

Diocesan Action Plan

Synod Report, March 2026

Introduction

The Diocesan Strategy ‘Seeking the Kingdom’ was received and adopted at Diocesan Synod in March 2025.

At that meeting of Diocesan Synod, we also committed to reporting back on progress against milestones in 12 months’ time. This report fulfils that commitment.

The Milestones

Each of the milestones from our initial Diocesan Action Plan is presented below, under one of the ten goals from the Strategic Framework. Progress to date is noted. The progress is ‘RAG’ rated:

- Red: area of concern – progress is behind where we want it to be
- Amber: progress is slower than anticipated, but because of a decision to prioritise other areas of work, or because a different approach is being developed
- Green: progress is as anticipated or is exceeding plans

Governance

We now have in place a full governance structure. Three project boards – ‘Feeding our Faith’, Supporting our Ministry’ and ‘Building up our Parishes and Communities’ oversee the work of the strategy programme and report back to Bishop’s Council when it meets as our Strategy Programme Board. This will be the mechanism for accountability going forward.

Goal 1: A growth in the overall worshipping community of 34,000 new disciples

Opportunities to explore faith mapped across the diocese

Work is ongoing with large numbers of deaneries and parishes.

‘Cradle to grave’ suite of resources developed

Work has not started on this yet because other areas of work have been prioritised.

MDR process reviewed and revised

Work will begin this year, now that the ‘Supporting our Ministry Board’ is established to provide oversight.

Work with external partners on developing the ministerial wellbeing programme underway

A task and finish group involving several external partners has been established and will be developing proposals over the coming months.

Deployment strategy developed

This will form part of the People Plan which is being developed as part of the underlying strategic work.

First learning community established

A learning community is established for leaders of large churches. ‘Resource’ is running a community for rural multi-parish benefices, and we are working on developing a diocesan community to add additional capacity. We have several leaders on national communities for parishes working with large numbers of young people.

All new incumbents being offered a mentor

Pastoral Supervision Scheme in place.

IME programme aligned with strategy

Significant progress on reshaping the IME programme has been completed. This will remain under review as the strategy develops.

Health and Vitality Review of all parishes completed

This has been completed and over the coming year will enable support for parishes to be directed more effectively.

Scheme to allow groups of volunteers to support a local church developed and ready to be piloted

Work has not started on this yet because other areas of work have been prioritised.

Buildings strategy developed

The Venerable Barry Wilson, retired archdeacon, has agreed lead on this work, which is underway, and reporting in to the 'Building up our Parishes and Communities Board'.

Giving strategy developed

Work is behind progress. We are waiting for a much-delayed funding stream from the National Church that will provide capacity for this work.

Goal 2: 200 new worshipping communities which are established and sustainable

Working group of chaplains and parish clergy setup to explore opportunities for closer working

Some initial meetings have been held but progress has been slow. We are reviewing whether this is the most effective approach.

Toolkit for measuring impact developed

Work is ongoing with external partners including Greenhouse, the National Society for Education and Pioneering Parishes. Telford Minster is hoping to become a Myriad Hub and additionally provides a rich source of learning from its 'Villages'.

Planting / revitalisation plans for Wolverhampton Episcopal Area developed

Work is ongoing between the Area Team and the Strategy Team.

Virtual network of leaders established

Work has not started on this yet because other areas of work have been prioritised.

Goal 3: A strengthened culture of vocation amongst all God's people, and at least 30 new licensed lay ministers and 30 ordinations a year

New vocations strategy developed with ongoing work to overcome the barriers to people fulfilling their calling

Significant progress has been made, with 18 people entering ordination training in 2025, 9 entering training for Reader ministry and 37 enrolled on our Chad Foundations programme. Continuing this development work will be a priority for our new Vocations Officer when they are appointed.

Second provider for training for Reader Ministry secured (to receive first cohort in September 2026)

Despite significant work on this we have not managed to secure a second provider. When our new Vocations Officer is in post, we will be looking at a different approach.

Goal 4: An active plan in every parish for engaging with their local population beyond the church walls

Existence of community engagement plans across the diocese mapped

This work has not been completed, and we are reviewing whether this is an effective or useful approach with the 'Building up our Parishes and Communities Board'. A suggestion from the Board, which we are following up, has been to look at approaching this at Deanery level.

Toolkit to show how pathways can be developed from outreach projects to discipleship produced

A group of parishes which have Places of Welcome has been working with 'Greenhouse' and their 'Soul Space' offer to see how this can work across the diocese.

Goal 5: A strong connection between every primary and secondary school and their parish church

Mapping work completed

This work has been completed for Church Schools.

We are still looking for an effective way to complete this work for non-Church Schools.

Goal 6: No fewer than 30 young people per year aged between 18 and 30 who are called to leadership being supported through a high-quality development programme offered by the diocese

First term's worth of training material completed and delivered to the first cohort

Telford Minster in its role as a Resourcing Church runs a ministerial training scheme for young adults from any parish. There are currently 13 young adults on this scheme.

Goal 7: The age profile of each worshipping community reflecting the age profile of the community which it serves

Proposals around the opportunities for greater church involvement in non-church secondary schools (where this is facilitated by the Multi Academy Trust structure) developed

Some work around this has started and will continue throughout 2026.

Discipleship course for leaders in church schools delivered for first cohort

The 3, 2, 1 course is being delivered to the first cohort.

Goal 8: Every worshipping community reflecting the diversity of the community they serve

Work undertaken with national team to see how Church Development Tool can be used to track demographics at parish level

We have become the pilot diocese for the Church of England, and a pilot is currently underway in one of our deaneries which will shape how the tool is rolled out nationally.

Goal 9: All people being able to see themselves reflected in the leadership and governance of the diocese

Work started on action plan to increase diversity in our structures (to be in place ahead of the next triennium)

Funded through the WMRJI Andy Wynter now works for us one day a week ensuring that every aspect of our strategy supports diversity from a racial justice perspective. This complements work around Enabling All and being Dementia Friendly.

Goal 10: To have made substantial progress towards Net Zero Carbon with a clear and achievable plan of how any shortfall will be resolved in the following few years

Net Zero Carbon Manager appointed to oversee this work

Our Net Zero Carbon Manager started work in September and is reporting to this meeting of Synod. Initially appointed for 12 months, we have secured funding for his post to continue throughout this triennium.