

GENERAL SYNOD

VISION AND STRATEGY

Background

1. Over a year ago, conversations arose around the need for some key strategic priorities for the Church of England during the next 10 years and to discern where God might be calling us, recognising our quinquennial goals were coming to an end.
2. For any institution undertaking a process of examining what is important to it and acknowledging what might need to change is rarely an easy process. For the Church of England, as a complex and multifaceted institution, it was clear that we needed an iterative and consultative methodology rather than the usual committee structure.

The story so far

3. The Vision and Strategy work sits under the umbrella of the Emerging Church and is working closely with the other work streams to ensure a coordinated and joined up approach.
4. We were determined that the Vision and Strategy process recalled us to the heart of our Christian vocation as followers of Jesus Christ; understood both the history and complexity of our Church and would help energise, shape and inspire the Church in every place, be it diocese, parish, church plant, school or chaplaincy. We were aware of the need to honour initiatives and commitments already made and we wanted something that could be owned by the whole Church. This is a tall order! We are grateful to the Bishop of Oxford and others who have underpinned our work with deep and rich theological reflections.
5. We have set about our work prayerfully and collaboratively, involving hundreds of people, representing many parts of the Church of England. There has been a particular emphasis on younger and more diverse voices, the very people who are often not included in this sort of process. Ahead of the General Synod meeting in November, a consultation with children and young people across the country is taking place in collaboration with the Education Team and the Archbishop of York Youth Trust. The road map in Annex 1, shows the progress and work undertaken so far.
6. The Five Marks of Mission, adopted by so many across the Anglican Communion, describe what life looks like for Christian communities. These are the ministries and concerns which should be shaping every church of every type.
 - i. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom **(Tell)**
 - ii. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers **(Teach)**
 - iii. To respond to human need by loving service **(Tend)**
 - iv. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation **(Transform)**

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- v. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. **(Treasure)**

The 5 Marks of Mission, operate as the overarching framework within which we conduct all our life and ministry, but of themselves are not the key strategic priorities for the Vision and Strategy work.

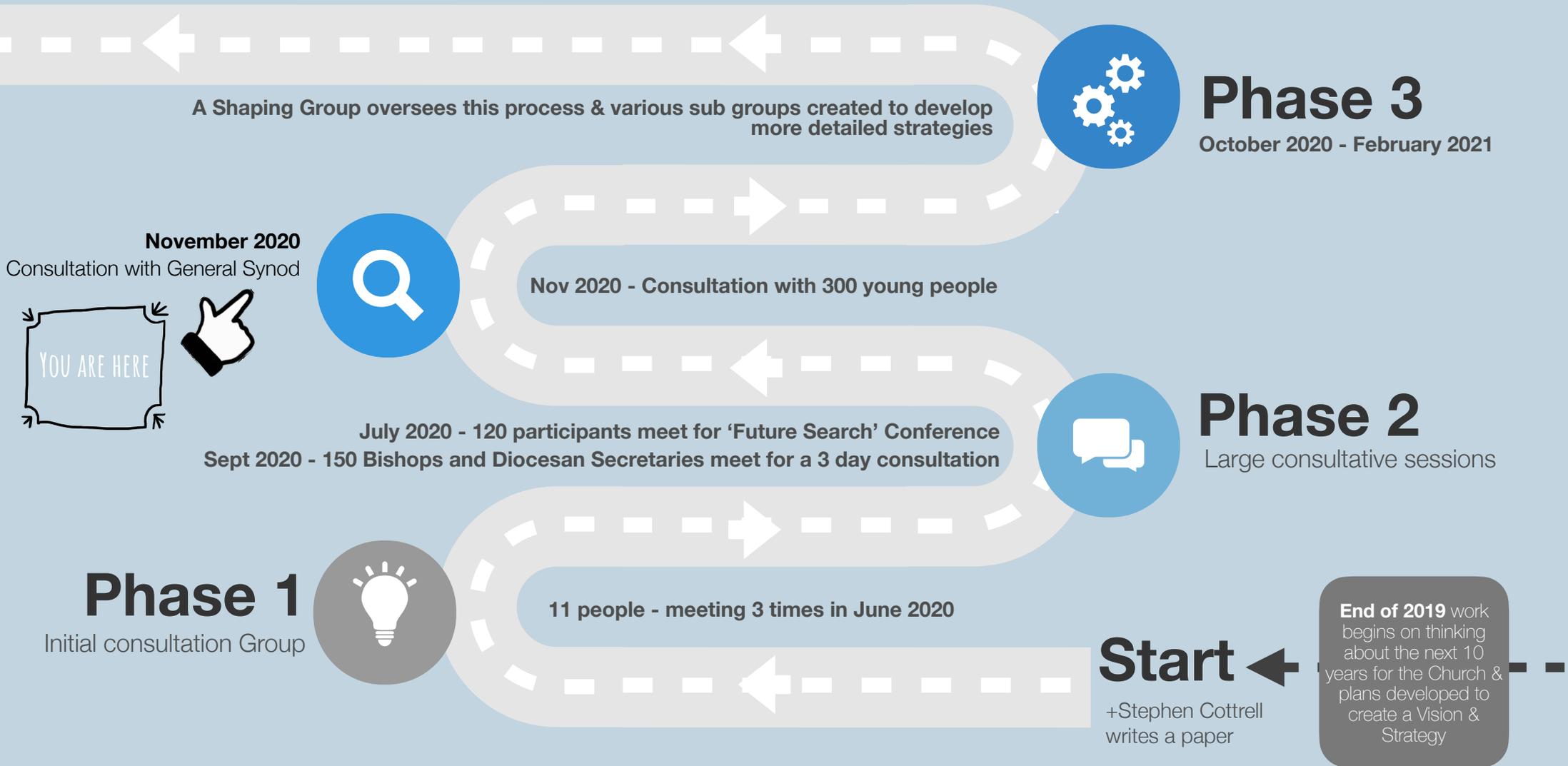
November 2020 group of sessions

7. The Vision and Strategy work will be unveiled at the November group of sessions, not in lengthy papers, but in a diagram, which shares the vision that, with others the bishops and diocesan secretaries endorse and own.
8. We are not asking General Synod for formal approval, but rather at this stage to share the fruits of our contemplation and discussion. It is our hope that this will enable Synod to understand the vision and both participate in its ongoing development and recognise where the strategic priorities we shall look at together in February come from.
9. There will be an opportunity for members to hear from some of those involved in the process to date and to discuss the diagram and pray together in breakout groups.
10. We are grateful to the Business Committee for this opportunity for General Synod to engage with the Vision and Strategy work stream ahead of the February 2021 group of sessions.

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York
Dave Male, Director of Evangelism and Discipleship
October 2020

Church of England : Vision and Strategy process

Report presented at the December 2020 House of Bishops & February 2021 General Synod



A Core Team gives consistency through the process; +Steven Croft as Theological Consultant