

# **Diocese of Ripon and Leeds Urban Strategy 2011-2016**



The strategy comprises context, theology, objectives and work plan.

The work plan is overseen by the Urban Task group of the Diocesan Council for Mission in conjunction with the Urban Officer



For further information about the strategy and other resources for urban ministry, please contact the Urban Officer,

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## Introduction

This strategy is to support mission and ministry in deprived parts of the city including parishes which are known as UPA and also those pockets of deprivation that are found in more affluent parishes.

Although it focuses on diocesan resourcing for the needs of UPA parishes, it is part of a wider context of mission which requires ongoing dialogue between all parts of city and diocesan life. It is based on the previous strategy and a consultation exercise with clergy in UPA parishes which took place in August 2010.

## Context

Leeds continues to be a two speed city with some in the city having high earning power and building developments in the city centre and environs coming back into play. However the city is facing major cuts in public spending which has implications for employment and service delivery in the public and third sector (voluntary, community and faith based organisations). This will have greatest impact on those who are the poorest in financial terms in our city.

The Leeds Initiative is developing a further vision for the city from 2011-2030. This will take into account the changing political and economic landscape that the city faces.

Signs of hope in the city include two movements, City of Sanctuary, concerned with welcoming and integrating people seeking asylum and refuge and Together for Peace which attempts to offer opportunities for people from different cultures, faiths and backgrounds to encounter each other and build relationships.

Following the Report of the Dioceses Commission (December 2010)

### Objective 3

*Support for UPA churches as they minister alongside people affected by rapid social change while engaging positively with the new contexts which such changes bring.*

#### **What does this look like?**

- Engagement with the cuts
- Responding to poverty, housing issues and mental health identified through the consultation

### Objective 4

*Encouragement and support for Anglicans to work positively and creatively with Christians of other traditions in the local faith context.*

#### **What does this look like?**

- Engaging with the Big Society Agenda
- Ecumenical working
- Use of shared resources in a grass roots and sustainable way

### Objective 5

*Development of the local church's understanding of itself as a witness to the kingdom in order to be an engaged presence as a minority among people of other faiths and no faith.*

#### **What does this look like?**

- Developing a better understanding of the relationship between community engagement and mission.
- Theological reflection on mission and engagement in different urban environments -both geographical and communities of interest.

and the continuing discussions on a variety of issues, there is the opportunity to look at resourcing mission and ministry in deprived areas from a wider perspective. It is important that mission and ministry amongst some of the most poorest communities in the country do not get lost in the concerns of structural reorganisation.

### Theology

1. We participate in God's mission to reveal God's kingdom on earth.

*"The mission of God in his world (the missio dei) is at its heart a partnership between the Father who sends and receives, the Son who goes and comes, and the Spirit who is sent and received. (...)*

*Into this Trinitarian partnership in mission God invites first the prophets, then the apostles and now every Christian, through baptism - the sacrament of mission. God chooses to reach out to the whole of creation in partnership with us, not because he needs us but because we need him, and because we need to be participants in this divine outreaching if we are to discover our true image as children of God.*

*Our primary call to partnership is, of course, with God himself - with the Father who sustains, the Son who guides and the Spirit who empowers - but we are also called into human partnerships with our church, our friends, family and others."(Mark Oxbrow )*

2. The signs of this Kingdom are eradication of injustice leading to peace and well being for all.

The vision is held in Zechariah 8. The prophet presents a picture of what the Lord wants for Jerusalem. The true city of God is a place which is safe for those people who are vulnerable, is inclusive of all and provides the necessary

sustenance for body, mind and spirit of each individual who lives there. The prophet acknowledges that this may seem impossible for human beings, but it is not impossible for God.

3. The role of the church is to be an agent of transformation and healing in society. The authority for this comes from the ministry of Jesus proclaimed in Luke 4:17-21:

*Jesus stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*"The spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to ^ proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." And he rolled up the scroll , gave it back to the attendant , and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (NRSV)*

"Theology is a task to be undertaken in solidarity with those who suffer from the refusal of the powerful to change their policies" (Harvey)

4. Paul's language of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) underpins the mutuality of our life in Christ. Mission and ministry in deprived urban areas is one part of the mission and ministry of the whole Church. It is often fragile and vulnerable. It is also determined and frequently sacrificial. It both offers and requires support and encouragement within the Body of Christ. In financial and numerical terms it may appear weak, in commitment to local

mission and faithfulness in prayer and worship, it offers a model of perseverance.

### Objective 1

*Mutuality across the diocese in order to resource mission and ministry in the deprived areas .*

#### **What does this look like?**

- Maintenance of internal resourcing through clergy, share apportionment etc.
- Encouragement of parishes in deprived areas to offer their experiences into the diocesan picture.
- Discussions and theological reflection between those engaged in ministry in deprived areas and those in affluent areas- including new pioneer minister posts and between those in urban and rural contexts.

### Objective 2

*Support and training for congregations with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds as they relate to the religious and social diversity of the communities in which they live and worship.*

#### **What does this look like?**

- Encouragement of celebrations of diversity
- Enabling churches in the more deprived communities to share their experiences of kingdom living with the wider church
- Response to issues of racism and political extremism as identified in the consultation
- Continuing encouragement of interfaith dialogue and work