

London Plan Working Arrangements

1. Process for parishes seeking arrangements for episcopal ministry under the provisions of the House of Bishops' Declaration

When a PCC is considering making a request under the provisions of the House of Bishops' Declaration, the Bishops of the Diocese believe that a process of consultation is appropriate and desirable. The Guidance Note accompanying the House of Bishops' Declaration encourages a PCC to consult widely within the parish, and the Bishops of the Diocese commend and support this. In addition, the Bishops and their representatives (members of the Senior Staff and other senior clergy) will be available to answer any questions and points of concern which the PCC may have about the nature of such a request and the process for making it. Invitations to meet with members of the PCC are particularly welcome.

After the period of consultation and having given the requisite period of notice under the terms of the House of Bishops' Declaration, the PCC meet in order to vote on making the request.

If passed, then the Bishop of London would receive a formal letter of request. This must be copied to the relevant Area Bishop. The formal letter of request should be accompanied by a further document describing the nature of the consultation which the PCC has undertaken within the parish, and clarifying the nature of the theological conviction underlying the request.

The House of Bishops' Declaration provides for a further consultation between the Diocesan Bishop and representatives of the PCC in order to further determine the nature of the theological conviction underlying the request, so that appropriate arrangements for the provision of episcopal ministry can be put in place. In the Diocese of London, the Bishops agree that this further consultation may be delegated to the relevant Area Bishop, although the final decision rests with the Bishop of London as Ordinary.

A PCC's theological conviction is likely to be expressed either in Traditionalist Catholic terms (based on the parish's understanding of communion, ministry, and sacramental assurance) (hereafter TC), or in Conservative Evangelical terms (based on the parish's understanding of headship) (hereafter CE). These working arrangements are drafted on the assumption that the Bishop of Fulham, as a Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese, will normally exercise episcopal ministry in the TC parishes making a request; and that the Bishop of Maidstone, as an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese, will normally exercise episcopal ministry in the CE parishes making a request.

The House of Bishops' Declaration makes clear (paragraph 21) that a PCC that has passed a resolution is expected to review it from time to time, especially when a vacancy arises in the benefice.

The relevant documents and guidance from the House of Bishops can be found here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/bishops/house-bishops-declaration-ministry-bishops>

2. Sponsorship of ordinands

The discernment process will take place using Area Directors of Ordinands and existing Area systems, but the Bishop of Fulham, as a Sponsoring Bishop, will appoint his own examining chaplain to be involved in processing candidates from TC parishes. The Bishop of Maidstone is also a Sponsoring Bishop and will work with the Directors of Ordinands in the discernment process in CE parishes. The C4 faculty process (where applicable) takes place in the Areas, with a final report going to the Diocesan Bishop.

3. Placing ordinands in title posts

Subject to suitable training incumbents being available, ordinands sponsored by the Bishop of Fulham can be placed in TC parishes, subject to funding being available. They will be counted within the overall Diocesan allocation. The Bishop of Maidstone will similarly be involved in discussions with the relevant Area Bishop about the placement of ordinands in CE parishes.

4. Licensed Lay Ministers and Commissioned Ministers

Candidates will be agreed by the Bishop of Fulham for TC parishes for training, licensing, and commissioning, working with the relevant Area Wardens of LLMs and CMs. Commissioning paperwork and entry on database to be done through the Areas.

5. Permissions to Officiate

The Bishops of Fulham and Maidstone will **not** process PTOs. PTOs will be processed by the Area Bishop of the Area in which the priest is working (or by the Bishop of London where the PTO applicant is in a national post).

6. Ordinations

Arrangements for ordinations are the responsibility of the Bishop of London. Where candidates for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood cannot, on theological grounds, accept ordination from a bishop who is a woman, from a bishop who ordains women or shares in the consecration of women to the episcopate, or is a male bishop at whose consecration a bishop or archbishop who is a woman has been the principal consecrator, arrangements will be made for their ordination by another Bishop (including the Bishop of Fulham for TCs and the Bishop of Maidstone for CEs)

7. **Collations, Institutions and Licensings**

These will be carried out by the Bishop of Fulham in TC parishes, with the relevant Archdeacon. In CE parishes where his episcopal ministry has been requested, the Bishop of Maidstone will preach, preside, or carry out the collation, institution, or licensing as commissary.

8. **Authorisation of lay permissions in parishes under the episcopal ministry of the Bishop of Fulham**

May be processed by the Area Bishop or by the Bishop of Fulham, with a list of those issued by him to be sent to the Area Bishop for safeguarding and database purposes (*Safeguarding checks through the Diocese of London's safeguarding team as normal*)

9. **Authorisation of admission of children to HC before confirmation**, by the Bishop of Fulham in relation to TC parishes, subject to Diocesan Regulations.

10. **Confirmation returns** to be kept by Bishops of Fulham and Maidstone for confirmations they carry out, for inclusion in the Diocesan Annual Returns of Confirmations.

11. **Blue files of clergy** – For TC parishes, to be kept at the Bishop of Fulham's office and to be available for consultation by the relevant Area Bishop. The Bishop of Maidstone to have access to the blue files of clergy from CE parishes (*the Chichester review made it clear that we should not have two separate clergy files*)

12. **CMD & MDR** – to be run in Areas. Participation by clergy is as set out in their SOP. Episcopal Review for TC parishes to be carried out by Bishop of Fulham. The Bishop of Maidstone will be invited to undertake Episcopal Review for clergy from CE parishes.

13. **Appointment under Common Tenure** – Bishop of Fulham (and Patron, where applicable) to run whole process with Archdeacon and Area Dean. Area Bishops to meet candidates before they are appointed. The Bishop of Maidstone will be fully involved in, and take part in interviews for, appointments to CE parishes, including commending candidates to the relevant Area Bishop, subject to the constraints of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.

14. **CDM process for clergy** - to be referred to the Bishop of London for determination on process.

15. **Pastoral Reorganisation** Provision exists under the constitution of Area Councils for the Bishop of Fulham to be a member of the respective Area Council for pastoral matters relating to TC parishes. It will similarly be appropriate for the Bishop of Maidstone to be consulted

(and invited to attend) an Area Council which is considering pastoral matters relating to CE parishes.

16. Other matters Because the London Plan preserves the integrity of the Archdeaconries, all those functions which are not specified in the London Plan, including Safeguarding, remain with the relevant Area Bishop and Archdeacon.