

GENERAL SYNOD

**ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL REPORT
ON ACTIVITIES SINCE FEBRUARY 2012**

1. The Archbishops' Council presents this report on its activities since the February 2012 Group of Sessions in accordance with the requirements of the National Institutions Measure 1998.
2. The Council is chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury or, in his absence, the Archbishop of York and has met on three occasions since its last report was prepared – on 15 March, 1-2 May and 30 May.

STRATEGY*Challenges for the new Quinquennium*

3. Much of the Council's work in its divisions and focus at meetings is now on the themes identified for the new quinquennium: Going for Growth, the Common Good and Re-Imagining Ministry.
4. The Council has received reports on work in hand and identified priorities within the themes outlined in *Challenges for the new Quinquennium* (GS 1815 and GS Misc 995). Its report on work being undertaken under the themes has been circulated to Synod as GS Misc 1025.
5. As noted in the report, the Council has discussed a draft report on the theological underpinning of the theme of re-imagining ministry and the priorities for ministry over the next five-ten years. The report will be revised and discussed by the House of Bishops in December. The report will be used to guide the policy review of ministry issues across the piece, including in the areas of resourcing and lay ministry.
6. The Council has also warmly welcomed a report on a mission strategy for growth across the Church from a group chaired by the Bishop of St Albans. The House of Bishops will also need to discuss the report before it comes to the Synod. There is a cross-over here with other work which the Council is undertaking to identify indicators of growth. The small group undertaking this work is due to report to the Council in September.

Beginnings and Bereavement

7. Following the success of the Weddings Project, the Council has approved two further mission initiatives around the areas of beginnings and bereavement. They are led by the new Head of Special Projects and Development and are looking at ways in which the Church of England can better engage with people at these key times in their life. The Council agreed the project plan at its March meeting.

Church School of the Future

8. Church schools provide education for 18.7% of children in primary schools and 6% in secondary education. This is, therefore, a significant area of social engagement for the Church.
9. The Council engaged with the Chair of the Board of Education, the Chief Education Officer and Dr Priscilla Chadwick on her report before it was finalised. The report, which will be the subject of a presentation to the Synod on Monday evening, considers the changing education landscape, the position of Church schools within it and how they might develop in the future.

Consequences of the Government's Higher Education funding changes for theological training

10. Following the Synod debate in July of a report (GS 1836) from a working party chaired by the Bishop of Sheffield on the possible consequences of the Government's Higher Education (HE) funding changes for theological education, and a presentation to the Synod in February of the further stages of the work (GS Misc 1008), the Council endorsed a recommendation for a provider for the validation of theological training.

FEES

11. Following debate at the February Synod, the Council has made the Fees Order which will come into force from 1 January 2013.

FINANCE

Whitelands College

12. The Council owns the freehold of the site in Roehampton on which Whitelands College (now part of the Roehampton University) is situated and leases the site to the College. Changes in the governance structure between the various colleges which make up the University (formerly the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education) have meant the renegotiation of various aspects of the lease arrangements. The negotiations have been complex, but have resulted in a much clearer definition of what 'Church of England identity' means. The Council agreed the outcome of the negotiations conducted on its behalf and this has been enshrined in new, formal documentation.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

13. The Council has continued to receive regular updates on the position around the dioceses in the light of the difficult economic context. In response and in light of savings against the 2011 budget, the Council agreed in November 2011 to freeze the overall level of the 2012 apportionment at the 2011 level and to recalculate the amount apportioned to each diocese on the basis of that figure. This represented a variation from the apportionment agreed at the July Synod (GS 1842) and a saving to the dioceses of around £0.5 million.
14. The Council has taken account of the ongoing financial difficulties faced in the dioceses in agreeing at its 1-2 May meeting a budget proposal for 2013. The budget proposed for 2013 represents an increase of 1.3% over the level funded by the dioceses in 2011 and 2012 and keeps the apportionment level proposed for 2013 below that first approved by the Synod last July for 2012.

GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT

15. The Council discussed a number of current legislative and other public affairs issues of particular relevance to the Church, including reform of the House of Lords and the Government's consultation document for same sex marriage. On the latter it endorsed, subject to some drafting changes, a draft Church of England response.

GOVERNANCE

Dioceses Commission

16. The Council has responded to the Dioceses Commission's consultation on its scheme for the establishment of one new West Yorkshire diocese from the present three dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield.

Archbishops' Council

17. The Council has agreed a number of changes to the way it conducts its business, some of which have been implemented already, and some of which will require changes to the legislation. It has reduced the number of its meetings to two 1-day and two 24-hour residential meetings annually, retaining additional dates for contingency meetings (the meeting on 30 May was a contingency date that was needed for urgent business). It will be considering its size and composition in the autumn.
18. The Council has also sponsored a number of enabling amendments to the National Institutions Measure, including to give it the power to conduct business by correspondence between meetings and to remove the requirement for one-third of the membership of the Appointments Committee to be appointed by and from the membership of the Archbishops' Council.

Chair of the Business Committee

19. Following the change to SO 115, the Council has extended an invitation to the Chair of the Business Committee to attend meetings of the Council and to receive papers which are not confidential to or of relevance only to the trustee responsibilities of members. The Chair of the Business Committee will be able to speak, but not vote at meetings.

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