

The House turned its attention to the reception of the bishops' response to Living in Love and Faith (LLF) and forthcoming Synod engagement.

The House was given an opportunity to reflect on responses to the proposals published on 20 January, from both the wider Church and the nation, with a range of views and perspectives discussed. The House emphasised the importance of listening to the voices of members of General Synod at its meeting next week.

The House agreed to proceed with terms of reference proposed for the Pastoral Consultative Group, which would be responsible for drafting new Pastoral Guidance, confirming no specific timetable but as previously stated, working towards July 2023 to allow sufficient flexibility and to accommodate feedback from the General Synod.

The House also agreed to establish a small steering group on the other areas raised in the LLF process including human embodiment; singleness, celibacy, friendship and community; human identity; and everyday faithful relationships.

The Lead Bishop for Safeguarding then addressed the House with the National Director of Safeguarding who provided a summary of the key work underway on safeguarding in the national church. The House welcomed the update and noted the priorities in the work programme and asked the incoming Lead Bishop for safeguarding to continue to keep the House informed.

For its final item, the House turned its attention to the state of Diocesan finances and staffing. The House recognised there was considerable variation in the picture for individual dioceses while welcoming evidence that the focus on increasing the number of vocations to ordained ministry since 2015 had borne fruit, resulting in stipendiary clergy numbers being notably higher than projected at that time. The House noted the analysis and further encouraged dioceses to work with senior teams to identify how they can best seek and utilise funding from the Diocesan Investment Programme.

The meeting ended in prayer.

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