

**GENERAL SYNOD****Legislative Reform Committee Update****Summary**

This paper gives an update on the work undertaken by the Legislative Reform Committee and outlines future work which will be presented to Synod.

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**Overview**

1. The Legislative Reform Committee was reconstituted in December 2019 and its remit was expanded to include promoting the reform of ecclesiastical legislation to enable the Church more effectively to carry out its mission through identifying legislation in need of reform. This includes making proposals to the Archbishops' Council for legislative reform that requires primary legislation and subordinate legislation. The LRC is empowered to circulate a Measure or Canon for First Consideration to Synod on behalf of the Council.
2. There are eight members:
  - The Revd Canon Simon Butler (Chair)
  - The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent (Vice-Chair)
  - The Rt Revd Martin Seeley
  - The Revd Graeme Buttery
  - The Venerable Douglas Dettmer
  - Mr Joseph Diwakar
  - Mrs Julie Dziegiel
  - Dr Rachel Jepson (*awaiting confirmation*)

**Current Priorities**

3. There are currently four areas of priority for the LRC. These are: delivery of two Legislative Reform Orders; reform of legislation relating to pastoral reorganisation; review of legislation relating to clergy terms of service; and consideration of legislation and guidance relating to diocesan finances.

**Legislative Reform Orders**

4. The LRC will be presenting two Legislative Reform Orders to General Synod over the next two groups of sessions. The first one, Legislative Reform (Church of England Pensions) Order GS 2193A will be presented at the April group of sessions. The purpose of this LRO is to update the governance of the Pensions Board to bring it into line with accepted standards of good governance and to remove legislative burdens which generate unnecessary complexity or cost.
5. The second LRO, Legislative Reform (Church Commissioners) Order GS 2194A will be presented at the July group of sessions. The purpose of this LRO is to update the governance of the Church Commissioners and to remove legislative burdens that generate unnecessary complexity or cost.

## **Pastoral Reorganisation**

6. A review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 (MPM) is currently taking place. It is a complex piece of legislation which has not had a significant review for over 15 years. The context has changed significantly since it was last reviewed, not least due to Covid-19 and the Emerging Church work such as the Vision and Strategy.
7. Currently the MPM includes all processes within the primary legislation, making any changes dependent on new Measures approved by Synod and Parliament. It is apparent that the MPM needs fundamental reform to align it with the Church's needs in the twenty first century.
8. The LRC are looking at proposals for new legislation which would separate the MPM into two: (1) a primary governance section which deals with purpose, responsibilities, powers and the functions of committees etc. and (2) a section which puts all the revised processes into secondary legislation, ensuring that these processes can be adapted over time as required. This would be an important modernisation and make it much easier for the Church to adapt its processes over time.
9. The LRC will hope to bring a 'green paper' to the July 2021 group of sessions.

## **Clergy Terms of Service**

10. The LRC has been looking a wide range of issues that concern what it means to serve as an ordained minister in the Church of England today. This includes the role and duties, accountability of and to, standards of practice, care and support, protection from harassment and bullying, capability issues, and the disciplining of the ordained.
11. The LRC is working to bring together a coherent approach to this range of issues, but wants to do so at a measured pace, conscious that this is a challenging time for clergy.
12. The complexity of this work is a challenge, and the LRC will seek to engage with this issue further during 2021. It is likely that the outcomes of this work will return at the beginning of the next Quinquennium, rather than in the lifetime of this Synod.

## **Diocesan Finances**

13. The LRC is considering whether there is scope for legislative change to support more effective use of diocesan funds. This is a work in progress but there have been finance training seminars with dioceses to address the use of proceeds in relation to parsonages. The seminars provided advice on disposal processes and the ways that proceeds can be used under current legislation. They also included an overview of the Total Return Order investment approach that dioceses can elect to follow for their Diocesan Stipends Fund Capital accounts. Further seminars will be available if required.

The Committee will be delighted to receive other proposals for legislative reform from members of the General Synod, which it will be happy to consider.

**Revd Canon Simon Butler, Chair**

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