

Planning a Parish Building / Redevelopment Project: A Guide for Clergy & PCCs

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...” (Revelation chapter 21)

Transformation lies at the heart of the Diocesan London Challenge 2012. Amongst other commitments there is a commitment to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in 21st century London, to serve London and all her people and to express God’s love in our world city. It is commitment to transformation such as this which must be the driving force for any proposed transformation of our church buildings.

First Steps:

A church building / redevelopment project has an impact beyond the worshipping community. Any parish considering embarking on a building/redevelopment project of any kind needs not only to have the support of the church community but also to be aware that such a project will always involve input from the wider diocese at some level.

Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), Area Council, Diocesan Finance Committee (NB the LDF act as custodian trustees for all PCC land and assets), the Church Commissioners, Local Authority and other bodies such as amenity societies, are likely to be involved at some stage in the process depending on the nature of the project.

It is important that a parish doesn’t take too many steps down the path of developing plans with an architect before undertaking necessary consultation with other individuals, committees and bodies. Otherwise frustration with ‘the Diocese’ can arise because it can seem as if others are thwarting the parish’s plans if the desired response is not given. Discussions with the Archdeacon should take place at the outset.

The following steps are all vital in order to reach a decision about whether or not a parish building/redevelopment project will be supported by the Area and Diocese.

1. Meet with your Archdeacon to discuss initial vision and ideas.

2. Provide some basic statistics and financial information:

a) In order to make the case for a parish project to gain the support of the Deanery, Area and necessary diocesan bodies, it is important to gather some basic facts, most of which should be accessible from parish annual returns. These are listed in Appendix 1.

These figures alone do not give the whole picture but they will give an indication of the current viability of the parish. These figures can then be looked at alongside the information outlined below. For example a parish might score extremely low on some of the viability statistics but it may be that a redevelopment project is actually required in order to increase viability and meet the mission and ministry needs in that locality. There are of course serious questions to be addressed about a vulnerable parish’s ability to ‘hold’ and manage a redevelopment project.

b) Whilst projects should be designed to support the execution of the parish’s Mission Action Plan (see below), they must also be financially viable. Although in exceptional circumstances small loans may be available from Area or diocesan funds, the Diocese does not act as a grant-making body.

3. Develop a good Mission Action Plan:

The starting point for any building / redevelopment project must grow from a parish's vision for mission and ministry as expressed in a Mission Action Plan, and be a response to identified need. An architect should not draw up plans, however draft, without the brief emerging from an updated Mission Action Plan i.e. the plans should respond to what is actually required rather than what could be created in the space available.

Area Directors of Training and Development can offer help and advice regarding Mission Action Plans. There are also details on the diocesan website under 'Vision': www.london.anglican.org/MAP.

4. Consider the vision for Mission and Ministry within the Deanery:

The face of London is constantly changing and before a parish project is embarked upon, difficult and courageous questions need to be asked within the context of a deanery vision. Any parish contemplating a building/redevelopment project should consult with the Area Dean and the Deanery as early as possible.

If the church proposing the building/redevelopment project is currently fragile regarding viability, it is important to ask if a church is actually required in that exact location and if so how a redevelopment project will enable the parish to become more viable. In some instances the response will be to say that the church buildings should *not* be redeveloped.

Thus for every parish building / redevelopment project there should be a comprehensive statement of need which is all part of the on-going deanery vision for mission and ministry. Details of how London is changing in future years (demographics, statistics and mapping information) can be provided by the Diocesan Regeneration Consultant (Matthew Girt 020 7932 1205). This will provide important input.

5. Initiate a Community Audit:

If a building redevelopment is about serving the needs of both the church community and the wider community then it is vital that a community audit is undertaken in order to identify local needs and hopes. For example, there is no point designing a hall which can be hired out to a nursery if there are already several in the vicinity and no additional need. Once the needs and hopes have been identified the various options available to the parish should be considered (an *options analysis*). Any local borough plans are an important factor to be considered as part of the audit.

The Community Ministry Adviser (*Jack Maple 020 7932 1122*) can offer help and advice regarding community audits. There are also details on the diocesan website under 'Vision' and 'Mission Action Planning': www.london.anglican.org/MAP.

The Next Step:

Once discussion has taken place with the Archdeacon and at deanery level, and there is a clear MAP and community audit in place, it is necessary for an initial consultation meeting to take place. This should be chaired by the Archdeacon and involve vicar, churchwardens, a member of the Care of Churches Team (if the project involves or impacts upon the church building) and the diocesan Project Development Manager.

The parish will be asked to outline the vision for the project and what the outputs and benefits will be. The meeting will provide a forum to discuss vision, look at plans,

discuss the parish's ability to manage a project and explore whether or not the project is feasible and financially viable. All of this will provide an indication of whether or not the project is to be supported.

If it is decided that the project should be encouraged then next steps can be outlined. At this stage a clear Business Plan will need to be produced. This must include how the building / redevelopment project is to be managed and by whom. Questions of long term sustainability must also be addressed.

The next stages are shown on the diocesan website on the Parish Project Flowchart in the Property Development section: www.london.anglican.org/Property-Development.

APPENDIX 1:

- Mission & Ministry (M & M) category
- Electoral Roll (ER) and Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) numbers
- Giving per head of ER and USA per week
- Common Fund contribution (it will be expected that CF contributions are up to date)
- Financial Resources e.g. property owned; income from investments; income from trust funds etc
- Employed staff
- Church and community activities and numbers involved
- Use of church and premises by other groups etc
- Latest QI report