resources are best deployed across the Church.

The Bishop of Leeds then addressed the House in his capacity as Chair of the Governance Review Group. The Governance Group is reviewing the shape of the national governance structures and functions of the Church of England and is tasked with suggesting possible changes to simplify and improve the functioning and effectiveness of those structures.

The House considered (in regional groups and in plenary) the work the Governance Review Group had done to date. A final report from the Governance Review Group will be presented to the Co-Ordinating Group in the summer and further discussion and implementation planning will follow in the autumn.

The House was then addressed by the Bishop of London in her capacity as Chair of the Recovery Group who updated the House about the work of the Group and how the Church will respond to the various phases of the planned relaxation of the lockdown. The Bishop of London also spoke to plans for 23rd March and the One Minute Reflection to mark one year of lockdown measures.

The House was then given an update (up to the end of February) by the interim Director of Safeguarding on establishing an independent oversight structure for national safeguarding.

The House then held its first discussion on the draft report of the Archbishops' Anti -Racism Task Force which will be publishing its report on 22nd April. The House was invited to consider the working draft of the Report and to give its views about the suggested implementation timetable and details of the Racial Justice Commission. The House was addressed by Revd. Arun Arora and Revd. Sonia Barron, authors of the draft report.

The House broke out into groups to discuss the draft with Archbishop of Canterbury speaking to the report in the final plenary session and suggesting some ways forward on the draft recommendations. The House noted the draft report and agreed to relay feedback from the meeting to the report's authors.

The meeting concluded with a blessing by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

