

## **Developing a Diocesan Strategy**

### **1. Our context**

The Diocese in Europe is entering a time of significant change and opportunity. Shaped by shifting patterns of migration, the climate crisis, and wider geopolitical developments, our chaplaincies are becoming increasingly diverse, multicultural communities embedded in their local contexts. Though we have deep historical roots, our diocese is less than fifty years old and is now better resourced and more connected than ever before. People across the diocese are seeking to respond faithfully to this changing context.

In addition, the Diocese in Europe has been allocated £9m under the Diocesan Investment Programme [1] for investment in our mission and ministry over the coming years. We recognise the need to steward this gift wisely and faithfully, as with all our resources, which come from the sacrificial giving of Anglican people in the past and present, for the sake of God's mission in Europe.

Rooted in our diocesan vision, Walking Together in Faith [2] our identity is as a welcoming and diverse church; hospitably Anglican, united in fellowship around the Eucharist, committed to trust, safety, and integrity, and shaped by our context as a dispersed, migrant church across Europe.

### **2. Strategy development process**

Being strategic means prayerfully discerning our long-term aims and planning how to reach these. Fundamentally, strategy is the art of making good choices with available resources. Our resources are limited in terms of both finance and people, and we will not be able to do everything that we might wish. For those who have journeyed through vocational discernment, the need to balance this intersection of the deep calling of God and the practical realities of options, support and funding available, will likely be familiar. The diocesan strategy will offer a framework for good decision-making by the diocesan synod, staff, clergy and laity of the diocese, across every area of our work, so that we are all working together.

Work towards a diocesan strategy began with extensive listening. Clergy and lay people from across the diocese have been engaged through synods, chapter meetings, working group meetings, and more than 200 one-to-one conversations. These conversations explored the realities of local ministry, alongside hopes and concerns for the future of the diocese.

[1] <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/vision-strategy/funding-strategic-mission-and-ministry/diocesan-investment-programme>

[2] <https://www.europe.anglican.org/resources/diocesan-strategy>

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From these conversations, we discerned five key areas of focus that structure our work in developing a diocesan strategy:

Healthy and thriving chaplaincies – developing proposals on how best to support chaplaincies across the diocese to grow in health and resilience, particularly during times of change or conflict, and to foster a safe and healthy culture in every chaplaincy.

- Children and youth – developing proposals on how support for children and youth workers and children, youth and young adult ministry.
- Intercultural, contextual and local language engagement – developing proposals for guidance on appropriate non-European and local language engagement and how best to support intercultural and contextual ministry and leadership across the diocese, including via the work in other key areas.
- Ministry training, support and development (lay and ordained) – reviewing current provision across the diocese and developing proposals for change or investment as needed, with particular attention to support for lay leaders, self-supporting ministers, and times of transition.
- New worshipping communities – developing proposals for appropriate authorisation, training, and resourcing for new worshipping communities in the varied contexts across the diocese.

These areas of focus have been chosen because they engage some of the most pressing and complex questions currently facing the diocese, including both challenges and opportunities. The development of the strategy is being led by the Bishop's Strategy Group, supported by five associated working groups on the five key areas above. These groups bring together lay and ordained people from across the diocese with diverse experiences, backgrounds and skills.

Other areas of work are vital and central to our shared life, but are already carefully discerned and well-developed, and there is no intention to revisit or rewrite these unnecessarily. We reaffirm our commitment to:

- Care for Creation
- Ecumenical and partnership working
- Giving and fundraising
- Public witness
- Safeguarding

The strategy will be developed further through consultation and discernment across the diocese, ahead of a final version being brought to an extraordinary online Synod meeting in November 2026.



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Phased implementation of changes to existing programmes or new work will follow from 2027, supported by careful and proportionate resourcing. These might include, for example, free training courses for people across the diocese, grants for local work, increased staffing, guidance or pastoral care in some areas, etc.

This is a shared endeavour. Together, in prayer and partnership, we are seeking to discern how God is calling us to live, worship, and serve across Europe – for such a time as this.

### **3. Take action**

The development of our diocesan strategy is underway. In reading, prayerfully reflecting on and responding to this paper, you are participating in an ongoing conversation between the people of our diocese and with the Living God.

Your comments, questions and insights are not only welcome but essential, as we seek to discern the future to which God is calling the Diocese in Europe. You can respond to this paper through a dedicated online survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/8frxEJQfuZ>

Thank you for taking the time to respond candidly, thoughtfully and prayerfully to this paper. We will read your responses carefully and weave reflections into our ongoing work.