

## **DIOCESES COMMISSION**

### **YORKSHIRE REVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2010**

1. In 2009 the Dioceses Commission and its staff undertook preparatory work for its review of the boundaries of the five Yorkshire dioceses. This included a tour of the Borough of Barnsley and much of the Diocese of Wakefield, guided by the Archdeacons of Doncaster, Pontefract and Halifax. The Commission appointed a review team, consisting of Dr Priscilla Chadwick (Chair of the Commission), Professor Michael Clarke and Dr Colin Podmore (Secretary of the Commission) to conduct the review. The review team was joined by Mrs Lucinda Herklots for its visit to Wakefield. (Professor Clarke is a former member of the local government Boundary Committee. Mrs Herklots is the Diocesan Secretary of the Diocese of Salisbury. Both are members of the Commission.)
2. The review began in the first week of January 2010. On 10 March 2010 the Review Team reported to the full Commission on the progress of the review in its first nine weeks and on future plans. During its first visit to Yorkshire (4–8 January 2010) the Review Team visited the Dioceses of Sheffield, Wakefield and Bradford, holding meetings in Goole, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Bradford, Skipton, Halifax and Sheffield. A planned visit to Barnsley had to be postponed because of snow. Further meetings were held in London in February 2010. During its second visit to Yorkshire (2–4 March 2010) the Review Team visited the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, holding meetings in Leeds, Harrogate, Ripon and Richmond and also in Northallerton (the county town of North Yorkshire).
3. In all, 50 formal meetings were held during this first phase of the review. In these meetings the review team has taken oral evidence from:
  - the senior staff of the four dioceses (bishops, deans, archdeacons, diocesan secretaries);
  - the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire;
  - the chairmen of the houses of clergy and laity, and of the diocesan boards of finance, of the four dioceses;
  - the diocesan director of education for Bradford and Ripon and Leeds;
  - members and officials of the five West Yorkshire unitary authorities and the East Riding unitary authority, of North Yorkshire County Council, of Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire and Hambleton District Councils and of Goole Town Council (in many cases including either the chief executive or the leader or both);
  - the rural deans and lay chairs of the Bowland and Ewecross Deaneries (Bradford Diocese), the deaneries covering the Boroughs of Calderdale and

Kirklees (Wakefield Diocese), and the deaneries in the Archdeaconry of Richmond (Ripon and Leeds Diocese);

- clergy and lay representatives from
  - the Sheffield Diocese parishes now in the East Riding of Yorkshire
  - the Bradford Diocese parishes now in Lancashire
  - the Ripon and Leeds Diocese parishes now in County Durham.

The Commission is grateful to those whom the Review Team met for their contribution to its thinking.

4. Clergy and lay representatives from the Bradford Diocese parishes now in Cumbria and some clergy and lay representatives from the Bradford Diocese parishes now in Lancashire were unable to attend meetings held in Skipton because of snow. Written evidence has been received from some of them, as well as from a small number of people in the other categories who were unable to attend relevant meetings.
5. The Commission has received a small number of written submissions from individuals who live in Yorkshire. Others who wish to make submissions are invited to do so **by Friday 14 May**.
6. Seven further meetings took place during a further visit to Yorkshire on 18-19 March, with:
  - clergy and lay representatives from the York Diocese parishes now in the City of Leeds;
  - officers of the four Yorkshire Methodist districts;
  - the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire;
  - the County Ecumenical Development Officer for West Yorkshire;
  - the Bishop of Beverley;
  - the Dean of St Anne's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Leeds.

Further visits to Yorkshire will take place in May and June, and further factual information will also be sought. The Review Team will then report further to the Commission at its June meeting.

7. The present expectation is that the Commission will consider a draft report at its September meeting, and that report will then be finalized for publication before the end of 2010. A period of consultation will then follow, in which the 'interested parties' enumerated in s. 6 (1) of the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, and others, will be invited to comment on the proposals set out in the report (as required by s. 6 (3) of the Measure). It is anticipated that the Commission will decide at its June 2011 meeting, in the light of comments received, whether to prepare a draft reorganization scheme or schemes, and if so, what the content of the scheme(s) should be. If the Commission decided to

prepare a scheme or schemes it would also have to prepare a statement of the effect of its proposals and a detailed estimate of their financial effect. The draft scheme and the other two documents would then be sent to the interested parties and others so that they had the opportunity to make representations on them.

8. A draft Scheme would then be sent out for consultation in October 2011. Under s. 6 (4) of the Measure the statutory process of consultation must last at least three and no more than six months. Assuming that the consultation period lasted for six months, the Commission would decide at its June 2012 meeting, in the light of the representations received following the consultation process, whether to pursue the Scheme and, if so, whether to amend it. Assuming that the Commission decided to proceed with the Scheme and that amendments were needed, the revised Scheme might be published in September 2012, and might, after consideration by the diocesan synods under s. 6(6) of the Measure, be submitted to the General Synod for approval in July 2013. If approved by the Synod, it would need confirmation by Order in Council and would (unless the Scheme provided otherwise) come into effect on the first day of the month following such confirmation. In these circumstances, the earliest a Scheme could come into effect is the autumn of 2013.
9. Schemes prepared by the Dioceses Commission need the consent of the diocesan synods of the dioceses affected by them, but s. 7 (2) of the Measure provides that, if any of the diocesan synods do not give their consent, the Archbishop of the Province may authorise the Commission to lay the Scheme before the General Synod for approval if he is satisfied either that the interest of the diocese(s) in the scheme is so small that the withholding of consent should not prevent the submission of the Scheme to the Synod or that there are 'wider considerations affecting the province or the Church of England as a whole which require the draft scheme to be submitted to the General Synod'.
10. Further information about the Dioceses Commission may be found at [www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/commissions.html/diocom/](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/commissions.html/diocom/)

On behalf of the Commission

PRISCILLA CHADWICK  
Chair

24 March 2010