

What is a Deanery Strategic LIFE Plan?

Your deanery will spend the next few months preparing a map which describes the life of the deanery, and a working document which proposes a scheme for meeting the needs of the people and communities which the church in your deanery serves.

Why are we doing Strategic Plans?

We want to plan how we can best serve this diocese in 10 years' time. Are the current boundaries, buildings, staffing and lay leadership suitable for the next decade and beyond? This process strengthens the role of our deaneries in planning creatively and strategically for our future as a varied and sustainable church across the diocese of Gloucester.

Who is facilitating this work?

Revd Dana Delap moved to Gloucester Diocese from Newcastle upon Tyne in 2014, to be Team Vicar and Team Missioner in the Vale and Cotswold Edge Team Ministry in the North Cotswolds. Before ordination in 2011, she was a probation officer, a Reader, a diocesan officer and a prison chaplain.

So, is this a cost-cutting exercise?

This is a moment of missional opportunity. At the moment Gloucester Diocese does not need to reduce stipendiary clergy posts but by 2030 we will not have the finances to sustain our current spending. This is an opportunity to prayerfully step back and look at the bigger picture. We need to ask God to help us discern our calling and vision for the next 10 years. Then we can plan strategically for future ministry, mission and evangelism.

Is there a hidden agenda?

No. The diocese has no hidden agenda, but we cannot continue 'getting by' on our reserves. We are encouraging deaneries to think creatively about whether we are meeting the needs of our communities. It may be that we consider starting new worshipping communities, creating festival churches, and financing new ministries in chaplaincy, pioneering, sports ministry, children and youth work and administration in the deanery.

Do we have a 'common framework' across the deaneries?

Your parish and your deanery are different from the parish and deanery next to you. Your knowledge of your locality will shape the plan. The LIFE Vision underpins the process as a whole and will be reflected in each plan. The plans will remain living documents for the deanery, and we expect each deanery to return to their plan regularly to continue to reflect prayerfully on it and improve it in the light of God's prompting.

Why are we planning for the future though the deanery?

Looking at the big picture creatively takes courage and maturity. By working together, we will see patterns, places and opportunities that as individuals we might miss. This is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to begin and renew mission among us and through us, as we continue to know, advocate and model life in all its fullness.

How will the process of developing a plan for the deanery in 2030 work?

To prepare for phase I, please read Luke 10:1-11 and think about these questions:

- What does it mean to journey together?
- What might it look like to be equipped for the journey?

While preparing the LIFE Vision, we were encouraged to speak with leading members of our communities about their view of church. In order to challenge our assumptions about how our communities continue to view our churches, it may be helpful to return to those centres of work, school and community gathering to ask again how the church is perceived by those who do not come.

In **Phase 1** clergy and lay people from the deanery meet to gather around an outline of the deanery. On our deanery we map the key physical and social geography of the area – roads, rivers and valleys; places where people gather and work; places like hospitals and schools; and places we want to celebrate where we can already see life in all its fullness.

Phase 2 draws together a small deanery working group of lay people and clergy who will consider the gaps between the vibrant gathering places and communities on our map and our current provision of ministry in the deanery. This is the focal point of our work in creating an effective deanery plan, when we look at the reality of current ministry and respond to the gaps. There will be a written scheme based on the LIFE priorities which will help in shaping the plans so that each deanery plan has a ‘family resemblance’.

In **Phase 3** the plans, shaped by the mapping and drawn up by the planning group, are shared with the deanery synod and clergy chapter. By November 2020, they are shared with the Bishop’s Council. The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group will work with the deanery to bring the plans to fruition over the next decade. Your deanery plan remains a working document, describing the life of the deanery and its future plans for meeting the needs of the people and communities it serves.

I look forward to meeting with you and working with you through 2020, so that the mapping and plan support the hopes and dreams you have for the church in your deanery.



“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”

(WORDS OF JESUS FROM JOHN 10:10)