

## GENERAL SYNOD

## DIOCESES, PASTORAL AND MISSION MEASURE 2007

**STATEMENT FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK GIVING THE REASONS FOR  
HIS DECISION TO AUTHORISE THE COMMISSION TO LAY THE DRAFT  
DIOCESES OF BRADFORD, RIPON AND LEEDS AND WAKEFIELD  
REORGANISATION SCHEME BEFORE THE SYNOD**

*Background*

1. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012 the Dioceses Commission ('the Commission') published the draft Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 201- ('the draft scheme'), prepared by it under s.6 of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007 ('the Measure').
2. In accordance with s.6(6) of the Measure the Commission submitted the draft scheme to the diocesan synods of the dioceses which would be affected by the implementing of the scheme ('the affected dioceses') for their consent. The diocesan synods of the affected dioceses (namely those of Blackburn, Bradford, Ripon and Leeds, Sheffield and Wakefield) have accordingly now all considered the draft scheme. The diocesan synods of the dioceses of Blackburn, Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Sheffield gave their consent. The diocesan synod of the diocese of Wakefield did not give its consent.
3. Had the diocesan synods of all the affected dioceses given their consent to the draft scheme, under s.7(1) of the Measure the Commission would have been required to lay the draft scheme before the General Synod for its approval.
4. However, since the Wakefield diocesan synod did not give its consent, s.7(2) of the Measure became engaged. It provides that:
 

*“If the diocesan synod of any of [the dioceses which would be affected by the implementing of a draft reorganisation scheme] does not give its consent ... and the archbishop of the province in which the diocese is situated is satisfied that-*

*(a) the interest of that diocese in the scheme is so small that the withholding of consent by the diocesan synod thereof should not prevent the submission of the draft scheme to the General Synod, or*

*(b) there are wider considerations affecting the province or the Church of England as a whole which require the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod,*

*the archbishop may authorise the [Dioceses] Commission to lay the draft scheme before the General Synod.”*
5. Section 7(3) goes on to require that, where the archbishop authorises the draft scheme to be laid before the General Synod under s.7(2), a statement by him of his reasons for his decision must be sent to every member of the Synod with the draft scheme.

6. Against this background, the draft scheme will only be laid before the Synod for approval if I authorise the Commission to do that, which I may only do if I am satisfied that one of the grounds specified in s.7(2) exists. If so satisfied, I must prepare a statement of the reasons for my decision.
7. In order to put myself in a position to discharge my responsibilities under s.7(2), I have read and considered:
  - the draft scheme; and
  - the report on the draft scheme sent by the Commission under s.6(7) of the Measure to every member of the diocesan synods of the affected dioceses, which included:
    - the statement prepared by the Commission under s.6(2) of the Measure of the effect of the proposals, if implemented, on the mission of the Church of England ('the mission statement');
    - the detailed estimate prepared by the Commission under s.6(2) of the Measure of the financial effect of the proposals ('the financial estimate'); and
    - a summary of the representations made to the Commission under s.6(4) of the Measure which the Commission thought should be brought to the attention of the diocesan synods.
8. I have also taken into consideration, so far as relevant, correspondence I received from the Bishops of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds, Wakefield and Burnley, and from the Chair of the Commission, following the decision of the Wakefield diocesan synod on 2nd March.

*My decision*

9. I have decided that there are wider considerations affecting the province of York which require the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod.

*The reasons for my decision*

10. The reasons for my decision are set out in the Annex.

*The consequences of my decision*

11. As a result of my decision I have written to the Chair of the Commission authorising him to lay the draft scheme before the General Synod.
12. However, it is important to understand the consequences of my decision. Its effect is to allow the draft scheme to be laid before the General Synod for its approval, so that it has the opportunity to debate it and decide whether to approve the draft scheme. Thus it does not follow from my decision that the draft scheme will be made. But it does mean that, rather than the process coming to an end at this point, the General Synod will be able to form its own view of the merits of the draft scheme, and hear and assess the arguments that will no doubt be put to it from a range of different perspectives.

**✠ Sentamu Eboracensis**  
Bishophthorpe

1 May 2013

Philip and James, Apostles

Statement of reasons prepared by the Archbishop of York under s.7(3) of the Measure for his decision to authorise the Dioceses Commission to lay the draft scheme before the General Synod

***Introduction***

Under s.7(2) of the Measure, in the circumstances which have arisen I may authorise the Commission to lay the draft scheme before the General Synod if I am satisfied that either:

- (a) the interest of the diocese of Wakefield in the draft scheme is so small that the withholding of consent by its diocesan synod should not prevent the submission of the draft scheme to the Synod, or
- (b) there are wider considerations affecting the province of York or the Church of England as a whole which require the draft scheme to be submitted to the Synod.

I have accordingly considered whether either of these grounds exists.

***The first ground specified in s.7(2)***

So far as the first ground specified in s.7(2) is concerned, far from being ‘small’, the interest of the diocese of Wakefield in the draft scheme is plainly significant: if made, on its coming into operation the scheme would (amongst other things) dissolve the diocese, vacate the office of its bishop, transfer the area currently comprised in the diocese to the area of the new diocese of Leeds, make Wakefield cathedral a cathedral of that new diocese, make the suffragan see of Pontefract a suffragan see of that new diocese, dissolve the diocesan bodies of the diocese of Wakefield and abolish various offices of that diocese.

In the light of these considerations, I do not consider that the interest of the diocese of Wakefield in the draft scheme can be said to be so small that the withholding of consent by its diocesan synod should not prevent the draft scheme being submitted to the General Synod.

***The second ground specified in s.7(2)***

The second ground specified in s.7(2) is that there are “*wider considerations affecting the province [of York] or the Church of England as a whole which require the [draft scheme] to be submitted to the General Synod*”.

I understand this to mean that I may authorise the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod for approval if I am satisfied that, when looked at from a wider, provincial, point of view, rather than from the perspective of any particular diocese, there are considerations affecting the province of such a weighty kind that the General Synod should have the opportunity to decide whether to approve the draft scheme, even though the diocesan synod of the diocese of Wakefield has not given its consent.

The exercise of my responsibilities under s.7(2) accordingly involves my considering the position in relation to the province more generally, rather than from the point of view of any particular diocese alone.

Having done that, I am satisfied that, for the reasons that follow, there are wider considerations affecting the province that require the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod.

### ***The furtherance of the Church's mission in the province***

The first wider consideration which I consider to require the draft scheme to be submitted to the Synod is that of the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England in the province of York.

Section 1 of the Measure provides that

*“It shall be the duty of any person or body carrying out any functions under this Measure ... to have due regard to the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England.”*

That duty applies to me in exercising my functions under s.7(2) of the Measure in relation to the draft scheme.

It follows that, in deciding whether *“there are wider considerations affecting the province or the Church of England as a whole which require the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod”*, I need to take the furtherance of the mission of the Church of England into consideration. In practice that means, in particular, that I need to consider whether the furtherance of that mission in the province of York is a ‘wider consideration’ of the kind referred to in s.7(2). I believe it is - though that is a conclusion I should have reached anyway, irrespective of the effect of s.1 of the Measure.

For the reasons explained in *Challenges for the New Quinquennium*<sup>1</sup>, the Church of England as a whole faces considerable challenges in the years ahead. That is no less true of the West Yorkshire region than it is of anywhere else. Indeed, the Church there faces particular problems as a result of the boundaries of the dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield having been determined at a time when circumstances were very different: the consequence is that they no longer reflect the ways in which the communities of West Yorkshire are structured, so prejudicing the ability of the Church to speak to them as effectively as it might.

I believe that the proposals embodied in the draft scheme would, if implemented, substantially enhance the ability of the Church to respond to the challenges of mission in the West Yorkshire region – mission, that is, to individuals, to communities and to the structures of society. The reasons for that are in my view persuasively and accurately set out in the mission statement.

In particular, I consider that the creation of a single diocese in the form proposed could enable it to develop new ways of delivering mission in its area, including:

- by enhancing the capacity of episcopal leadership in mission by creating an episcopal team for the region headed by a single diocesan bishop;
- by creating a coherent area scheme for that team which, amongst other things, allows mission to be more locally focused through the individual episcopal areas / archdeaconries, and therefore more sensitive to the particular needs of local communities within the region, than is possible at the moment; and
- by maximising the support that can be provided for mission at local level through the creation of a single diocesan office.

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<sup>1</sup> *Challenges for the New Quinquennium – A Report from the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council* (GS 1815), January 2011.

## ***Finance***

There is no suggestion that the existing dioceses are failing financially. Nor is the securing of financial advantage the primary reason for making the proposals embodied in the draft scheme.

However, I consider that the implementation of the proposals embodied in the draft scheme would offer substantial financial advantages to the Church of England in the province of York. So much is demonstrated, in my view, by the careful analysis set out in the financial statement.

In particular, I believe that creating one diocese in place of the three dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield would:

- give rise to economies of scale and consequent cost savings;
- create the potential for greater savings than those foreseen in the financial statement as new working practices are developed over time; and
- so promote the redirection of funds to new mission initiatives and/or the reduction of parish share.

I also believe that the establishment of a single diocese would also produce a more substantial financial structure, with a larger income and greater reserves, which should be more secure and stable in the longer term.

## ***Conclusion***

I am satisfied that the potential benefits, in terms of mission and finance, that the proposals embodied in the draft scheme (if implemented) would confer on the Church of England in the province are of such significance as to require that the draft scheme be submitted to the General Synod so that the Synod has the opportunity to decide whether to approve the draft scheme, even though the diocesan synod of the diocese of Wakefield has not given its consent to it.