

GENERAL SYNOD

MOTION ON REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW GROUP

Note from the Chair of the Governance Review Group

1. The House of Bishops originally agreed in December 2019 that there should be a review of the Church of England's national governance structures. This work later became part of the Emerging Church programme of activity. Between August 2020 – August 2021 the task and finish Governance Review Group (GRG) met regularly under my chairmanship. We submitted our report to the Archbishops at in August 2021 and it was published on 14 September 2021.
2. I presented the report of the GRG at the inaugural group of sessions of this Synod last November. In my presentation to Synod, I outlined how the GRG had gone about its work, some of the issues it had grappled with, and how it had reached its conclusions. I also said that I would be asking the Business Committee to find time on the February 2022 Synod Agenda for a debate on how the National Church Institutions should take forward the recommendations of the report.
3. As a result, the following motion is before the Synod at this group of sessions:
That this Synod:
 - a. *Welcome the Report of the Governance Review Group (GS 2239);*
 - b. *Invite the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners to engage with stakeholders in the Church and State on the Report's recommendations; and*
 - c. *invite the Archbishops' Council, in the light of the outcome of that engagement, to introduce legislation for consideration by this Synod to give effect to proposals that involve legislative change.*
4. I should emphasise that this Motion does not seek an endorsement of **the specific set of recommendations** contained in the report, but rather the Synod's support for setting in motion a process of engagement on these led by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners in which the Synod will be a major actor. There will be opportunities through the legislative process and other means for the Synod to discuss, question and challenge the proposals. Other stakeholders will include Parliament and the dioceses.
5. The second part of the Motion before Synod refers to the General Synod's unique role as the legislative body of the Church of England. In this role, the Synod will be asked to consider and (if it thinks fit) approve legislation bringing forward changes to the Church's national governance structures after the process of engagement which is referred to in the first part of the motion.
6. If adopted, not all aspects of the recommendations set out in the GRG report will require legislation to be passed in order to implement them. Some of these operational and financial changes will require very careful planning and implementation and communication and engagement with the stakeholders mentioned above will also be crucial.

7. I am glad to report that my colleague Bishop Andrew Watson, the Bishop of Guildford, will be taking over from me responsibility for this area of work. If the Synod approves this motion, such that the work can go forward to the next stage, he will convene a small project board, including some Synod members, to oversee both the preparation of the draft legislation, and the parallel work needed to consider and address non-legislative planning.
8. This will include an extensive process of engagement and listening, to make sure that the work is informed by the range of opinions and concerns across the Church, both as expressed by Synod members, and also in the wider Church. I know that he will wish to learn from the considerable engagement and consultation that took place during the life of the previous Synod on the draft Cathedrals Measure, and which led to an improved Measure, with wider support. To facilitate this, he is proposing to establish a wider Reference Group of Synod members representing a range of perspectives and interests with whom he will consult regularly as the work goes through its various phases.
9. I hope that the Synod will engage with this report in the spirit in which it is intended: as a small but potentially worthwhile contribution to simplifying and making more effective the governance of our national Church functions, and thereby to helping us all to devote more of our energies to the Church's vital mission of making Christ known to our nation.

RT REVD NICK BAINES, BISHOP OF LEEDS

JANUARY 2022