DIOCESE OF BLACKBURN PARISH LEADERSHIP AND DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY
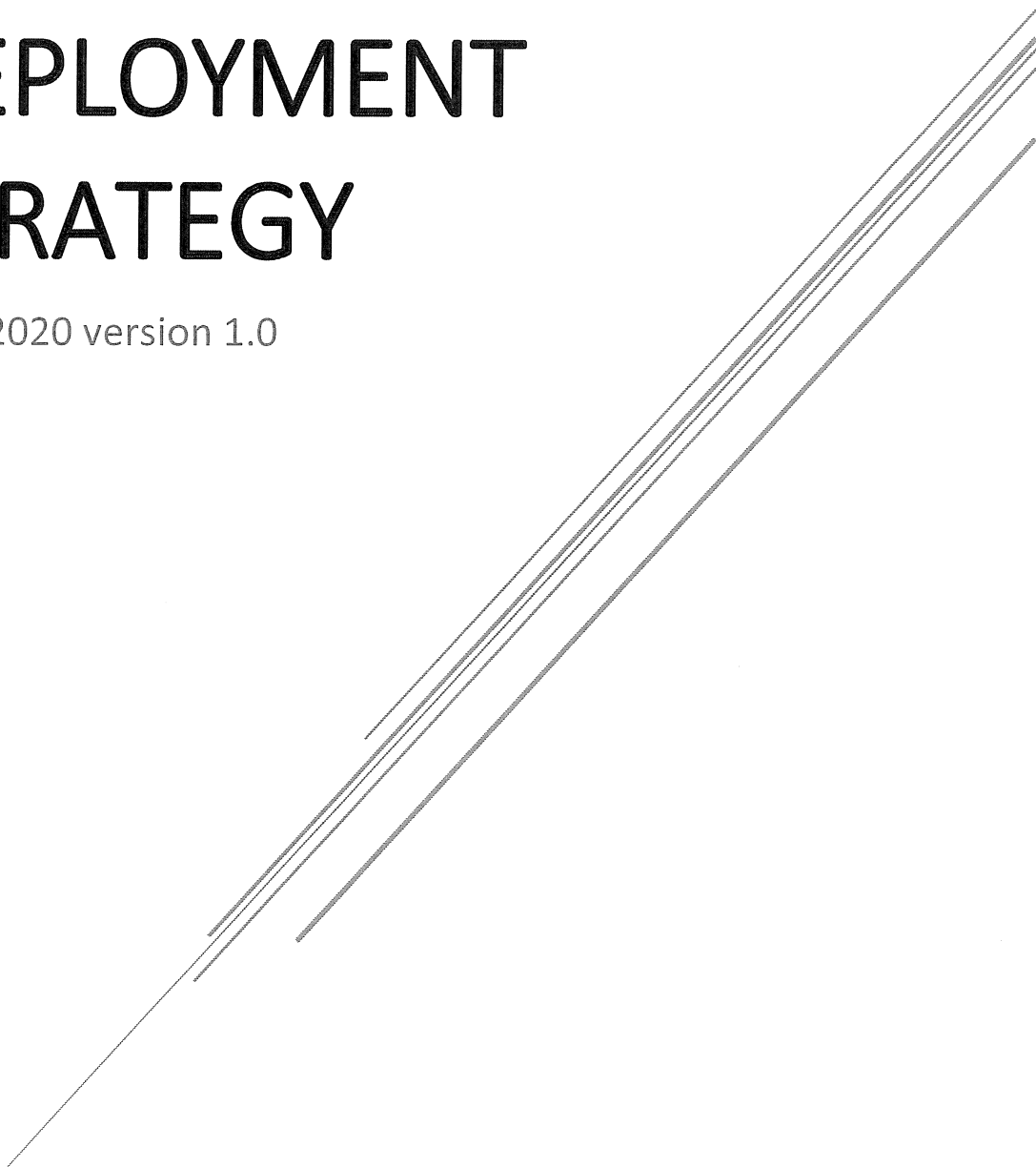
2018-2020 version 1.0

Bishop Philip and Archdeacon Mark

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1. WHAT IS OUR VISION OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP?

Growing leaders is one of the key strands of Vision 2026. Without ordained and lay leaders who are alive with the Gospel and who are formed to grow healthy Churches, the aims that the Vision sets out are unachievable. The original briefing document sets out the issue of developing leadership succinctly:

> *In order for each local Christian community to grow there must be at least one leader, lay or ordained, paid or volunteer, who provides that stability and continuity of presence when that community meet for worship, prayer and planning. And then there needs to be a real drive for every member ministry, discerning and developing the gifts of the Spirit in each disciple.*
>
> *Instead of reducing the number of leaders and merging parishes in pastoral reorganization, which increases pressure and workload onto already hard-pressed leaders, we should be aiming for a Missional leader in each Christian community.*

At the same the time language of leadership can sometimes divide opinions. For some developing leadership is the heart of any effective mission strategy. For others the language is managerial, unscriptural and undermines the distinctive call of the Ordained. How might we then find a vision of Christian leadership that unites and excites all?

Leadership is rooted in our shared baptismal vocation. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28) Jesus sends the disciples to 'baptise all the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' It is our baptismal identity that roots us in Christ, that compels us to grow as disciples and that sends us out into the world to draw others to baptism and so to new life in Christ. All the baptised are called to some form of Christian leadership.

Leadership is about the both service and proclamation. In one of the great models of Christian leadership in the Upper Room Jesus first washes the disciples feet (John 13) and then gives them the gift of an everlasting memorial of his death in bread and wine. In so doing Jesus demonstrates that the leader is called to be (a) the servant who makes of his/her life a gift to others and (b) the evangelist who will hold the cross high for the world to see and therein find salvation. This calling to be a servant-evangelist is integral to any vision of Christian leadership.

Good leadership is rooted in healthy relationships between Lay and Ordained. The recovery of the centrality of the ministry of all the baptised is profoundly liberating but it has on occasions been at the expense of a clear understanding of the distinctive role of the Ordained. The ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons is an integral feature of Anglicanism as we are reminded whenever a new priest is licensed. A healthy acknowledgement of the distinctiveness, uniqueness and dignity of each vocation is essential, and we must avoid an emphasis on one denigrating another.

Christian leadership is expressed in many ways. Setting God's People Free draws a distinction between 'functional' and 'influencing' leadership. The functional leader is given a role by an organisation, the influencing leader discovers a role of leadership for themselves, usually unwittingly, because of their capacity to inspire and engage. Leadership in the church is much deeper than the roles that people occupy – indeed arguably this is the least important part. All are called to leadership as they influence others with the saving news of God in Christ.

Good leaders are always looking out for new leaders. Just as Jesus called the twelve, just as Hilda called Caedmon, so the effective leader is always seeking to call out and develop the gifts of others. The primary task of a Christian leader is to give away so that others can lead.

Effective leadership is rooted in shared responsibility, generosity, grace and inter-dependency. It is important that the change in language and culture necessary to resolve financial/charity governance issues is applied to our understanding of leadership. Effective Christian leaders are above all role models of vivid Christian living.

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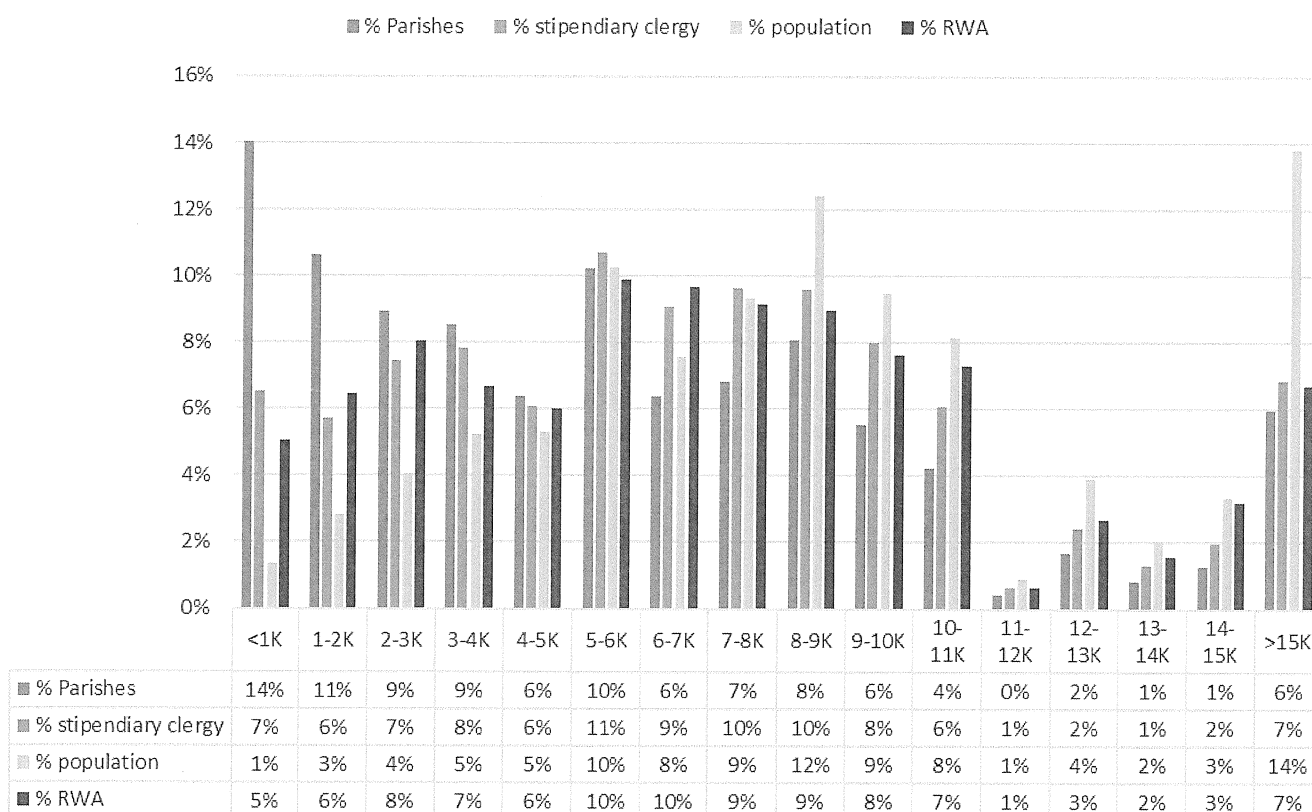
2. WHAT IS OUR CURRENT LEADERSHIP SITUATION?

Numbers of parochial clergy

The Diocese of Blackburn currently (May 2018) has 239 parishes within 171 benefices, led by 146 full-time equivalent stipendiary posts plus 3 House for Duty and 2 Fully self-supporting ministers.

Existing deployment of clergy

Using data from 2016, the proportion of stipendiary ministry in general matches the proportion of Regular Weekly Attendance (RWA) regardless of parish size. It is noticeable however, that the proportion of stipendiary ministry is significantly greater than the proportion of the population in smaller (generally more rural) parishes and the opposite in the larger (generally more urban) parishes.

Proportion stats by parish population bands

■ % Parishes　■ % stipendiary clergy　■ % population　■ % RWA

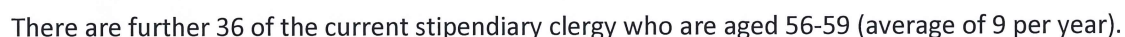|	<1K	1-2K	2-3K	3-4K	4-5K	5-6K	6-7K	7-8K	8-9K	9-10K	10-11K	11-12K	12-13K	13-14K	14-15K	>15K
■ % Parishes	14%	11%	9%	9%	6%	10%	6%	7%	8%	6%	4%	0%	2%	1%	1%	6%
■ % stipendiary clergy	7%	6%	7%	8%	6%	11%	9%	10%	10%	8%	6%	1%	2%	1%	2%	7%
■ % population	1%	3%	4%	5%	5%	10%	8%	9%	12%	9%	8%	1%	4%	2%	3%	14%
■ % RWA	5%	6%	8%	7%	6%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	7%	1%	3%	2%	3%	7%

The current average allocation of stipendiary clergy units is 1 for every 9,600 population (1.4m/146 stipendiary full time equivalent) and 1 for every 112 RWA (16,350/146 full time equivalent). The average allocation per benefice is 8,200 population (1.4m/171) and 96 RWA (16,350/171).

There are currently only 66 (c. 30%) benefices with over 95 RWA (shown in the map below).


Current Parish Share Receipts

One key factor in determining stipendiary clergy deployment is the state of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) accounts. As this Diocese has relatively low levels of historic asset on which to earn a return, parish share receipts accounts for over 80% of the total DBF income. In 2017, the overall receipt rate was c.90% of what was requested, with 50+ parishes contributing less than 90% of their individual requests. On a positive note, over 165 of the 239 'contributing places' received certificates thanking them for meeting their request (some of which were after agreed parish share support).

Current Clergy age profile

Based on 2018 clergy age information, there is **unlikely** to be a significant number of old-age retirements in the diocese for at least five to seven years (as the cohort of 60-year olds move towards retirement).

There are further 36 of the current stipendiary clergy who are aged 56-59 (average of 9 per year).

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Clergy vacancy management

Looking back over the past five years, the average number of stipendiary clergy vacancies has increased from c. 10 per month in 2014-2016, to c. 14/16 in 2016-2017. This partly reflects a 'bow wave' of clergy retirements (old age and ill-health) over the past two years.


Stipendiary vacancies in month
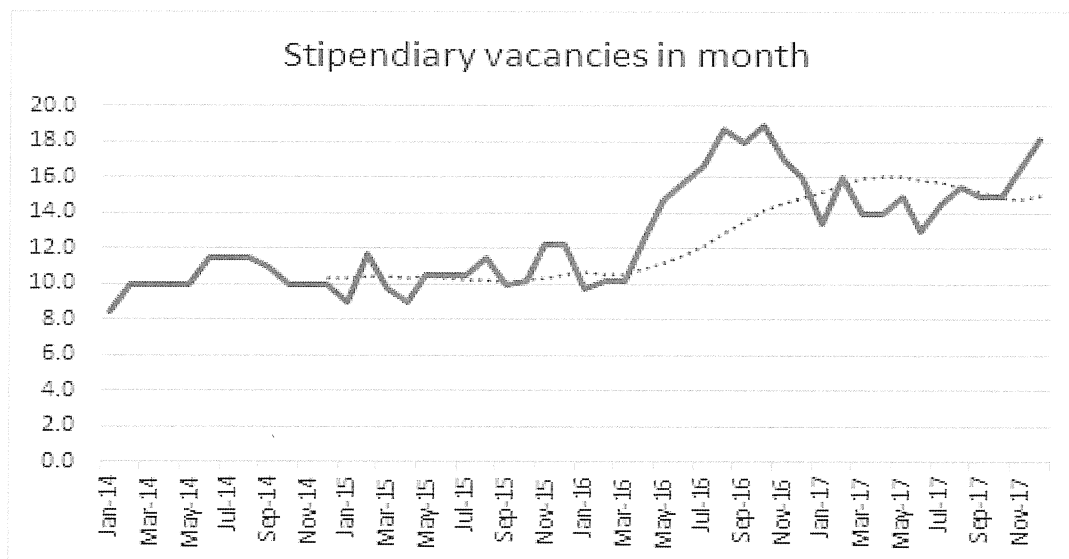
Over the past two years, there have been very few stipendiary clergy who have moved out of the diocese (2-3 per year on average), although the number may be higher in 2018.

The Bishop's Appointment Team has been working hard to reduce the length of vacancies, as lengthy vacancies are linked to numerical decline. As can be seen from the graph below, the average vacancy length is currently c. 8 months, with only four parishes currently having a vacancy lasting more than a year.

Vacancy length (years) from start date
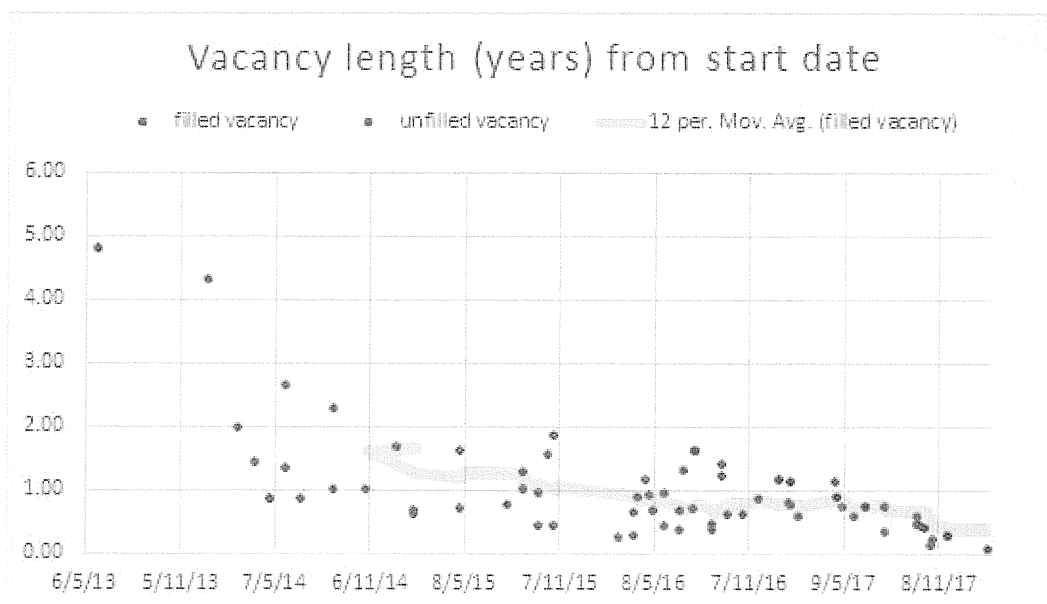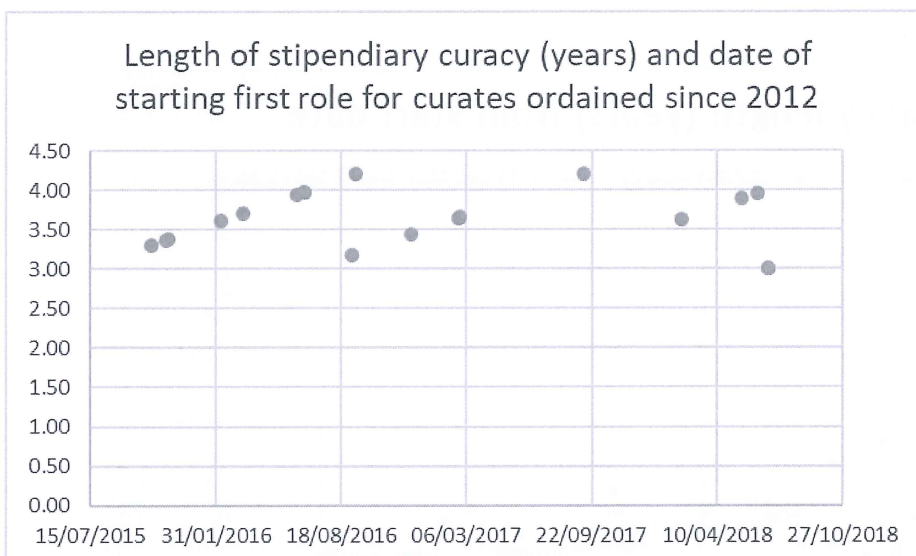
Clergy length of service

The average length of service of clergy in a parish is c. 6 years. Seven clergy have served the same parish for over twenty years and a further 14 have served for over fifteen years.

Length of service at May 2018 of those priests in post in July 2017
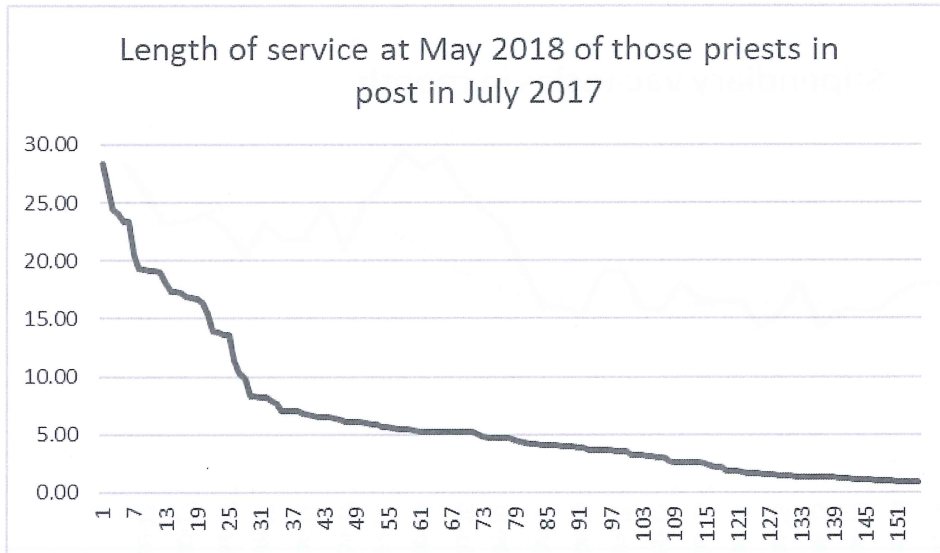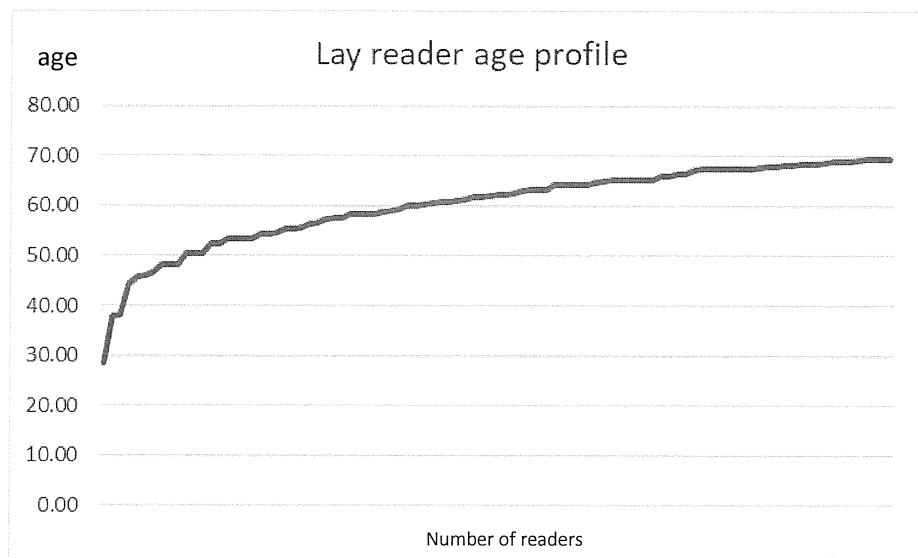
Ordinand and Curates

Before the ordinations in July 2018, there are 24 curates in IME2, with a further 10 ordinations this year, leaving 15 ordinands still in training.

The average length of a stipendiary curacy for those ordained since 2012 is 3.6 years.

Length of stipendiary curacy (years) and date of starting first role for curates ordained since 2012

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Lay Leaders

There are currently 156 licensed lay readers of whom 67% are aged less than 70 (ie not Permission to Officiate). The graph below shows the age profile of those aged less than 70, with an average age of 60 years old. There are four to five Readers in training each year for the next three years, although there are nine starting in 2018, which means that, unless the 2018 number becomes a trend, there will be an overall reduction in (non-PTO) Lay Readers over the next few years.

Lay reader age profile

age

| 80.00 |
| 70.00 |
| 60.00 |
| 50.00 |
| 40.00 |
| 30.00 |
| 20.00 |
| 10.00 |
| 0.00 |

Number of readers

Conversely, over the past couple of years, over 80 people have completed the occasional preachers course and a further 19 have completed the occasional worship leaders course, indicating a preference for shorter, more practical training. In addition, there are over 175 Pastoral Assistants.

One parish has been led by a lay focal leader during 2017/18, with a new lay leader taking over the role in summer 2018.

3. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING TO ACHIEVE WHEN IMPLEMENTING THIS STRATEGY?

The Vision strapline, 'Healthy churches transforming communities' answers this question. Our aim is to have in every place lay and ordained leaders working together for the benefit of the communities they serve and seek to transform with the Gospel. This means:

- Energised lay and ordained leaders in every Parish, Chaplaincy and Fresh Expression. The precise pattern of leadership will vary according to context. Whilst leadership provided by a priest (stipendiary or self-supporting) will remain the norm, there are many places in which lay leaders or focal leaders can play a much more focussed and significant role
- A culture of vocation so that discerning gifts and calling people out for lay ministries or to the priesthood is the norm
- Lay and ordained leaders who can plant and sustain at least 50 new or renewed congregations by 2026.
- A strengthened presence in 'hard to reach' areas, especially inner urban, outer estate, rural and Presence and Engagement parishes. In these areas the challenges posed to clergy and lay leaders are especially acute.
- A changed culture around parish and/or benefice mergers and co-operations. Parishes need to be encouraged to let go of the fear that mergers and co-operations mean a reduction in clergy posts. Co-operation between parishes can unlock gifts by providing a team-based approach and allowing strengths to be shared and the administrative burdens on the laity to be reduced.
- Greater incorporation of Chaplaincy into the life of the Diocese. Our hospital, prison, and university Chaplains often feel on the edges of Diocesan structures, and yet they have a great deal to offer to the whole.

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4. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DELIVER?

1. **We will develop a clear and cohesive vocations strategy (within 6 months of the Director of Vocations starting in post) which joins up lay and ordained vocations.**

This will:
- Create a culture of vocation in every parish where all lay people can explore a call to be disciples in daily life
- Measurable increase in vocations to different forms of lay parochial leadership eg Reader, Focal Leader, Occasional Preacher, Occasional Worship Leader, Churchwarden, other parish officer, children/youth worker, evangelist, pastor etc.
- Focus especially on vocations amongst younger people, (below the age of 32) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people
- Maintain recent 50% increase of the number of people coming forward for Ordination, and sustain an average of 8 stipendiary and 4 SSM
- Increase by 100% the number of those aged under 32 coming forward for Ordination, from 2 2018 to 4 in 2020

Responsibility: Director of Vocations

2. **We will engage with 'Setting God's People Free' as a Pilot Diocese in 2018/19**

This will:
- Enlarge our vision of lay ministry from being about doing things in church to equipping people to be a leader/influencer for Christ in the whole of life Monday to Saturday – work, community, family - wherever their 'front line' happens to be.
- Help us explore issues around lay leadership and lay discipleship and determine policy accordingly, in particular:
  - **To look at what <u>is</u>** by taking a realistic assessment of discipleship and lay vocation within our diocese, the strengths and barriers.
  - **To look at what <u>could be</u>** by considering how things might be if we were able to change our church culture and release people fully into the ministries and vocations to which God is calling them.
  - **To look at what <u>will be</u>** by planning some actions aimed both at changing the culture within the diocese (long-term) and building on what is already there to generate momentum and encouragement to change (short-term)
- Enable us to network with, and learn from, other Dioceses

Responsibility: Archdeacon of Blackburn, Director of Discipleship

3. **We will raise up a new generation of lay leaders**

This will:
- Develop a strategy to form Lay Focal Leaders (which may link into the review of Reader ministry below).
- Continue to offer opportunities such as occasional worship leaders and occasional preachers courses
- Entail a major review of Reader ministry and new thinking on the best way to deploy theologically educated lay leaders. (In so doing we will stay in touch with national developments and especially the review being conducted by the National Reader Council). We should be willing to offer ourselves as a pilot Diocese should that be required.

- Lay Leadership Officer to provide a variety of tracks to equip lay people for such ministries as occasional preaching and teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, worship leading, pioneer ministry, leadership in social action, and youth and children's work.
- The M:Power urban leadership hub based at St James Lower Darwen, funded by the Strategic Investment Board until 2023 to mentor lay leaders drawn from deprived parishes
- Address the shortage of people to take on parish administration/governance roles – providing training and mentoring for churchwardens, treasurers, PCC secretaries (which is being expanded by archdeacons/DBF). Explore where and how pastoral reorganisation can help with this. In 2018, consider the DBF offering (paid for) external support for parish management.
- Pioneer new ways to form lay leaders from and for urban areas (SDF1)

Responsibility: Bishop's Appointment Team, Director of Vocations, Lay Leadership Officer, Warden of Readers, Diocesan Youth Officer

4. **We will encourage and enable a team-based approach to lay leadership**

This will:
- Support parishes in forming teams for particular areas of ministry eg pastoral visiting, baptism preparation, youth ministry etc possibly in conjunction with Mothers Union branches in 2018-2020
- Encourage parishes who wish to form Leadership or Ministry teams through training, mentoring and (where appropriate) learning communities e.g. holding the small-group leader course each year

Responsibility: Lay Leadership Officer

5. **We will maintain clergy numbers at their current rate but with greater emphasis on pioneering and planting – recognising that SSMs/HfD are a key resource in places with affordability issues**

This will:
- Give greater confidence to parishes in planning their future and encourage a more positive approach to mergers and co-operations, for emphasising the difficulty of recruiting part-time clergy.
- Tackle the mentality of 'presumed decline' through preaching, teaching and coherent messages from those in leadership
- Create capacity for plants and renewals especially by developing resourcing churches/parishes and training planting interns. Utilise Strategic Development Funding for the establishment of the Preston Minster/St George resourcing parish in 2019.
- Find methods of supporting parishes in terminal decline involving turnaround strategies or closure and replanting

Responsibility: BAT

6. **We will achieve (5) by:**
- Ordaining 8 stipendiary curates and at least 2 SSM curates a year from 2019
  - To include 2 planting interns/curates per year, trained at Resourcing churches
  - Curates deployed as agreed at BAT October 2017
- Setting a target rate of 80% retention rate post curacy
  - Working with curates throughout IME2 to ensure retention
  - Simplifying appointments process for our own curates to ensure they are not tempted outside the Diocese
  - Offering improved support for the First Incumbency through developing the learning community and making consistent use of mentoring

Responsibility: Director of Vocations, BAT, Director of IME2

7. **We will develop our use and deployment of SSMs and make better use of active retired clergy**

This will require:

- Fast track selection and training for SSMs aged over 50 who do not intend to move into stipendiary ministry
- Making more strategic use of SSMs post Curacy through one to one work, especially during IME2
- More intelligent use of SSMs in groups and multi-parish benefices and using SSMs as Focal Leaders
- The appointment of a new volunteer Director of SSMs by autumn 2018.
- Area Deans to be encouraged to use the Contact Management System (CMS) to identify PTOs living in, or close to their deanery
- Better support for PTOs so that they are aware of the strategy and direction of the Diocese and feel better included in the family requiring the appointment of new Retired Clergy officers, a BLT link bishop and exploring what good practice that neighbouring dioceses eg Carlisle are doing with their Retired Clergy Association

Responsibility: BAT, Director of SSMs, Retired Clergy Officers

8. **We will enrich the resourcing and support we offer current clergy**

By:

- Improving the induction for clergy new to the Diocese and First Incumbents. Pilot this in autumn 2018
- Launching the mid-ministry programme in partnership with other Dioceses
- Sourcing and promoting Leadership training for those for whom a need is identified through MDR
- Addressing issues of clergy wellbeing, so that all clergy can thrive and take appropriate steps towards a healthy and balanced lifestyle
- Overhauling CMD and appointing two volunteer CMD Officers
- Taking a more strategic approach to Study Leave as agreed by BLT in 2017.

Responsibility: Bishop of Burnley, CMD Officers

9. **We will offer tailored support to clergy and lay leaders in hard to reach areas (inner urban, outer estate, Presence and Engagement)**

We will:

- Launch a Presence and Engagement Centre of excellence in Blackburn Cathedral from spring 2019
- Successfully launch Outer Estates Leadership models in Blackburn and Blackpool that have an impact across the diocese from spring 2018
- Run learning communities within the diocese, and sharing with others through appropriate networks eg Estates Evangelism Task Group, Rural Focus Group, Urban Priority Group, Coastal community, leaders of largest churches

Responsibility: Archdeacon Mark, The Dean, Tim Horobin, Peter Lilicrap, Linda Tomkinson, Vision Co-ordinator

5. HOW WILL WE DEPLOY CLERGY?

1. Deployment Decisions

The question of how to make decisions regarding local deployment will necessarily involve a degree of judgement. In deciding whether a Parish or Benefice should be staffed with a full-time, part-time, House for Duty or SSM priest a number of factors should be taken into account.

Growth Potential
- A sense of Vision and Purpose assessed by Mission/Vision Action Plan or Vision 2026 response and a Vision Champion in place
- Population and new housing forecasts
- A Church School and/or links with other schools
- Recent history. A parish that has been weakened by a poor incumbency should not be punished.
- Active patterns of lay ministry
- Engagement in ministry with children and young people

Workload - there are many elements to consider, such as...
- Regular Weekly Attendance. (An RWA of around 100 is a helpful guide for a full-time priest in most contexts) NB there are currently only 66 benefices that meet that criteria
- Number and timing of services (Though we should not be influenced by a lack of flexibility over Sunday service times)
- Number of churches in a Benefice
- Civic responsibilities
- Number of Occasional Offices (support available from local SSM clergy, Mothers Union etc?)
- Church School(s) and other schools – role on governing body (bodies) as well as active engagement
- State of Buildings (judged by estimated cost of urgent work in last quinquennial)
- An open churchyard
- Fresh expressions
- Chaplaincy roles in the community

Finance
- Financial capacity to afford a replacement
- Evidence that financial issues are being addressed e.g. a recent meeting with DBF Directors
- Evidence of recent work on Christian stewardship

If a place is up to date with parish share and has an RWA of over 100 then there is clearly a job to be done and resource to pay for it. If a parish is behind on parish share or below 100 RWA then consultations may take place (with DMPC and with neighbouring parishes) to see if the post can be amalgamated or reconfigured to create a viable post.)

Hard to Reach Areas
- There are a few places, including but not exclusively those with large other faith communities, which do not meet either of the above two categories, but where it is important to maintain a Christian presence (26 parishes based on 2011 census data).
- Even though significant numerical growth may be hard to attain, as a national (rather than a gathered) church we are committed to maintain a Christian presence in every local

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community. However, the model of ministry might differ to that provided in the past e.g Mereside Freedom Church

2. Configuring Posts

In common with many Dioceses far removed from the south-east, we will continue to find it hard to recruit clergy to some posts. Therefore, in addition to the above, we will give close attention to configuring posts such that they are likely to attract a field of candidates. This means balancing the data in section 1 above with a sense of what constitutes an attractive and sustainable post.

We will also seek to configure posts and offer support such that clergy are released for mission and ministry and are not overly burdened by administration, governance demands and the management of buildings. For example, failure to fill lay leadership/PCC governance roles is an indicator that structures may need to be simplified (e.g. create a united parish), paid administrative assistance provided, and/or support is provided to identify and train 'unlikely leaders'.

3. Vacancy management

Vacancies have the potential to be a difficult time for Parishes. However, if handled imaginatively and if of limited length, it can be a time to re-envision. There is still room for us to be more pro-active in planning and managing vacancies. This should involve:
- Predicting vacancies and planning ahead (by for example BAT reviewing age profile of clergy/outcomes of MDRs)
- Aiming to fill all vacancies within nine months
- Making more general use of 'consultants', especially when there are complex issues to resolve in a vacant parish
- Making better use of the outgoing incumbent, planning for the appointment before the outgoing incumbent has left and enabling handover from one incumbent to the next
- Continuing to make use of Interim ministry (Between 12-36 months maximum) or temporary Priest in Charge when:
    o There are particular issues to address around finances or pastoral organisation
    o Lay leadership is low in number or weak in capability
    o Recruitment may be hard
- Taking careful note of the tradition of a parish especially when a Letter of Request has been sent under the House of Bishops Declaration

4. Parish Support Programme

We need to offer focussed support to parishes that are weak but where there is a willing leadership in place that will enable an effective turnaround. This needs more detailed development work but may include the following:
- Bishops and Archdeacons identifying 10-15 such parishes by end summer 2018
- Offering a Parish Support Programme funded by the Vision Fund to include:
    o Parish Management additional support (Covering administration, stewardship, finance, buildings, governance) from the Enablers team – both existing DBF employees re-focused and a team of volunteers
    o A Mentor for clergy – someone who is an effective leader and coach (clergy or lay)
    o Leading Your Church in to Growth (LyCiG) programme involving preparation, the LyCiG Course and follow-up, attended by the priest and up to three laypeople. This will need additional funding from the Diocesan Vision Fund

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    o   Encouraging 'twinning' with a Resourcing Church

    o   Supporting clergy who need help in moving on

A more pressing challenge is faced where the leadership is either unwilling or unable to face up to the issues confronting a Parish. Here models being pioneered by other Dioceses will be explored.

5. Funding pioneers/church planting

This is a pressing issue if we are to have a stream of planting interns in addition to our stated aim of planting at least 50 new/renewed congregation (at least a few of which will be led by stipendiary pioneers or planters). The DBF needs to give thought to how these are funded and needs to be ready to use:

- Revised Parish Share arrangements including allocation from Lowest Income Communities Funding (LICF)
- Diocesan Vision Fund
- Parish Vision Fund (Steps are being taken to promote the opportunity for individuals and parishes to give directly to this fund)
- National Strategic Development Funding whilst available

The leadership and deployment strategy here is a bold one in that it provides an engine for growth based on the presumption that God will raise up new lay and ordained leaders and the funds to support them. It states that we will retain stipendiary numbers where they are which will require huge generosity on the part of our Parishes.

In certain circles this will always raise a question, and it is one that some external bodies will pressure us to answer. What if it goes wrong? If we can't find the finance or the people, what is plan B?

It would be a critical mistake to attempt an answer to this question:

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

When Jesus called Peter there was no plan B. Peter simply had to place every shred of trust in Jesus Christ, even when it seemed that so doing would bring death and disaster. He had to walk in faith, and when he did, he achieved remarkable things for Jesus.

We live at a time when the Church is being called to walk in faith. 'Plan B' is by implication a decline plan which would manage reduced clergy numbers, reduced income and a reduced mission. If we have that in our back pockets, it is quite inevitable that when the wind blows (as it will) we would become fearful and employ it. For Peter, Plan B was Plan A – keep walking, keep trusting with his eyes fixed on Jesus. Surely that must be our Plan B also. If we plan for decline, decline is inevitable. If we plan for growth with absolute trust and unwavering faith, the Lord will without doubt bless us. The question in the end is a straightforward one. To where do we owe our ultimate allegiance, the Excel Spreadsheet or the Gospel of Jesus Christ?