

## GENERAL SYNOD

### Background Paper: Review of the Five Guiding Principles

#### Introduction

1. The Private Member's Motion was tabled by David Lamming, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, in March 2017. It sought a review of the Five Guiding Principles and was drafted in response to the withdrawal of a candidate to the nomination to the See of Sheffield.
2. Since the motion was submitted, there has been considerable work undertaken by the House of Bishops through the Implementation and Dialogue Group to understand how the Declaration and Five Guiding Principles are being received and experienced across the Church.
3. The House of Bishops has been able to engage with the report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group and it is being presented at the July group of sessions as GS 2225.

#### Summary

4. The House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests was made in 2014 and in the same year, the General Synod made the decision that all three orders of ministry be open to women and men, and that those who cannot in theological conscience accept the ministry of women would continue to have an honoured place within the life of the church.
5. The Private Member's Motion was drafted over four years ago and reflects a particular event in the circumstances of the time. Synod may wish to consider to what extent the specific references to those events remain relevant, given the passage of time, and developments since then, in the diocese of Sheffield and more widely across the Church. There are some who have expressed concern as to whether the specific references in the opening paragraphs, and the personal references in particular, are suitable for a motion of Synod.
6. The wording of the motion is as follows:

*'That this Synod:*

*(a) share the sadness and regret of the Rt Revd Philip North in his decision, announced on 9 March 2017, to withdraw acceptance of his nomination to the See of Sheffield;*

*(b) note the substantial support for Bishop North's nomination from many women and men, lay and ordained, in the dioceses of both Sheffield and Blackburn, and in the wider Church of England;*

*(c) express its full support for Bishop North in his future ministry, whether in the Blackburn diocese or elsewhere;*

*(d) note, with concern, the implications of Bishop North's decision, and the public debate that preceded it, for the 'mutual flourishing' of the Church of England; and*

*(e) request the House of Bishops urgently to review the 'Five Guiding Principles' and to consider whether they need to be amended or amplified in order to ensure that there is an equal place at all levels in the Church for men and women of*

*different theological convictions on the issue of women's ordination, and to report to the Synod by February 2018.'*

7. It is noted that there is a proposal to amend the final paragraph to reflect that the motion has been overtaken by time and events, and that the House of Bishops will be establishing a Standing Commission to focus on the working of the Declaration both now and in future. The proposed amendment builds on the paper from the House of Bishops:  
*'(e) welcome the report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group (as set out in paper GS 2225) and, noting the intention that the proposed 'Standing Commission on House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests' should report at least once a year to the House of Bishop, request that each such report is sent to all General Synod members, with an opportunity, if requested, for the report to be debated.'*
8. This paper does not provide further commentary on the implications of the Motion. Synod members are referred instead to GS 2225, which contains a much fuller discussion of the issues involved, both in the report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group, and in the covering paper by the Bishop of Rochester on behalf of the House of Bishops.

## **Conclusion**

9. It is acknowledged that the paper from David Lamming, GS 2226A, does recognise the work of the Implementation and Dialogue Group, and welcomes its report. The proposed amendment to the final paragraph may be considered to make the motion more relevant following the passage of time since it was first drafted. Synod may wish to consider the relevance of otherwise of the paragraphs which refer specifically to individuals, and to events in 2017.

William Nye  
Secretary General  
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