Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church
Anglican Diocese of Durham

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## Contents

Contributors .......................................................................................................................... 2
Governance and Finance Research Team Personnel .......................................................... 2
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 4
  Background ......................................................................................................................... 4
  Mapping the Trajectories ................................................................................................. 5
Section A: Governance and Finance .................................................................................... 7
Anglican Diocese of Durham Executive Summary ............................................................. 8
Phase I ................................................................................................................................... 12
  A.1 Anglican Diocese of Durham ......................................................................................... 12
    A.1.a History .................................................................................................................... 12
    A.1.b Ecclesiology .......................................................................................................... 12
    A.1.c Constitution .......................................................................................................... 12
    A.1.d Demographics ....................................................................................................... 13
    A.1.e Structure ............................................................................................................... 14
    A.1.f Personnel ............................................................................................................... 14
    A.1.g Regional: Committees and Structure .................................................................. 14
    A.1.h Intermediate: Committees and Structure ............................................................. 16
    A.1.i Congregational: Committees and Structure .......................................................... 17
    A.1.j Organisational Flowchart (Durham) ..................................................................... 18
    A.1.k Regional Mission and Strategy ............................................................................. 19
    A.1.l Intermediate: Mission and Strategy ...................................................................... 19
    A.1.m Congregational: Mission and Strategy ................................................................ 19
    A.1.n Finance .................................................................................................................. 20
    A.1.o Questions .............................................................................................................. 20
Phase II Interview Summaries ............................................................................................. 21
Anglican Diocese of Durham ................................................................................................. 21
  A. PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNENCE ............................................................................. 21
  B. SCORING OF GOVERNANCE ..................................................................................... 25
  C. PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGY ..................................................................................... 26
  D. SCORING OF STRATEGY .............................................................................................. 30
  E. FINANCE ....................................................................................................................... 30
  F. GENDER .......................................................................................................................... 32
  G. CHURCH AND STATE .................................................................................................... 33
APPENDIX I: Scoring ........................................................................................................... 34
Bibliography .......................................................................................................................... 35
Introduction to the Regional Comparative Research Project in Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church

Paul Murray

Background

This preliminary report is the result of the first phase of the work carried out by the regional comparative research project in Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church that has been running in the North East of England since 2007. At the heart of Receptive Ecumenism is the principle that further ecumenical progress will become possible if – and only if – rather than asking the typical question as to what ‘other’ traditions might need to learn from ‘us’, each tradition instead takes the creative step of rigorously exploring what ‘it’ needs to learn and can learn (or ‘receive’) with integrity from its others. The conviction is that if all were acting upon this principle then change would happen on many fronts, albeit somewhat unpredictably. Hence Receptive Ecumenism takes seriously both the realities of the contemporary ecumenical context and the abiding need for the Christian churches to walk the way of conversion towards more visible structural and sacramental unity. The basic aim of this particular project is to examine how the respective sticking points in the organisational and ecclesial cultures of the churches of the North East of England (the ‘North East’) might be creatively helped and developed by learning, or ‘receiving’, from each other’s ‘best practice’.

The report covers the Christian denominations in the North East, not comprehensively but within the resources of the project and in relation to those denominations or groupings that have generously agreed to participate in the project. They include:

- Anglican Diocese of Durham
- Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
- Assemblies of God, Northumbria
- Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
- Methodist District of Newcastle
- Methodist District of Darlington
- Northern Baptist Association
- Salvation Army, Northern Division
- United Reformed Church – Northern Synod
- Autonomous Evangelical Churches.

As the above list makes clear, this project takes ecumenism to a new level. Although ecumenism traditionally concerns the inter-denominational, this project is also intra-denominational, taking into account the different structural, governmental, and financial policies within distinct regional groupings of the same denomination. For example, included in this study are both the Anglican Diocese of Durham and the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle, and similarly the Methodist District of Darlington and the Methodist District of Newcastle.
Mapping the Trajectories

The Project unfolds along three key trajectories of research, each with its own research team, working in a co-ordinated yet relatively distinct fashion, and represented in this document by three individual reports. These trajectories and related research teams have become referred to as:

- Governance & Finance
- Learning & Formation
- Leadership & Ministry

**Governance & Finance** asks directly after the organisational cultures and systems of authority, accountability, strategic planning and finance operative in each tradition.

**Leadership & Ministry** asks after how these organisational cultures and systems are administered and shaped by the cultures and practices of leadership in these traditions.

**Learning & Formation** asks how the respective cultures and identities of the churches are nurtured, transmitted and shaped through the habits, practices, processes and programs operative at various levels.

Together they ask: what are the organisational patterns reflected in the formation of church? How do those structures promote or impede Christian identity or certain styles of ministry? And what are the positive and negative aspects of the various models in relation to formation? While this preliminary report, deriving from an initial mapping exercise, does not claim to answer such questions in full, it does lay the groundwork for exploring more adequately the questions by establishing a framework for their rigorous comparative study.

The overall Regional project in Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church is conceived in four broad phases. Phase I involves a detailed mapping of what is at least in theory, is currently happening in each of the participant traditions relevant to the three trajectories (Governance and Finance, Learning and Formation, Ministry and Leadership), and relevant also to the congregational, intermediate, and regional level of denominational organisation.

- **Governance & Finance** maps out the organisational structures of the churches and their finances and governance at the various levels.

- **Learning & Formation** gives a general survey of extant learning experiences of lay church members that are variously described as ‘adult Christian education’ and ‘Education for Discipleship’.  

- **Leadership & Ministry** maps out the various types and levels of ministries and leadership roles, as well as the various routes to ministry, as they pertain to the denominations.

Together, these reports provide the groundwork for subsequent Phases by highlighting not only the forms involved, and practices undertaken, but also the issues that arise, and possible empirical case studies.

Phase II and III are conceived of as the empirical parts of the project, exploring how these structures and issues work out in practice and where the points of ability, dysfunction and, therefore potential receptive learning can be found to lie. Phase II is specifically
concerned to test after the accuracy of the initial Phase I mapping exercises (conducted on the basis of extant documentation and initial conversation) through conducting a series of closer empirical data gathering exercising. Each research trajectory employs its own specific methodology. For Governance & Finance this is principally qualitative methods, through the use of formal structured interview questions. For its part, Leadership & Ministry employs a questionnaire yielding quantitative data. In turn, Learning and Formation employs a qualitative listening audit. Hence included in these Phase I reports are the empirical apparatus for Phase II. For example, the Governance & Finance Report includes the formal interview questions, whilst Leadership & Ministry includes the draft questionnaire and rationale.

Phase III will follow on directly from Phase II by pursuing a series of focused case studies that will integrate the concerns of all three research teams; case studies such as examinations of how each of the denominational groupings are handling, at congregational level, the declining members of ordained/authenticated ministries. Phase IV will be the phase of dissemination, application, and it is hoped reception.

It is the overall hope of this Phase I report to set the foundation for a project that will lead to significant fresh knowledge and understanding in the fields of ecclesiology, ecumenism, practical theology, the sociology and anthropology of religion, and in organisational studies and the study of human resources and finance more generally. Ecclesiastically the hope is that the project will: a) issue in the identification of a range of well thought-through and tested specific practical proposals for real receptive learning within the participant traditions that would enable each of them with integrity to live their respective callings and mission more fruitfully; b) provide a thoroughly researched framework against which to assess how the various traditions might most effectively work together; c) provide a much-needed and highly significant model of good practice by demonstrating a particular, creative way of living the contemporary ecumenical challenge that can be offered to the wider church, nationally and internationally.
Section A: Governance and Finance
Marcus Pound

This section is the result of the Phase I work carried out by the Governance & Finance Team within the regional comparative research project Receptive Ecumenism and the Local Church. The document maps out the regional, intermediate, and congregational structures of the various denominations of the North East of England on the basis of extant documentation and informal interviews. It is not a comprehensive record of all the denominations of the North East but, within the resources of the project, of those who have been willing to contribute, either through a direct representative sitting on the Governance & Finance research team and/or through help given in sourcing relevant documents and associated interviews. The aims of the report are: 1) to map out the organisational structures and strategies of the denominations with reference to the formal documentation given; 2) to identify where further research is needed and particular case studies which may be taken up in Phases I and II as part of a more detailed and empirically based study; 3) to provide the basis of comparison in Phase II between the formal documentation pertaining to the denominations’ respective self-descriptions of their organisational and financial cultures, and the empirical data. In short, does the actual practice reflect the documented position?

It is not the intent of this document to answer such questions, but to provide the initial groundwork (Phase I) in relation to which such questions may be asked intelligibly. This has been undertaken through a series of informal conversations with key members of the denominations involved, both clergy and lay workers, and through reviewing the formal documentation provided by the denominations (e.g. statutory law, mission documents, year books, relevant authoritative national and international reference points et c.).

This section proceeds by discussing each participating denominational relative to the following headings: a) history; b) ecclesiology; c) constitution; d) demographics; e) basic structure; f) personnel; g) regional committees and structures; h) intermediate committees and structures; i) congregational committees and structures; j) organisational flowcharts; k) regional mission and strategy; l) intermediate mission and strategy; m) congregational mission and strategy; n) finance; o) Questions.

Summary of key issues arising from Phase 1 to be explored within each of the churches.

These issues are to be explored further at regional, intermediate and congregational level as appropriate:

- Do governance arrangements work well? Is flexibility inhibited or enabled? How well does the centralisation / decentralisation issue get resolved? Where does decision-making power actually lie and how well-distributed is it? Is there a relationship between the degree of autocracy and the governance arrangements? Do people in positions of governance see their role as spiritual leadership or church management?
- Is the mission / strategy of the church effective and how well is it linked at the different levels?
- What are the cultural and theological barriers and access points for women in matters of governance and mission / strategy?
- What is the relationship between governance and mission / strategy? Is the church stronger on governance or mission / strategy?
- How is the financial situation being handled (particularly where the church is running a deficit), and is the financial situation driving the mission / strategy?
Context

The context within which the Diocese of Durham is working is challenging. In an area whose population is broadly static, it is experiencing declining membership and attendance. Driven partly by a deficit financial situation and partly by central CoE reductions in the numbers of clergy it can support, there has been a steady reduction in the numbers of full-time stipendiary clergy, a decline that is set to continue until at least 2016. The Diocese has responded with various initiatives and is in a period of significant change.

Governance

The governance systems that the church has at regional, intermediate and local levels were designed in a period of stability and to encourage wide representation. But, even in a period of significant change, both the level of development of governance systems and processes and their effectiveness were rated by interviewees as average or above at all three levels. The only exception was the effectiveness of the governance arrangements at Diocesan level, which was rated just below average. Here there appears to be some lack of clarity as to where decisions should be taken, although this may be the result of the collegial nature of governance in the Anglican church, with at least four official locations of governance: Bishop, Diocesan Synod, Bishop’s Council, and the Diocesan Board of Finance. But overall the systems are well-developed and reasonably effective and there seems to be little appetite to overhaul them.

Strategy

The key developments, therefore, have been to do with strategy and while these are partly in response to the context outlined above, there is also some evidence of proactive initiatives. The current official Diocesan strategy is contained in “Growing the Kingdom”, introduced in 2006. This makes reference to the five marks of mission and to five building blocks. This provides, in effect, a meta-strategy, offering theological guidance and organising principles for strategic thinking.

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1 This Executive Summary, with the exception of the conclusions, is based on the findings from the Phase I (documentation) and Phase II (interviews) research. It also responds to feedback provided by Diocesan senior staff on an earlier version.
2 The five marks of mission are: to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom; to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; to respond to human needs by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures in society; to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. The five building blocks are: restoring the sacred centre; focusing on mission; developing leadership; learning discipleship; acting collaboratively.
In terms of organisational strategy, which was the focus of this research, it is possible to identify four core strands, (not based on a written-down strategy but implicit in the views expressed during the interviews):

1) The reduction in full-time stipendiary posts. This is the clearest part of the strategy, with target numbers given to 2016. The deployment of these reduced numbers is one of the tasks on which Deaneries are working in the “Deanery Development Plans” (DDPs), which will cover ministry, mission, finance and buildings. DDPs develop the strategic role of Deaneries, which were already involved in deployment planning, and since 2007 have had the responsibility of allocating the Deanery total of parish share amongst their parishes;

2) A restructuring of the Diocesan ‘centre’ (officers, administrative staff and Councils rather than the formal governance arrangements outlined above) to be more directly supportive of the Deaneries and hence the parishes;

3) The encouragement of formal ministries other than full-time stipendiary clergy. Thus the Diocese has seen an increase in numbers of part-time stipendiary clergy, non-stipendiary clergy, Ordained Local Ministers, Deacons, Readers (although with a recent decline in admissions) and Authorised Pastoral Assistants (APAs). The reduction in the cultural barriers to women’s ministry has also been supportive in this growth in alternatives to full-time stipendiary clergy as the key resource for the local church;

4) The associated promotion of ‘shared ministry’ at the local church level. Shared Ministry Development Teams sit alongside PCCs, focus on purpose and strategy (rather than on the governance function that PCCs largely serve), and draw together ordained and lay participation in ministry and mission. This initiative also reinforces the spiritual role of the laity which is recognised explicitly in Reader and APA ministries but is becoming more widespread.

This emerging organisational strategy is largely based around the preservation, in some form or other, of the existing parish structure.

Articulated as four core strands, as above, this appears to be a well thought through organisational strategy which has a greater focus on mission and a broader and more sustainable set of lay and ordained ministries to sustain it; the level of development of the systems and processes and the effectiveness of the present strategy were rated by interviewees above average at all three levels. However, implementation of this organisational strategy appears to face a number of challenges:

1) The recent history in the Diocese contains a number of initiatives (localities – groups of parishes – being the most obvious) which have not been adopted consistently across the Diocese. There was some cynicism reflected in a few of the interviews concerning Diocesan strategies. As discussed further below, the wide degree of autonomy at the local level militates against Diocesan strategies being implemented consistently across the Diocese;

2) There are both personal and structural rigidities – individuals, particularly clergy, but also parishes, which may choose not to participate or who resist change. Freehold,
or its legal successors, and the legalities associated with parish reorganisation make rapid redeployment of clergy and pastoral reorganisation more difficult to achieve;
3) DDPs have only just been completed and, apparently, have a high degree of variability. It is too early to say whether these will be effective, but it is possible that the extent to which parishes will work together as a result may be limited;
4) The strengthening of the Deanery level within the structures of the church also raises ecclesiological questions which do not appear to have clear answers at present;
5) The restructuring of the Diocesan centre is only just under way and so, again, its effectiveness is as yet uncertain;
6) The SMDT initiative at the local level has not been adopted consistently – as of 2006 only 39 parishes had become ‘shared ministry’ parishes with 33 considering it out of a total of 275 churches. An increase of participants was registered in the Ministry division report for 2008, but no figure is specifically stated. It is not clear that parishes have mechanisms for either establishing or implementing an effective strategy.

There is, therefore, an overall sense both that the strategy is still in the process of articulation and that it may be difficult to apply it in a concerted and co-ordinated way. The Bishop’s Council is seen as key to this at Diocesan level but there are questions as to whether if could be more effective in discharging this role. This scenario is entirely understandable in an organisation that has not had to do this level of strategising before and in which the personal and structural rigidities identified above all militate against achieving rapid and consistent change across such a large and diverse organisation. However, the financial situation which the Diocese and parishes face may force the issue.

Finance

As noted in the context section above, the financial situation at Diocesan level is particularly challenging. Revenue deficits of £500k or more in 2006 and 2007 (roughly 6-8% of total income) have been offset by realised gains on investment assets. While this situation could continue for some time as full-time stipendiary clergy numbers decline and parsonages can therefore be sold, it is not clear what the ‘end-game’ position will look like or when it will occur. With central CoE support per priest under pressure, a further £200k per annum required to support clergy pensions, and income from parish share (which currently represents around 58% of total income) continually under pressure, the Diocesan finances may well become more difficult over the next few years. It is clear that the financial situation is limiting strategy and it may well already be driving strategy rather than vice-versa.

At parish level there is some difficulty in paying parish share with Diocesan receipts in this respect being only around 88.1% (2009) of the targeted amount. For many parishes it seems that their focus is on their financial situation, preservation of the buildings and hence survival, rather than on ministry and mission. Hence the financial viability of parishes must remain a cause for concern and with it the financial viability of the Diocese.

Conclusions

There are various possible scenarios for the Diocese of Durham over the next decade or so. While recognising that some parishes may be growing, one scenario is of gradual decline—a downward spiral of declining membership, attendance, clergy numbers and finances which it is unable to break out of. An alternative scenario is that the decline is halted at some point as the Diocese reaches a stable and sustainable, if rather smaller, size. This second scenario is also highly likely to contain many positive aspects such as a more engaged laity, a better balance between lay and ordained ministries, and a greater focus on mission rather than maintenance. At present, however, it is impossible to discern which of these two scenarios, or indeed any other scenario, might prevail.

Strengths

The following can be identified as strengths of Anglican Diocese of Durham, which it can offer to other traditions:

1. Governance arrangements which are well-developed and effective;
2. A meta-strategy, based on “Growing the Kingdom”, which offers theological guidance and organising principles for strategic thinking;
3. An organisational-level strategy which seeks to respond pro-actively to the challenging context in which the Diocese is operating.

Open Questions

The following can be identified as open questions which the Diocese might seek to address, and where learning from other traditions may be of assistance:

1. The extent to which the four official locations of governance at Diocesan level (Bishop, Diocesan Synod, Bishop’s Council, and the Diocesan Board of Finance) enable a clear strategy to be articulated and its implementation enabled;
2. The effectiveness of the reorganisation of the Diocesan centre;
3. The ecclesiology and effectiveness of enhancing the role of Deaneries as a key part of the organisational strategy;
4. The ability of individual priests and parishes to resist or refuse to engage in the organisational strategy;
5. The ability of parishes to establish and implement organisational strategy;
6. The establishment of a sustainable financial position.

These conclusions, and the strengths and open issues which follow, are the personal view of the author.
Phase I
A.1 Anglican Diocese of Durham
Geoff Moore

A.1.a History

In one sense the roots of the Church of England, (and certainly of the Church in England) go back to the time of the Roman Empire when Catholic Christianity first came to the shores of what was then the Roman province of Britain. At the Reformation the larger part of the English church broke with Rome, to become the State Church thereby rejecting papal authority and aspects of doctrine. While the religious settlements that eventually emerged retained a significant amount of continuity with the church of the Patristic and Medieval periods in terms of its use of the Catholic creeds, its pattern of ministry, its buildings and aspects of its liturgy, it also embodied Protestant insights which further shaped its theology and liturgy.

The Diocese of Durham takes its roots from the Diocese of Lindisfarne, established by Saint Aidan around 635AD. The Diocese of Durham was created in 995AD to replace the Diocese of Lindisfarne. In 1882 it was further reduced when the part north of the River Tyne became the Diocese of Newcastle. The seat of the Bishop of Durham is the fourth most significant in the Church of England hierarchy.

A.1.b Ecclesiology

Whilst Anglicans stress their continuity with the early Catholic and apostolic creeds, Anglican ecclesiology is the site where Anglicans articulate their difference. The Anglican Communion is not a global church in the sense that it has no central governing authority or unified canon law. Rather it is a family of churches which are self-governing. The primates of the respective churches that constitute the Communion (chief Archbishops, Presiding Bishops, Chief Pastors of the various Provinces) have no authority as a ‘body’ and their own national churches determine how their ministry is carried out in their own context. The Archbishop of Canterbury is akin to their spiritual leader. He is primus inter pares, first among equals of the others. The only formal exercise of primatial power that the Archbishop of Canterbury has is precisely as convener of the Lambeth Conference. He is devoid of juridical power, occupying a position more akin to a presidency. He has the power to convene the consultative instruments of the communion (he calls the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference, chairs the meeting of Primates, and is President of the Anglican Consultative Council). Hence, no single Anglican church can claim to be the definitive expression of Anglicanism. At the same time it is united, both through the instruments of communion as well as a common tradition expressed liturgically, spiritually, and theologically, which draws upon scripture, tradition, reason, and, more recently, experience as traditional Anglican sources (in case of first two) and resources (in case of latter two) for theological discernment.

A.1.c Constitution

The Diocese of Durham is governed by Standing Orders approved in 1970 and subsequent amendments, and its statutory governing body is the Diocesan Synod. Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (Durham DBF) was incorporated in 1923 as a charitable company limited by guarantee, and was formed to manage the financial affairs and hold the assets of the Diocese. The objectives and

5 Taken from the CoE website: http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/history/ (last accessed 7 July 2008).
6 http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/index.cfm (last accessed 25/102010)
7 Company Registration No. 192018; Charity No. 248287
aims of the charity are in general terms to promote and assist the work and purposes of the Church of England, and more particularly, to hold real and personal property for purposes connected with the Church of England, and to transact business between the Church of England and the Diocese.

A.1.d Demographics

The Diocese of Durham is bounded in part by the River Tyne in the north, the Tees in the south, and stretches from the North Sea coast to the top of the Pennines. The population in 2006 was 1,455,000\(^9\) in an area of 987 miles squared/1588 squared kilometres. The total of all parochial church electoral rolls was 23,500 in 2006. The proportion of the population on the electoral roll of an Anglican church, based on 2006 figures, was 16%. The graph below (figure 1) gives a partial historical analysis.

Figure 1: Total parochial church electoral role: Durham\(^{10}\)

Average weekly attendance (adults, children and young people), shown below and calculated typically from a four week count in October, and shows a rise from 22,900 in 2004 to 23,200 in 2005\(^{11}\) a fall to 20,800 in 2006 and subsequent rise to 22500 in 2007\(^{12}\)

Figure 2: Average weekly attendance: Durham


\(^{10}\) Church of England Statistics: http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/statistics/churchstatisticslink.html

\(^{11}\) Church Statistics at a Glance, 2005/6, p. 4.

A.1.e  Structure

The individual unit of the Anglican Church is the parish church, or in some cases churches. These are grouped together to form deaneries, and further collated into archdeaconries. The deaneries form the main intermediate tier between Diocese and parish. Modern Anglicanism is both Episcopal and synodical in its governance. Synodical government reached the Church of England in 1969, finally being expressed in the establishment of the General Synod in 1970. Parochial church councils are the local form of church government, sharing responsibility with the incumbent and church warden, including building, finance, worship and mission. All parishes have elected lay persons on the Deanery Synod.

According to The Summary of Diocesan Statistics 2006/07 the Diocese of Durham has 230 parishes, with 285 churches, and 187 Benefices. Parishes are grouped into 16 deaneries which in turn are further collated into three archdeaconries (Durham, Auckland and Sunderland), of which the 16 deaneries are divided five, five and six respectively.\textsuperscript{13}

A.1.f  Personnel

The Bishop of Durham and the Suffragan Bishop of Jarrow are the two substantive Bishops, but there are in addition two honorary assistant Bishops. There are three Archdeacons, sometimes referred to as the ‘eyes and ears of the Bishop’, and 16 Area Deans. Full time stipendiary diocesan clergy for 2007 (i.e. ministers who were working within the Diocesan framework as at 31st December 2007) were 192 (154 men / 38 women) a reduction from 203 in 2005 (166 men /37 women).\textsuperscript{14} Part-time stipendiary: 9 (7 men/2 women); non-stipendiary 48 (25 men/23 women); Ordained Local Ministers: 2 (2 men), making a total of clergy of 251 (188 men/63 women).\textsuperscript{15} In addition, there were 145 Licensed Readers (62 men / 83 women), three Church Army lay evangelists (1 / 2) in 2006\textsuperscript{16}, and 14 Authorised Pastoral Assistants.\textsuperscript{17}

A.1.g  Regional: Committees and Structure

The key committees at Diocesan level are as follows, beginning with the Diocesan Synod. The Durham Diocesan Synod meets twice per year\textsuperscript{18} and, for 2006-2009, the membership of the Diocesan Synod consists of Bishops (4); Ex-officio clergy (11); Elected clergy (67); Ex-officio laity (8); Elected laity, (69); giving a total of 159 from a possible 210.\textsuperscript{19} The functions of diocesan synods are laid down in the Synodical Government Measure 1969:

a) to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their diocese, and to consider and express their opinion on any matters of religious or public interest;
b) to advise the bishop on any matters on which he may consult the synod;

\textsuperscript{14} Church Statistics at a Glance, 2005/6, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{15} Church Statistics, 2007.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.17.
\textsuperscript{17} Diocesan Directory for 2007-08, Durham Diocese.
\textsuperscript{18} Annual Report 2007, Durham Diocese, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{19} Membership of Diocesan Synod plus other Boards, Councils and Committees, 2006-2009, Durham Diocese, pp. 3-5.
c) to consider and express their opinion on any matters referred to them by the General Synod, and in particular to approve or disapprove provisions referred to them by the General Synod under Article 8 of the Constitution:

Provided that the functions referred to in paragraph a) hereof shall not include the issue of any statement purporting to declare the doctrine of the Church [of England] on any question.

It shall be the duty of the bishop to consult with the diocesan synod on matters of general concern and importance to the diocese.

_Bishop’s Council:_ The aim of the Bishop’s Council is to co-ordinate the life and work of the Diocese in support of the mission of the Church, in accordance with the priorities set by the Bishop and the Diocesan Synod. The Council works with the Bishop to develop policies and programmes and to co-ordinate the work of Boards, Councils and Committees. It is the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod.20 The Annual Report of the Diocese for 2007 also refers to development of the Bishop’s Council’s role in 2007 ‘as the strategic heart of the diocese’, and has established among other task groups one called ‘2020’ to look at what sort of church is envisaged by that date.21 The Council met nine times in 2007 and has ex-officio membership of two bishops, five clergy and two laity, with three elected clergy and six laity – total 18.

_Bishop’s Staff Team:_ This is an informal group supporting, working with and advising the Diocesan Bishop. It comprises the Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops, the three Archdeacons, the Dean of Durham, the Women’s Adviser in Ministry, the Bishop’s Senior Chaplain and the Diocesan Secretary. It meets monthly.

_Board of Education:_ This is a statutory body established by the ‘Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991. There is a belief that ‘parishes and church schools jointly stand at the centre of the church’s mission to the nation.’22 ‘The aim of the Board of Education is to ensure young people in Durham Diocese are able to grow in their relationship with Christ and are supported and encouraged in their engagement with God’s mission as a full part of God’s church.’23 The Board is chaired by the Archdeacon of Sunderland, has three elected clergy and three elected lay members, plus eight other appointed, nominated or co-opted members – total 15.

_Board of Finance:_ As noted above, the Board of Finance the formal legal vehicle for the Diocese. It employs the lay staff of the Diocese. The Board is the financial adviser and executive of the Diocesan Synod; it is responsible for the collection, custody, disbursement and account of the Synod’s funds and the employment of all persons in receipt of salaries paid directly from those funds.24 The Board is chaired by one of the nominated members and has the Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops, three Archdeacons, and the Chairs of the Houses of Clergy and Laity of the Diocesan Synod as ex-officio members, 16 elected deanery representatives and up to two other members nominated by the Bishop – total 25 – provided that the Bishop’s Council may nominate such other members as will ensure a majority of the Board are lay people.25

23 _Growing the Kingdom_, Durham Diocese, p. 6.
Council for Ministry: ‘The aim of the Council for Ministry is to enable God’s faithful people in their vocation and ministry to serve God in holiness and truth.’\(^{26}\) It is responsible for the local selection, training and development of ordained and lay ministers, for enriching discipleship and for local church development through Shared Ministry parishes and Shared Ministry Development Teams. The Council’s membership is six elected clergy, six elected lay and three appointed / co-opted members including the Chair who is appointed by the Bishop of Durham – total 15.\(^{27}\)

Council for Mission: ‘The Council for Mission is responsible to the Diocesan Synod for encouraging and co-ordinating [the Five Marks of Mission] across the Diocese, in deaneries, in parishes, in individual lives, and in the communities to which we belong.’\(^{28}\) The Council’s membership consists of six elected clergy and six elected lay members, and three appointed or co-opted members one of whom (currently an Archdeacon) is chair – total 14.\(^{29}\)

Diocesan Pastoral Committee: The Diocesan Pastoral Committee considers proposals for pastoral reorganisation such as redundancy of churches, and unification of benefices. In 2007 each deanery was asked to establish a deanery pastoral committee to ‘consider how best to deal with issues of mission, ministry, buildings and finance’ (see further below).\(^ {30}\) The Committee’s membership consists of the Diocesan Bishop (Chair, if he so desires), the Suffragan Bishop, three Archdeacons (Archdeacon of Durham presently serves as Chair), three other appointed members, all ex-officio, sixteen elected deanery representatives – total 24 – with the option for the Bishop’s Council to appoint additional clerical or lay members to achieve balance.\(^ {31}\)

A.1.h  Intermediate: Committees and Structure

The 16 deaneries, each with its Area Dean, form the intermediate layer between Diocese and parishes. Each deanery has a Deanery Synod whose function is laid down in the Synodical Government Measure 1969. The functions of a deanery synod are:

a) to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their deanery, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;

b) to bring together the views of the parishes of the deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote in the deanery the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;

c) to make known and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the diocesan synod;

d) to consider the business of the diocesan synod, and particularly any matters referred to that synod by the General Synod, and to sound parochial opinion whenever they are required or consider it appropriate to do so;

e) to raise such matters as the deanery synod consider appropriate with the diocesan synod.

Deanery synods consist of a house of clergy and a house of laity to include all clergy beneficed or licensed to any parish in the deanery and in which all parishes have representatives.\(^ {32}\)

\(^{26}\) Growing the Kingdom, p. 5.

\(^{27}\) Membership of Diocesan Synod plus other Boards, Councils and Committees, 2006-2009, p. 7.

\(^{28}\) Growing the Kingdom, p. 3. The Five Marks of Mission are covered further below.


\(^{30}\) Annual Report 2007, p. 22.


A.1.i Congregational: Committees and Structure

The legal body at the parish level is the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Durham Diocesan Board of Finance is the custodian trustee in relation to PCC property, but has no control over PCCs, which are independent charities\(^3^3\) (though apparently not separately registered). The following is taken from the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 (as amended) and is an extract of the key points:

1. It shall be the duty of the minister and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.
2. The functions of PCCs shall include:
   a. co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
   b. the consideration and discussion of matters concerning the church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the church on any question;
   c. making known or putting into effect any provision made by the Diocesan Synod or the Deanery Synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the council on any particular matter;
   d. giving advice to the Diocesan Synod and the Deanery Synod on any matter referred to the council;
   e. raising such matters as the council consider appropriate with the Diocesan Synod or Deanery Synod.
3. In the exercise of its functions the PCC shall take into consideration any expression of opinion by any parochial church meeting.
4. The PCC of each parish shall have powers duties and liabilities with respect to:
   a. the financial affairs of the church including the collection and administration of all moneys raised for church purposes and the keeping of accounts in relation to such affairs and moneys;
   b. the care maintenance preservation and insurance of the fabric of the church and the goods and ornaments thereof;
   c. the care and maintenance of the churchyard, and the power of giving a certificate under the provisions of section 18 of the Burial Act 1855;
   d. the power to acquire (whether by way of gift or otherwise) any property, real or personal –
      i. for any ecclesiastical purpose affecting the parish or any part thereof;
      ii. for any purpose in connection with schemes (hereinafter called ‘educational schemes’) for providing facilities for the spiritual moral and physical training of persons residing in or near the parish.

A.1.k  Regional Mission and Strategy

The Diocesan Development Programme entitled ‘Growing the Kingdom’ was presented to Diocesan Synod in May 2006. In the background section it was stated that the programme ‘should give shape and coherence to the contemporary mission of the Diocese and be a rolling Development Programme, adjusting to new demands and opportunities year on year’.\(^{34}\) A section on theology was followed by a section on Values within which the Mission was identified as being one which:

- implements the achievement of Jesus and anticipates the final coming of his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven
- becomes a way of life, sharing in the overflowing love of God for his creation
- remains deeply loyal to the faith of the church and the call of God
- Is expressed in the five ‘marks of mission’:
  - to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom
  - to teach, baptize and nurture new believers
  - to respond to human need by loving service
  - to seek to transform unjust structures in society
  - to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Five building blocks were identified, presented in a cross shape with the centre – Restoring the Sacred Centre – surrounded by Focusing on Mission; Developing Leadership; Learning Discipleship; and Acting Collaboratively. Aims for Mission, Ministry, Central support (employees, finance and buildings), were established each with priorities over the following 12 to 18 months.

A.1.l  Intermediate: Mission and Strategy

In 2001 deaneries put together locality plans, describing how clusters of parishes might collaborate for the sake of mission. The locality process seems to have been adopted on a patchy basis across the Diocese. However, deaneries have added to the locality plans a plan for how they might wish to deploy stipendiary clergy and in 2006 the new Parish Share scheme has linked the level of share to the number of stipends in a deanship and has asked deaneries to allocate the share between parishes in ways which are fair, but also give support where necessary.\(^{35}\) Following from this, deaneries are now being asked to put together a deanery plan (see under Diocesan Pastoral Committee above). These are expected within 12-18 months, i.e. April-September 2008.

A.1.m  Congregational: Mission and Strategy

In terms of mission and strategy, this is left to PCCs to decide, although the introduction of localities and deanery plans may influence this in future. A feature of Diocesan strategy for parishes, linked with the ‘Acting Collaboratively’ building block in the Diocesan Development Programme, has been the development of Shared Ministry parishes and, within that, Shared Ministry Development Teams (SMDTs). Again, this is not universal – figures for 2006 show 33 parishes / pluralities / localities considering shared ministry and 39 SMDTs up and running.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{34}\) Growing the Kingdom, p. 1.

\(^{35}\) Developing Mission and Ministry in the Deaneries, Diocesan Pastoral Committee, Durham Diocese, April 2007.

\(^{36}\) Annual Report 2006, Durham Diocese, p. 12 – no equivalent figures are given in the 2007 Annual Report.
A.1.n Finance

Regional: The Diocese has income of around £8.5 million and expenditure of around £9 million, the balance made up from disposal of fixed and other assets. The main sources of income are from Parish Contributions (the ‘Parish Share’) (58.2%) and the Archbishop’s Council (central funding from the Church of England) (27.7%). The main expenditure is on the resourcing of mission and ministry (87.0%) which is further broken down into Parish ministry (£6,719k or 73.1% of total expenditure) and central Diocesan support for ministry and mission (£1,270k or 13.8% of total expenditure). The balance sheet total consists largely of property holdings of which the vast majority is for parsonages which are held at historic cost (total property £31,971k or 76% of the balance sheet total). The remainder mostly consists of investments of which investment in residential property is the majority (total investments £6,299k or 15% of the balance sheet total). 37

Intermediate: There is no financial data available at deanery level – financial support is limited to additional secretarial support for Area Deans.

Congregational: Financial data for the Parishes is patchy for, although Parishes are due to make financial returns to the Diocese annually, not all do and, as noted above, the Diocese is not required to consolidate Parish accounts into its own. In relation to total income and expenditure for all Parishes, 2006 figures show income of £12,089,550, an average of £50,796 for the 238 Churches included, and expenditure of £11,269,830, an average of £47,352. 38 In relation to Parish Share, the total assessed Parish Share for 2007 was £5,558k which contrasts with £5,051k received (which itself included £45k paid in arrears). This suggests a collection rate of around 91%. 39 Parish Share therefore amounts to about 45% of expenditure on average. Parish Share requested for 2008 is £5,719,534. 40

A.1.o Questions

1. Do the governance arrangements work well? i.e. do the committees, councils, synods function effectively and is proper accountability exercised?
2. Where does decision-making power actually lie? i.e. is it with the bishops, or with Bishop’s Council, or is it dispersed through various roles and committees?
3. Is the ‘Growing the Kingdom’ strategy effective? i.e. is it guiding strategy and being implemented in Diocesan, Deanery and Parish strategies?
4. How is the deficit financial situation being handled? i.e. is it actually driving strategy?
5. Is the Deanery development process (Deanery Plans, Deanery responsibility for distributing parish shares, Deanery pastoral committees, Deanery Development Programmes) a significant development?
6. Are parishes linked in to Diocesan and Deanery plans and processes?
7. Is Shared Ministry working? i.e. how are parish strategies being formulated and implemented?

Phase II Interview Summaries  
Anglican Diocese of Durham

Interviewees

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Of the eight people interviewed two were female.

At the local level:
- One clerical respondent was priest-in-charge of a large rural benefice with 7 churches, 1 priest, 1 curate, 1 Reader, 1 Authorised Pastoral Assistant (APA); Population 4,651, Electoral Roll 227;
- One clerical respondent was priest-in-charge of a semi-urban benefice with 1 church, 1 priest, 1 curate, 2 Readers, Population 9,783, Electoral Roll 123;
- The lay respondent was a member of a semi-urban benefice with 1 church, 1 priest, 3 Readers, Population 4,969, Electoral Roll 97.

At the intermediate level:
- The clerical respondent was Area Dean of an urban Deanery with 11 benefices, 14 churches, 11 clergy, 3 curates, 7 Readers, 1 APA, Population 88,611, Electoral Roll 1,440;
- The lay respondent was a member of the Deanery Synod of an urban Deanery with 16 benefices, 24 churches, 12 clergy, 8 curates, 13 Readers, 2 APAs, Population 121,659, Electoral Roll 2,381.

At the regional level:
- One respondent was a senior cleric, one was a senior administrator, the third was a lay member of Diocesan Synod.

A. PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNENCE

By governance we mean the systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.

a. Different organisations work in different ways: how would you describe the governance system at your level?

Local: The key body is the Parochial Church Council (PCC) but how it operates is to some extent dependent upon the parish priest. One parish priest referred to being still in the process of “putting that accountability in place” (referring to financial information), but implying a collegial model in which the PCC could exercise proper control, while another parish priest referred to the democracy inherent in PCCs and the requirement to consult. The lay respondent made reference to a Shared Ministry Development Team (SMDT)\(^\text{42}\) as the other key body besides PCC although there was

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\(^{41}\) All figures are taken from the Diocesan Directory 2007-08. 
\(^{42}\) SMDTs are a comparatively recent development in the Diocese. Parishes become Shared Ministry parishes through a formal process and then appoint a SMDT. “Shared Ministry is a new way of being church. It is based...
considerable overlapping membership and some repetition of subject matter. But this was connected to a parish priest who was committed to openness. Church Wardens were also seen as an important part of the governance system in one case stepping in to keep the show on the road in a small rural parish.

**Intermediate:** Deanery synod with sub-committees of typically finance, pastoral and standing (where the work gets done), together with the Deanery Chapter (clergy) form the governance mechanisms. It is a microcosm of regional and national levels. From 20 years ago when it was just a talking shop it has recently become much more strategic, starting with a more direct role in budgeting and now involved in Deanery Development Plans (DDPs): “Deanery synods will feel less like meetings in search of an agenda.” Deanery synod is representative of the parishes but with all Deanery clergy as members, so not truly democratic. It functions reasonably democratically, however, usually making decisions by consensus and there is a sense of trying to discern the will of the Spirit. Collegial is a better description than democratic with strong collegiality among pastoral and standing committee members mentioned by one respondent.

**Regional:** The actual governance structure is not entirely clear with at least four official locations of governance: Bishop; Diocesan Synod; Bishop’s Council (BC) (the bishop in Synod or in Council); and Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). One respondent expressed the view that in governance the source of power is always somewhere other than where you are. One other respondent expressed the view that policy properly belongs to BC and if it were doing its job effectively governance would feel non-hierarchical, potentially even democratic. There are, however, elements of hierarchy e.g. for disciplinary matters concerning a parish priest.

So BC should work with the Bishop to have a clear sense of the vision for the Diocese. The vision would ultimately rest with the Bishop but should be arrived at collegially and it would be the responsibility of the BC to deliver on it. Synod is where strategic decision and direction is worked out, but this needs BC to operate effectively. Because of the wide set of ‘stakeholders’ including PCCs and mission to the whole community, there is a need for wide representation on Synod: “There’s an argument for having a structure which is more messy, but involves more people”. Hence representation and consultation were key; it wouldn’t work if the Bishop’s proposals did not have majority support in BC or Synod. It is governance and leadership by the Bishop in Synod or the Bishop in Council.

With the advent of DDPs there is a sense of delegation from Diocese to Deaneries.

b. **Would you say the governance arrangements at your level work well and why?**

**Local:** Generally the structure provided by PCCs was seen to provide a good framework for governance, but was dependent upon a nucleus of people making it work. So, for example, in one

on a partnership between laity and clergy which takes responsibility for living out God’s life in a particular place.

The key features are:

- Exploring what the Church is called to be and do;
- Helping the Church to choose priorities;
- Promoting the mission of the Church;
- Enabling the congregation to develop its faith and discipleship;
- Identifying and addressing the needs of the wider community;
- Discerning and nurturing the gifts and ministry of everyone;
- Considering what support and training are needed.”

parish finance and monitoring of accounts was handled by a finance committee. As in Aa Church Wardens were sometimes key to effective governance.

**Intermediate:** The position of Deaneries between parishes and the Diocese has given rise to some ambiguity of role, but as that is being clarified and tightened Deaneries are proving to be more effective, working within parameters set by the Diocese (particularly the Deanery budget for parish share and clergy numbers) in a more bottom-up way since they know what life is like on the ground. Distribution of clergy posts within a Deanery is now decided by Deanery Pastoral Committee. The DDPs are strategic documents and involve dialogue with the Diocese which is moving to a structure and mode of working which is more supportive of decisions and developments, and attempting to resource them, at Deanery level.

This approach, however, is not shared by all Deaneries or parishes some of which are negative towards the Diocese.

**Regional:** Two respondents felt that the present governance arrangements were not very effective. This was seen in a lack of direction perceived at Deanery level and in a lack of clarity as to who should do what e.g. whether BC should set priorities and DBF follow or if DBF should make available financial information for BC to work within. So this respondent felt that, “You [the DBF] need to tell us [BC] what the financial position is, e.g. how much longer can we go on drawing on reserves?”, and that this information was unforthcoming.

One respondent thought the present governance arrangements were fine, though recognising that not everyone would agree. This respondent thought the key issue was strategy, not governance (see below); that PCCs and priests would respond more to leadership, inspiration, vision and support. There was also a sense that effectiveness was dependent upon change; that if nothing were changing governance would be very effective, but change requires strategy in order to govern direction rather than being subject to events.

c. **In organisations power is both centralised at some levels and devolved to others. This can create tension. Is there tension in your organisation and if so how is this addressed?**

**Local:** One source of tension is created by members of the parish (not the congregation) who expect the parish priest to do everything, while the parish priest wants to share the ministry: “So [clergy] are put in the position where they want to share but sometimes they are not allowed and then that becomes a sort of habit of domination if you like”. Tension can occur when someone’s role is questioned e.g. the Treasurer’s in relation to the counting of collections when a new Diocesan guideline came in. Working with volunteers and them being upset if things are done differently can cause tension. Democracy (majority voting) is not necessarily helpful in such situations: there is a need to work by consensus.

**Intermediate:** Historically there has been a lot of suspicion between Deaneries and the Diocese, but that has changed significantly recently. So there is no sense that the ‘centre’ is trying to grab power.

One respondent referred to the main tensions being between the clergy themselves with ‘fault lines’ that run all the way through Anglicanism. One Deanery Synod had challenged the clergy to work together to deliver the strategy set out in the DDP: “that’s all very well but can you clergy work together well enough to deliver it? Go away and sort yourselves out and come back and tell us that you can”. This was laity challenging the clergy to enable the Deanery to operate more like one church, doing as much as possible together.

**Regional:** Generally respondents felt there was little tension (and one respondent thought that some tension might be good). This was because local independence is high and there would still be freedom of action at the local level. Similarly at Deanery level the Diocese was leaving Deaneries to
organise themselves within the parameter of total stipendiary ministers. “I don’t think it’s going to be anything like as directive to cause tension.”

d. Where does decision-making power actually lie and how well-distributed is it?

Local: Decision-making was generally seen as shared although with the priest having a key role in enabling that (or otherwise). One parish priest saw it as easier to share decision-making on practical issues (finance, heating, repairs) but less so on ‘spiritual’ issues (liturgy and worship).

Intermediate: One view was that decision-making power lay at Deanery Pastoral Committee level, although Deanery Synod was also now seen as less of a rubber-stamping body. Clergy were also seen as key players in deciding and implementing strategy so that it was important that they were on board.

Regional: From a top-down perspective decision-making power lies in theory with the Bishop operating through BC and through Synod. In practice this has to be with the consent of those two bodies. In practice informal authority rests with the senior clergy and bishop’s staff (a small group which meets monthly). But also in practice it depends what decisions – financial ones are taken by a combination of Bishop, BC and DBF. Deployment of clergy is made through Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Committees. Decisions about priorities are ultimately BC / Synod decisions but some of these would be driven by DDPs.

From a bottom-up perspective decision-making power lies with the people in paying the parish share or not. And Deaneries are now becoming much more powerful as the DDP process works its way through the system.

e. To what extent do people in positions of authority see their role as spiritual leadership?

Local: There was seen to be a tension between spiritual leadership and church management with most laity in leadership positions seeing themselves as doing management whereas the roles they occupied (SMDT member, Church Warden, PCC member, Secretary, Treasurer, Sunday School leader, pastoral role) all had spiritual dimensions. There was still a tendency to look to the parish priest for spiritual direction but a sense that this was changing and laity were engaging in both spiritual leadership and church management and that the spiritual dimension was unavoidable.

Intermediate: Although the Deanery level had been seen as largely to do with church management, there were more recent examples of spiritual leadership e.g. Deanery days for clergy and laity on prayer, and film and faith. There was also mention of the Deanery praying and worshipping more together. But despite that, the predominant role is church management – spiritual leadership is left to the parishes and the Deanery is seen as serving parishes’ needs. The Area Dean is seen as a friendly face and source of pastoral support for clergy in the Deanery, but this is not seen as spiritual leadership.

Regional: At the level of Bishop it is primarily about spiritual leadership and leadership in mission. Archdeacons are very much involved in church management though within a spiritual context. One respondent suggested that at Diocesan level they would like to see it as spiritual leadership but probably spent 90% of their time on church management.

f. To what extent do people in positions of authority see their role as church management?

Local: See Ae above.
Intermediate: See Ae above.

Regional: See Ae above.

g. To what extent do people in positions of authority see their role as managing changes that occur in the organisation?

Local: There was general recognition that change was essential, that the leadership (clergy and PCCs etc.) were more aware of the need to change than other members of the congregation, and that there was a reluctance to acknowledge that need. Hence the leadership role was to make the fellowship more accepting of change. But one respondent noted the potential resistance to change when a member of their church had said to them in private, “It will be a brave person who comes along and closes this Church!”

Intermediate: There was general recognition that the role of Deaneries is all about change management; DDPs are really all about change. Some parishes are running mixed economy models (traditional and emerging forms) of church. But some are more concerned with just keeping the show on the road.

Regional: All respondents agreed that it was about change management but the extent of change considered necessary varied from very significant – the danger inherent in running a show that is not entirely successful with fewer resources instead of thinking about an entirely different way of doing the job – to being more about simply trying to improve things. There was recognition that aspects like freehold and sensitivity to the effects of change meant that change took time.

B. SCORING OF GOVERNANCE

a. In a word or phrase, how would you describe the governance system at the level above / two above; below / two below you?

Local: The system works well despite it. There is no typical parish but the official structures are very well developed if complex. Governance at the parish level is much better developed than at Deanery level.

Intermediate: Deaneries are becoming parochial in the sense of looking after their own interests. But also governance is becoming effective even if the structures are not good, as Deaneries are now effecting change. But the Deanery can be very difficult – vacancies or people on the sick or not participating. The Area Dean has a very difficult task. Not all Deanery Synods are doing a good job, some parishes are not participating in the DDPs. So despite all Deaneries being run on the same governance system, the system is not being implemented equally across all deaneries.

Regional: The Diocese is in a state of change and while the governance systems are reasonably well developed it’s not clear that they’re effective. People in the pew feel resentment about the Diocese – it is wordy, doesn’t reach the person in the pew or at PCC level. There is resentment about clergy numbers being cut and (the perception at least) that Diocesan paid posts growing. Governance systems are well-developed but less effective in implementation. There is an ad-hoc-ness in relation to decision-making and the significance of decisions can be greater; one respondent was not sure that the decision-making process was sufficiently well organised to cope with the range of demands and was not sure that all the information that would be useful to have is always available. “Sometimes there is an alarming degree of unclarity about whose job it is to do what.”
For summary scoring schedule see Appendix 1.

C. PERCEPTIONS OF STRATEGY

By strategy we mean the sense of purpose and actual direction of the organisation over the long term and this includes the configuration of resources and the effective implementation of strategy.

a. Is there a clear sense of purpose at your level?

Local: All respondents felt there was a sense of purpose but this varied and there were caveats. One church had an evangelical background and hence an evangelistic purpose but had lost some of the personal contact such as home meetings so that the church had become more formal. One respondent referred to an incarnational theology with Jesus at the centre: “That’s what makes them get up in the morning, it’s at the heart of their prayer and praise and their work and their care for one another in the community”. But whether this could cope with the changes was less certain despite there being some sense of the strategic importance of the church. One respondent referred to clarity about what needed to be done with the buildings.

Intermediate: The DDP process has given Deaneries a much greater sense of purpose: “Whether we’ve actually defined what that purpose is … whether you’re talking about the mission of the church or the purpose of the Deanery … The Deanery body has decided it’s important for it to look at strategy and get on with that and do something… in that sense it’s quite a step forward”.

Regional: Two respondents answered “no”: “I think the answer’s no. It’s maintaining a model which has always been there. It does alter over time. I think we’re still trying to run a historical model. It’s very difficult to do anything else [than maintain it] – it’s back to legal structures”. The other respondent also stated baldly: “No. I don’t think there is” and felt that the “Growing the Kingdom” strategy was really a set of values rather than a direction. This respondent felt that nowhere was there a statement that began “The Diocese of Durham exists so that ….”. One respondent felt the answer was “yes” and referred to there being commitment at the Diocesan level to “Growing the Kingdom”.

b. Would you say your organisation has a strategy at your level? (Prompts: plan, objectives)

Local: One respondent referred to strategies (e.g. to do with buildings or worship) rather than a single strategy. Most people were not engaged, however, and strategy tended to be emergent (e.g. a lunch club) and relatively short term. One clerical respondent had a clear strategy related to mission and ministry and some of this was written down in PCC papers etc. Mission, healing and working ecumenically were high on the agenda. One respondent referred to a mission statement and a clear strategy of drawing people in: “The strategy is to draw [people] in … not purely that but to help people to understand that there is this group of people, as well as that building, who are there, and certainly every piece of research that has been carried out shows that people who we don’t see every Sunday feel this is their church. It has an important role in that sense in community life. People will speak well of it”.

In only one case (and via PCC papers etc.) was the strategy written down.

Intermediate: In one case the DDP articulated a reasonably clear vision about how the parishes in the Deanery wanted to be with each other, the principles by which they would work together as well as a specific agenda in areas like mission. It did not suggest any great upheaval but was dependent
on the Diocese not revising down the number of clergy any further than had been done already. In another case there was less certainty: “I’m not sure it’s quite come up with a vision for [xxx] Deanery and because of the diversity it probably won’t be able to. But at least by going through this strategy process they’ll be able to think of some positive things to do that they’ll all agree on”.

In one case the DDP was complete [copy obtained]; in the other it was at the draft stage and was felt to be about vision and more conceptual but vague on specifics although it covered worship and training for worship; admission of children to communion; finance and administration (e.g. having Deanery-wide policies on baptism and marriage); sharing Church offices. The thrust in this case was to be as close to being one church as possible.

Discussion under finance (see below) indicated a view that part of the strategy was about the development of lay ministry and that this would have taken place irrespective of the need to reduce clergy numbers.

Regional: Views amongst the respondents varied considerably. One respondent stated: “When you talk about Diocesan strategy, I don’t know. I think there is one, but no one is prepared to say to me this is what it is”. One felt that the strategy was “To survive. Certainly not to expand, certainly not to close churches”. Another that, “The strategy, frankly, is to get down the number of stipendiary clergy ... that’s the bit that’s clearest”. The third respondent stated that the strategy was undeveloped as yet.

One intermediate level respondent, in commenting on the Diocesan strategy as encompassed within the “Growing the Kingdom” document, felt that it was pretty good if it were implemented, but was less sure that the strategy as a piece of paper had influenced things. There were questions about how that strategy had emerged and “very serious questions about how communicable it is. It just seems to have been drafted in a way that is peculiarly unmemorable”. But because it has been agreed by Diocesan Synod it felt as though it couldn’t be withdrawn, so the Diocese was stuck with something which, while there was no disagreement in principle, was difficult for people to get hold of and so less effective as a result than if it had been presented with a bit more sharpness.

However, all respondents agreed that DDPs were the main thrust of the present strategy, although again financial pressures and the corresponding need to reduce the number of stipendiary clergy were seen to be the drivers. 15 DDPs (out of 16) had been received and were being reviewed by the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee with a view to sharing good practice, and possibly encouraging some Deaneries to go further. The standard, level and degree of engagement of Deaneries varied enormously and it was recognised that there was the danger of refusal by a Deanery to engage with the plan if the process by which it had been put together had not been good.

The second part of the strategy was to review and reorganise the ‘Diocesan centre’. This was currently in progress but the view was that this was geared towards the centre offering support and being responsive to the Deaneries as they delivered their plans. So a possible structure was to create a single development department to take on the work of the present Council for Mission and Council for Ministry, together with the youth and children’s work in parishes (but not the schools portfolio from the Board of Education).

The notions of delegation and local autonomy also emerged strongly although there was an indication of a continued debate about whether the parish, locality or even, in some cases, the Deanery should be the key focus. Hence a mixed economy might emerge at a practical level, but in any case the Diocesan strategy would not look like a business plan; it would be more inspirational than that, bringing together the spiritual and the practical but also giving freedom.

The problem of local freedom was also noted together with cynicism among many priests who had seen other Diocesan strategies come and go; it was difficult to enforce change even if it was needed: “If mission and ministry doesn’t happen on the ground with local initiative and enthusiasm then it isn’t going to happen at all, it can’t be imposed”. But then another respondent
stated: “I can see some parishes walking off the edge of a cliff because the priest has made them blind”.

Aside from the “Growing the Kingdom” document and the guidelines for DDPs, the Diocesan strategy was not written down apart from the guidance on stipendiary clergy numbers that informed DDPs.

c. Who decides the strategy?

Local: One respondent saw strategy coming from the Standing Committee of the PCC, or the Vicar and Church Wardens or the Vicar and Vice-chair of the PCC, but with a need to go away with the PCC and let things bubble up. One respondent indicated that it was the SMDT but also then at PCC where it would be owned and challenged if appropriate. One respondent indicated that it was the priest who decided and then encouraged others to join in, recognising that the strategy would change as they worked on it.

Intermediate: In both cases it was put together by a sub-group of Deanery Synod. In one case parishes were given the opportunity to comment. In both cases the final sign-off was by the Diocesan Synod. DDPs have then been forwarded to the Diocese and Deaneries are awaiting feedback.

Regional: As noted above (Cb), the Diocesan strategy was based around DDPs and reorganising the Diocesan centre. As such, the decisions were with Deaneries and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee in the former and with the Diocese (Bishop’s Council and Synod) in the latter. One respondent was more cynical: “If you ask me what the Diocesan strategy is, I don’t know what it is, I don’t know who’s deciding it and I don’t know how it’s being implemented”, although this respondent also agreed that the strategy was more emergent than planned.

d. Who puts it into effect?

Local: In all cases it was clear that implementation would be via the laity. In one case this involved SMDT and PCC (and more so than it used to be in the latter case), but was then also shared with Readers, Church Wardens and those who did more mundane jobs. In another case the implementation of the strategy would require training so that it was the laity who would implement it, e.g. junior church leaders, youth ministry, worship leaders.

Intermediate: One respondent indicated that it was up to the parishes to put it into effect, but there was a still a DDP group meeting regularly which would set targets and timescales and make sure the plan was being implemented. Clergy were seen as reasonably well disposed to the plan. The other respondent indicated that the DDP was a direction of travel and put the emphasis on the clergy “because they’re the key blockers in my experience”.

Regional: With DDPs as the main focus of Diocesan strategy, Area Deans were seen to be key people; they had the potential to be almost mini-bishops in having a ministry of oversight. “In other cases it needs an Archdeacon to go in and grind out some detail, do a bit of gentle persuasion where it’s needed”.

e. How well are resources used in support of the strategy?

Local: Money and buildings tended to go together. Lack of money was generally problematic and buildings could be seen as a burden but were also the key physical resource. The other main resource was human and this was generally not seen as lacking but in some areas in need of training.
**Intermediate:** The key resources were seen as human and physical (buildings). These resources exist at the parish rather than Deanery level although in one case there was the possibility of parishes acting in groups and e.g. sharing a youth worker or having one treasurer (possibly for the whole Deanery). Decrepit buildings were seen as problematic in one case, and the knock-on effect on effective outreach was noted.

**Regional:** One respondent felt that the concept of utilisation of resources was felt to be good in relation to new appointments but there was continued structural friction with individual clergy (either because of freehold or because they did not want to engage). This respondent felt there was no pro-active HR strategy. One respondent noted that some Deaneries had recognised the key role of the Area Dean and had decided, within their allocated clergy numbers, to provide more resource at that level. One respondent thought resources were being reasonably well used in support of the strategy but noted that there was a big debate about whether money should be put into clergy or into Diocesan officers – but believed the balance was currently about right. There might also be a need to address the skills of Diocesan Officers who would need consultancy-type skills in future to support parishes and Deaneries.

f. **How well is strategy at your level linked with strategy at other levels?**

**Local:** Apart from the use of the Diocesan “Faith and Life” course by one respondent’s parish, the link with the Diocesan strategy was limited, although one respondent indicated that Diocesan strategy-making had improved over the last two years. One respondent, however, indicated the difficulty of links between the local and regional levels: “What Diocesan strategies would affect parishes?” [joint laughter] “What are they?”.

The DDPs had given rise to a greater engagement between parish and Deanery though this varied from good in one case to limited engagement in another, with one respondent indicating that there was a willingness to engage but limited opportunity (sharing a bus to the Diocesan ‘Go Large’ youth event being cited as one example). One respondent indicated that it looked like there was no DDP because nothing was yet written down, but that this masked the large amount of work that had been done on it.

**Intermediate:** The question of power was raised in both cases – despite the DDPs, Deaneries were still perceived as having little power, with power lying in both parishes and the Diocese. In one case the DDP was seen as offering a coming together in quite limited areas for common working where that made sense. One respondent felt that subsidiarity was in evidence – the Diocese delegating to Deaneries and Deaneries to parishes. Both respondents felt that Diocesan strategy was slightly problematic or unclear although there was recognition that the Diocese had provided reasonably clear headings for DDPs.

**Regional:** The link between Diocese and Deanery was generally felt to be reasonably good, given the DDP process. So Diocesan Officers were now talking to Deaneries about their plans. The link to parishes was felt to be much weaker: “It’s disconnected. I don’t think strategy exists at parish level”. Some parishes, including some under alternative Episcopal oversight, were thought not to be in sympathy with the strategy. One respondent felt that it would take time for the strategy to work down to parishes (given that it had taken 10 years for Deaneries to accept responsibility).
D. SCORING OF STRATEGY

For summary scoring schedule see Appendix I.

E. FINANCE

a. Who holds the purse strings at your level?

Local: In some cases this is the Treasurer, but in the main the PCC. One respondent stated that the church did not plan a budget but does have a system to review costs and will be doing more planning of actual costs linked to stewardship.

Intermediate: Deaneries have only very limited finances themselves, being charged with allocating parish share but this is between parishes and the Diocese in terms of funds being transferred. The Deanery of one respondent now has a Deanery Treasurer. The Deanery asks individual churches how much they can give recognising that if a church says only so much, this is likely to have consequences.

Regional: The technical answer is the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), but there is a debate as to how tightly they hold them and the role of the BC in the financial strategy. One view was that BC should be setting strategy and getting robust financial advice from DBF in doing so.

b. What is the financial position of the church at your level?

Local: Generally the position was break-even with most respondents saying they paid the parish share in full. Most also indicated that they were struggling to keep above water financially. One respondent reported a bequest part of which was to be used on the fabric and part on educational support and that this provided a bit of security. Another reported large repair bills coming up which would mean drawing on reserves, and that it was down to just a few people to raise a lot of money.

Intermediate: There was recognition that the amount raised by parishes under the parish share was less than required to pay their way and that the deficit was topped up by Diocesan and CofE central funds, the Diocese being the most subsidised of all Dioceses.

Regional: The overall position over the medium term is break-even with small surpluses or deficits per year. But this is achieved by selling houses as clergy numbers are reduced (“If in doubt sell a couple of old vicarages”). The parish share is potentially problematic as it is technically a voluntary contribution, although it is possible to “create a climate in which there is the strongest possible expectation that you will meet your share”. There will, however, still be the problem of parishes which, for example, have a half-time non-stipendiary priest but are still being asked to pay £12k per annum.

As support from the Church Commissioners (thought to be £13k per priest per annum) is due to become fixed in the near future (and so not rise with inflation), and with £200k per annum to be found to support the clergy pension scheme due to the troubles in the investment markets, the medium term is going to be challenging.

c. If you are running a surplus, why is this and how is the surplus being used?

Local: Non-applicable

Intermediate: Non-applicable
Regional: Non-applicable

d. If you are running a deficit, how is this being addressed?

Local: Non-applicable

Intermediate: See Eb above.

Regional: See Eb above.

e. To what extent is the strategy at your level influenced by the financial position?

Local: For one respondent the financial position was almost entirely geared towards buildings in order to maintain the present position. For another any additional money would be spent on people (a youth worker and a children’s worker) rather than on buildings (some of which would ideally be closed), but this respondent also recognised that neither of these were likely and it would continue to be ‘mend and make do’. Another respondent indicated that the church raised money for specific charitable purposes but in the past had given a much greater proportion to charities.

One respondent at regional level bemoaned the fact that “it is finance and buildings that take up the bulk of discussion at church meetings. So that church meetings and church life seems to be rarely about what is the church here for, but is actually about how do we survive, and that’s not healthy ...”. So here finance and buildings, and the need to survive, were seen to be driving strategy.

Intermediate: Both respondents saw the financial position as driving strategy (reducing stipendiary clergy numbers), but that the desire to foster lay ministry would have happened in any case. It was a question of trying to get ahead of the game rather than feeling that there was always a negative push from the Diocese. One respondent stated that it was trying to “get out of death by a thousand cuts and anticipate where we could reasonably get to, that makes better use of the resources we’ve got by sharing more, to get ahead of the game. Otherwise it’s ‘Right, which post is to go next?’”. Increased resources would have enabled the strategy to be implemented more easily.

Regional: Views differed on this question. One respondent thought that the underlying strategy was still driven by mission and ministry. One indicated that finance was limiting but not driving strategy so that there was a limited amount available for investment in new areas such as developing youth and children’s work. One thought that strategy was being driven by finance and the Sheffield numbers (numbers of stipendiary priests per Diocese subsidised by the Church Commissioners), but then qualified this: “I think I still want to argue that it’s driven by finance because actually if we had the money, OK even if the national church wouldn’t let us have vicars, we could do something else, we’d employ community workers or something ....”. Hence finance, or the lack of it, was the determining factor.

f. What is the financial position of the church at the next level up (and/or below) and is this having an impact on your own financial position and strategy?

Local: The key issue was the paying of the parish share and correspondingly the number of stipendiary clergy. There was recognition that the Deanery and Diocesan levels were also struggling financially and that this had had an impact on the need for lay ministry and the use of non-stipendiary clergy: “that’s where the future of the church will be, people exercising what gifts they’ve got”. It was recognised that there was the possibility of getting into a vicious circle over finances with reduced clergy leading to reduced congregations leading to reduced giving etc.
Intermediate: See Ee above.

Regional: See Ee above for discussion of the next level up. The parish share system received additional comment since the Diocesan financial position is so dependent upon the health of the parishes. The proportion of parish share paid had declined to 90.34% in the previous year. As posts were deleted the current three year average system was under pressure as Deaneries felt the full saving from declining clergy numbers should be reflected in the first year.

F. GENDER

Women are involved in varying degrees in the governance and strategy of organisations. Some feel they are relatively excluded, others have an active role.

a. What roles do women play in your organisation?

Local: While women occupied all the roles (priest, curate, Reader, Church Warden, Treasurer etc.) in the respondents’ parishes there was also some sense of the north east being a backward part of the country and it had been difficult for congregations to accept women and for women’s vocations to be recognised. It was very much “this is man’s work, this is woman’s work”.

Intermediate: Deanery synods had always been female-dominated, reflecting the congregations, and women had occupied most roles at Deanery level, such as lay chair of synod. In general the clergy were predominantly men. In one Deanery two parishes had Resolution B in place allowing female presidency at the Eucharist but not a woman incumbent, so this and the historical majority of male clergy accounted for the current lack of balance between male and female clergy at Deanery level.

Regional: It was generally recognised that women were not well represented at senior levels in the Diocese. One woman had recently left the Bishops’ staff team but another has replaced her. There was one female Area Dean (out of 16).

b. Based on your experience what are the main factors that influence opportunities or barriers for women?

Local: Although one respondent stated that theological barriers had existed with a small minority of the parish (and these people, once persuaded, had become the most whole-hearted supporters of the female curate), it was generally indicated that the barriers had been cultural. And these barriers were now being removed with one respondent commenting that the experience of women priests had been generally positive and so a gradual acceptance was emerging.

Intermediate: One respondent indicated that there were some theological barriers in some parishes but otherwise the barriers were cultural and these were disappearing. One respondent said there were no barriers and that a female Area Dean, for example, would not be a problem.

Regional: It was recognised that some theological barriers existed in some parishes which did not accept women’s orders of ministry, but in the main respondents stated that barriers did not exist. It was thought that the lack of women in senior positions would gradually work its way out as the numbers of women priests increased, although the issue of women not wishing to take on senior jobs that appear to be so all-consuming was stated by one respondent. Another respondent thought that more of the ‘wrong’ people coming forward for ordination were women rather than men.
G. CHURCH AND STATE

a. Has charity law forced any changes onto legal or other structures or practices recently; how has this affected governance arrangements or strategy?

Local: The impact of charity law was generally low and was more of a compliance matter than having any effect on governance arrangements or strategy. One parish had had to set up its church hall as a separate charity for legal reasons and to be able to access lottery funding. This had involved interviewing PCC members to ensure they were fit persons, but the procedures were seen as helpful in this regard. Two respondents (from the intermediate level but commenting on their own parishes) indicated that, because their churches had incomes over £100,000 (and so had to register as independent charities), this had had an effect on membership (e.g. lay workers could not be PCC members / trustees as they were employees) and the auditing process was now much tougher.

Intermediate: None.

Regional: Similarly, there had been issues over accounting requirements but this was also viewed as a compliance matter.

b. Within your own organisation, what would you see as the main tensions between civil and religious law?

Local: Health and safety and CRB checks were mentioned by respondents. Again, this was generally regarded as a matter of compliance. One respondent felt that CRB checks had been helpful in forcing people to look at procedures, but another respondent indicated that these had led to a row at PCC.

Intermediate: Similarly health and safety and CRB checks were mentioned but again the issue was compliance although some tensions (e.g. over the cost of compliance with a health and safety issue) were mentioned. One respondent indicated that relationships with other secular agencies were very constructive and the church was expected to be a player in the local community.

Regional: One respondent also noted how much easier the relationships between church and state were in this part of the country (e.g. no concerns over having to talk to Muslims if a secular authority wanted to talk to the church). The costs of compliance over, e.g. CRB checks were noted and the possible side-effects of providing an excuse not to pursue mission and ministry were also noted. One respondent mentioned employment law as being challenging and requiring expertise that it was not easy for a small organisation to retain. A regional HR manager covering six Dioceses was due to start shortly to cover this.
APPENDIX I: Scoring

Scoring of governance and finance are on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is highly developed/effective, 3 is moderately developed/effective and 5 is under developed/ineffective.

### Scoring of governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Development: Where would you score the level of development of the governance systems and processes that are in place?</th>
<th>Effectiveness: Where would you score the effectiveness of the present governance arrangements?</th>
<th>Average Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local level</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate level</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional level</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Scoring of Strategy

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Development: Where would score the level of development of the systems and processes for deciding and agreeing strategy?</th>
<th>Effectiveness: Where would you score the effectiveness of the present strategy?</th>
<th>Average Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local level</td>
<td>a</td>
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<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate level</td>
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<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional level</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>2.43</td>
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### Scoring of institutionalisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How would you describe your church in terms of the degree to which it is institutionalised on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is highly institutionalised, 3 is moderately institutionalised and 5 is un-institutionalised.</th>
<th>Is the effect of the institutionalised church 1 - very supportive, 2 - supportive, 3 – neutral, 4 – unsupportive or 5 – very unsupportive to the practice of your faith?</th>
<th>Average Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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