

MISSION TO AREAS OF NEW HOUSING IN THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

Purpose

To provide a framework to support:

- Senior diocesan leaders in developing plans for growth
- Diocesan, Archdeaconry and Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees in exercising their oversight of growing new congregations across the Diocese
- Those considering mission and ministry to new housing areas: assessing need and opportunities, carrying out consultation and seeking authorisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all parishes within the Diocese of Salisbury.

Introduction

In 2015, Bishop Nicholas commissioned a research project that resulted in a document published in 2016 "Planning for New Communities". The report shows that around 46,000 new houses will be built in the Diocese of Salisbury over the next ten years, with the potential to house over 100,000 people. The Diocese takes seriously its remit to provide for the cure of these souls, and to ensure that there is a Christian presence in all of these new communities.

This Diocesan policy aims to lay down general principles for mission to areas of new housing, leaving enough flexibility for those on the ground to implement them according to their local context and as God directs. It should be read in conjunction with the Good Practice Guide (GPG) for Mission on New Housing Developments. The Guide will give detailed and practical recommendations on best practice and is due for completion for the end of 2017.

Levels of response

It is recommended that the number of houses planned for each area is used as a guide to assess the appropriate level of response, recognising that flexibility will be required to account for the disproportionate impact relatively few houses may have on smaller communities.

New housing developments do not respect traditional parish boundaries, so flexibility and partnership working across parishes and deaneries is essential, recognising gifting and willingness to engage wherever it is found.

The "Planning for New Communities" report gives a guide to the size of developments as of March 2016, though figures on the ground may well change as development plans evolve. The figure of 2.3 people per house has been used as a guide for average occupancy.

Categories of development:

- Category 1: Over 2,000 houses (at least 4,600 people approx)
- Category 2: Over 1,000 houses (at least 2,300 people approx)
- Category 3: Under 1,000 houses (fewer than 2,300 people approx)

Recommendations for all categories

- The Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees identify all new housing developments in their regions and consider an appropriate response, taking into account the areas detailed below.
- New housing should be on the agenda of each Mission and Pastoral Committee meeting.
- In Deaneries, the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee should take responsibility for engaging with new housing in their area in partnership with the Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Sub-Committee. Deaneries with substantial new housing developments should consider setting up a dedicated new housing team to take this forward.
- Deanery strategic plans should take account of new housing developments in their area.

- An appropriate strategy for engaging with the new community should take into account the following areas:
 - Planning engagement
 - The most appropriate model of mission for each development
 - The implications for current parishes/parish boundaries
 - Flexible use of staffing and property resources across the deanery
 - Partnerships with schools and/or community groups
 - Ecumenical partnerships
 - Capacity development
- Whatever strategy is decided upon, a local team should be in place for each development and engage with the emerging community as early as possible. This makes the most of the window of opportunity early in the development when people are most open to visits and invitations to get involved in the emerging life of their community.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that key members of the local new housing team live on the development. National research and local experience show that the on-site presence of key members of the team (lay or ordained) is crucial for effective mission.
- Human resources for mission to new housing areas are at a premium, so working in partnership using Deanery, Ecumenical and key community partners is essential.
- The Ministry for Mission team will be available to offer support and advice as required.

Category 1 - Diocesan and Deanery-level response

Goal: a missional Christian presence within the new community, with the aim of establishing in time a new congregation/fresh expression of church.

Options to resource this could include:

- The Diocese exploring the feasibility of resourcing a house and/or a post in these new communities, depending on the model of mission agreed and resources available.
- An assessment of property resources across the relevant deaneries, exploring the scope for reallocation of resources to facilitate the sale/purchase/rental of a house on new developments.
- Seed corn funding and support for projects in areas of new housing through the Aldhelm Mission Fund subject to assessment and approval by the appropriate Deanery/Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee and availability of funds.
- The provision of appropriate training through the Learning for Discipleship and Ministry and Ministry for Mission.

Category 2 – Deanery-level response, with Diocesan input.

Goal: a missional Christian presence within the new community, possibly leading to a fresh expression of church/new congregation, linked with an established church partnership.

Options to resource this could include:

- An assessment of property resources across the relevant deaneries, exploring the scope for reallocation of existing resources to facilitate the sale/purchase/rental of a house on new developments.
- Seed corn funding and support for projects in areas of new housing through the Aldhelm Mission Fund subject to assessment and approval by the appropriate Deanery/Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee and availability of funds.

Category 3 – local parish/benefice response supported by deaneries

Goal: the effective welcome and contact with new members of the community, leading either to a fresh expression of church/new congregation or feeding back into existing church.

- Over 500 houses – a local housing team should be formed, possibly through Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees or parish/benefices or through ecumenical partnerships, taking into account the areas specified above.
- Under 500 houses – As above or a vibrant local church may be able to lead mission to the area on its own, within the guidelines of the Diocesan Church Planting Policy.

Options for resourcing this could include:

- Seed corn funding and support for projects in areas of new housing through the Aldhelm Mission Fund subject to assessment and approval by the appropriate Deanery/Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee and availability of funds.
- The provision of appropriate training through LDMT and Ministry for Mission.

Central Diocesan action

- Explore future external funding streams specifically for resourcing new housing initiatives.
- Establish the Ministry for Mission Support posts provided for as part of the Strategic Development Funding programme to support the work of the Archdeaconry and Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees, new housing mission initiatives and to develop a constructive central relationship with Local Authorities regarding new housing planning.
- Assist deaneries and churches in early engagement with neighbourhood plans and more localised planning applications where it is sometimes necessary to push hard to ensure that good local services and school and community facilities are planned and provided.

Early engagement with planners and developers

- Both Diocese and deanery/parish new housing teams should engage with central and local planning authorities as early as possible in the life of any development.
- Deanery teams and parishes should also engage with developers as early as possible in the life of any development.

Partnerships with Diocesan Board of Education on church schools/church spaces

- Schools, both primary and secondary, can be hubs of community activity in areas of new development, and as such, both worshipping communities and schools have much to gain from working together.
- The relevant Archdeaconry/Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees, and the Mission Resource Officer should work together with the DBE as early as possible in the life of each new housing development to identify the potential for new schools.
- Once a potential school is identified, the above parties and the local new housing team should work together to identify areas of common interest for partnership working as regards the school, church and community development.
- Where possible, the design of the new school should also take into account the needs of the worshipping community and the community as a whole; e.g. storage space for worshipping community, a community cafe built alongside the school, additional rooms for weekday community use etc.
- The Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee or local new housing group should lobby developers and planners to ensure that any school is built early in the life of a development.
- Head teachers are often pioneers with vision for their school and local community and should be supported by the local new housing team on any development.
- We recommend that church parties register interest with LEAs in becoming temporary school governors to any new school being built.

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