



EMERGING HOUSING POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2007-2008 saw the discussion by various Board's and Committee's in the Diocese of a paper pulling together various emerging policies and strategies that effect housing for clergy within the Diocese in order that housing could be provided in a strategic and cost effective manner, ensuring good asset management whilst at the same time supporting mission in the Diocese.

The paper was received and endorsed by Bishop's Council in December 2007. Since then modelling has been undertaken using the contents of the paper and in addition the strategies raised in the document have been affirmed.

A number of positions were adopted as regard to housing as follows:

Benefice Housing The status quo of providing a Green Guide (four bedroom, two reception and study house) standard to be maintained. The Green Guide is a document published by the Church Commissioners on the design/accommodation/layout of new purpose built vicarages.

Curates Housing There is now a gradual move to Diocesan provision of housing with an ideal standard being Green Guide. This will allow the majority of housing to be owned by the Diocesan Board of Finance with the balance rented from private owners. This is a substantial shift in policy and will take some time to be fully adopted but is hoped that this will allow for strategically located houses to be used and that the cost of housing is removed from individual parishes.

House for Duty Because House for Duty priests are used for a number of different situations it is felt that the provision of a Diocesan Green Guide house should continue allowing for suitable and flexible dual use.

Resource Ministers Future Resource Minister posts to be offered on a salary basis only and not stipend plus house.

Diocese Environment Policy The Housing & Estates Committee are currently working through the impact of this and it is hoped that further information can be disseminated in 2009 concerning the strategy to be employed with regard to clergy housing including further advice to occupiers.

Future Housing Numbers The Housing & Estates Committee of the Board of Finance are currently responsible for 160 houses throughout the Diocese. The number of houses required for full time stipendiary clergy will decline between now and 2015 as these numbers decline, however this is countered by the increase in the need to provide houses for curates where previously housing was provided by the parish. We therefore anticipate that we will still continue to have a housing stock of 160 in 2015 on which to base revenue and capital expenditure.

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Revenue Implications In the light of the above, revenue levels are still forecast therefore to remain at similar levels prior to taking into account any inflation elements. Additional monies are being introduced into the budget to allow for increased rental costs for some of the curates housing and costs associated with renting out houses. Rental of houses as an income stream is now part of the overall property strategy. This is done when there are opportunities to let properties out for at least 6 months without impacting on the appointment process of new clergy. Expenditure on clergy housing (approximately £1.2M) is a significant percentage of the Diocesan Budget and is a reflection of the commitment to ensure that the clergy and their families are adequately housed.

Capital Implications Plans are also being worked up to see what the capital implications are of purchasing some additional curates houses in strategic locations together with more major capital investment work on the existing housing stock. This may also include proposals emanating from the Environment Policy concerning clergy housing likely to be considered in 2009. Part of this will involve the continuation of the policy of channelling back sale proceeds from surplus housing into the existing stock by funding improvements and alterations to the retained houses.

Should you wish to discuss this summary in further detail or have any specific comments you may wish to make then please do contact the Diocesan Surveyor details as below.

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