

GENERAL SYNOD**Report on the Archbishops' Council's activities**

1. The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the February 2017 group of sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998. It has met twice since its last report was prepared – on 23 March and 15 May. It met jointly with the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors on the morning of 15 May.

Renewal and Reform

2. The major focus of Council meetings remains the various elements of Renewal and Reform and the Council receives regular updates on the work as it progresses.
3. As the final stage of a long and detailed process of consultation, the Council agreed the final funding arrangements for training for ministry (see separate discussion in GS Misc 1168).
4. The Council agreed a new set of Objectives (see annex) for the period 2017 to 2020 to enable it better to align and focus its resources on taking forward Renewal and Reform. In relation to the new Objective 9, the Council has set in train work to develop strategies to support evangelism and discipleship amongst lower socio-economic groups and amongst BAME people. The Council will also be seeking to develop similar strategies for Deaf and disabled people. At its meeting in May, the Council began to consider how best it could support these areas of work.
5. Having agreed with the Church Commissioners the arrangements for the new Strategic Development Funding (which aims to bring funding for growth initiatives to areas of the country where growth and funding are most needed) the Council met for the first time with the Board of Governors to explore their respective roles in relation to this. The meeting will take place annually so that both bodies can review how resources have been allocated and lessons learned from the projects supported.

Safeguarding

6. The Council receives regular updates on the work of the Safeguarding team.

Other matters

7. The Council agreed a 2% increase in the National Stipend Benchmark from 1 April 2018.
8. In terms of governance, the Council finalised its budget for 2018 (GS 2076), reviewed its Risk Register and satisfied itself that the risks had been correctly identified and that appropriate measures were in place to manage those risks, and agreed its Annual Report for 2016 (GS 2058).

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Archbishops' Council Objectives 2017-2020

1. Evangelism

Objective: to bring more of the people of England to the faith of Christ through the Church of England

2020 aim: to have halted the fall in numbers of Church of England worshippers in dioceses representing half the population of England, and to see growth in numbers in a quarter of dioceses

2017 aims: to have helped at least half of dioceses to establish credible strategies for growth, and to have supported at least half of them through strategic funding, and beginning national programmes for targeted groups in higher education and estates

Note: "numbers of worshippers" should be based on the "worshipping community", which is broader than the older measures like "usual Sunday attendance" or the October count. This needs to be aligned sensibly with the measures of Renewal and Reform progress that the Council has already promised to share annually with the Commissioners and publish.

2. Discipleship

Objective: to strengthen the Christian faith and life of all who worship God in the Church of England

2020 aim: to have embedded the two key culture shifts of encouraging seven-day-a-week discipleship, and mutual respect of the vocations of laity and clergy based on baptism; and to have established a national portfolio of lay leadership / discipleship activities, involving the participation of 100,000 adults.

2017 aim: to establish the new discipleship portal, and support 5 champion dioceses for lay leadership, with take-up of activities by 10,000 adults

3. Ministry

Objective: to ensure there are sufficient ordained and lay ministers of the required gifts and qualities who are effectively deployed to enable the Church of England to fulfil its mission, and to support those ministers in their calling, development, ministry and retirement

2020 aim: to achieve a 50% increase in vocations to ordained ministry, compared to 2015; and to have in place processes to call and train ministers who are missional, adaptable and collaborative, and able to lead the Church in the 2020s, 2030s and beyond; and to have in place a national framework for their deployment

2017 aims: to achieve a 10% increase in the number of ordinands, and to set a strategy for further increase, and from wider backgrounds; to implement the new funding

arrangements for ministerial training; to complete a review of the selection of ministers, and to establish a national framework for lay ministries

4. Common Good

Objective: to contribute to transforming our society and communities more closely to reflect the Kingdom of God through loving acts of neighbourliness and service to all.

2020 aim: 75% of parishes to be serving the needs of their community through at least one focused activity; 80% of dioceses to be running at least two diocese-wide social action programmes; and the NCIs to be leading at least three social actions with a national focus.

2017 aim: to support dioceses in building social action initiatives into mission plans; and more structured links with dioceses to give national support to local programmes in at least four areas (e.g. modern slavery, community finance, inter-faith cooperation etc)

5. Education

Objective: to promote high quality Christian education in Church of England schools and voluntary education settings, and through our Church contribution to other schools, colleges, further and higher education institutions.

2020 aim: to have agreement to establish at least 100 new Church schools, including 20 new secondary schools, which will ultimately educate 37,000 extra children; and to have established the C of E Foundation for Education Leadership as self-sustaining and recognised as excellent.

2017 aim: agreement for a total of 50 new schools with plan to achieve the target by 2020; To have developed programmes and trained 75 MAT CEOs and 150 aspiring head teachers and established 100 schools within the peer to peer support network

6. Resources for the Church

Objective: to help dioceses and cathedrals to be most effective in their mission, by providing cost-effective national and specialist services and advice

2020 aim: to have an effective suite of shared services for dioceses and cathedrals, building on established services and having introduced new ones in response to demand; and to support dioceses in securing continuing growth in giving.

2017 aims: to introduce a cost-effective new national recruitment service for dioceses and all parts of the Church to use; and to provide valued consultancy support to cathedrals facing financial difficulties.

7. Safeguarding

Objective: to ensure all children and vulnerable adults are safe in the Church

2020 aim: to have embedded safeguarding as everybody's business and integral to the culture, mission and structures of the Church, and to have established the Church of England as a beacon of good practice.

2017 aim: to continue with the building of the infrastructure and processes for a National Safeguarding Function to promote a Safer Church at all levels, to include including the development of policies and practice guidance, long-term audit processes, training, high-level casework handling, survivor engagement and responding to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

8. Governance

Objective: to operate the national governance arrangements of the Church of England as cost-effectively as possible in pursuit of the Church's mission

2020 aim: to have refined institutional governance structures and processes for the national Church to deliver high-quality, cost-effective policy-making for the Church's needs and mission in the 21st century

2017 aims: to devise and implement a new approach to organising and supporting meetings of Bishops; to devise and implement a better approach to coordinating engagement with the Church's core internal stakeholders; and to assist the Church's governing bodies to decide a way ahead on issues of human sexuality.

9. A Church for all people

Objective: to be a Church that can provide a home for all people in England

2020 aim: to have made material progress in extending our reach and engagement with all people.

2017 aims: to develop a strategy for evangelism and discipleship for those less well served by reason of race or class – including a stocktake of the impact of Renewal and Reform on BAME communities, and developing the R&R work on evangelism in outer estates; to draw together and strengthen work on support for disabled people; to support continuing work in the House of Bishops and General Synod on marriage and same-sex relationships.