



## **Good Practice Guide for Churches Working On New Housing Developments**

This 'Good Practice Guide' has been created as an aide-memoire for those who are facing growth in new areas of housing within the diocese. It should be read in conjunction with the 'New Housing Mission Policy' that was presented to the Diocesan Synod in November 2017. Paper copies of this are available from AD Alan Jeans or M4M office, and are downloadable from the M4M ['New Housing' area](#).

A piece of investigative work was commissioned by the Diocese in 2016 to establish where new areas of housing might be planned. It revealed that 46,000 houses will be built in the diocese in the next 10 years. This means that the diocese now has clear indications where the building might occur, but unfortunately not when! It is vital that deaneries are aware of movement related to New Housing in their area, and that clergy and/or local leaders keep abreast of the planning initiatives as things develop locally.

**The aim of this Guide is to show the Pathways that should be followed by benefices and deaneries to help both clergy and church members understand the implication and effect of possible new housing in their area. This may of course be across benefices and overlap deaneries. The implications of this growth has already been explored by the diocese and work has begun with recent housing initiatives. They have seen the major impact new builds can have on individual churches which is valuable. However, there are also tremendous opportunities for outreach and mission in areas of new housing which need to be grasped.**

### **New Housing Lines of Communication**

It is important that lines of communication are clear so that all key players are kept abreast of changes across the diocese. The diocese has staff who are dedicated to work with those who have the challenge of new housing near them. This is currently based [within the Ministry 4 Mission \(M4M\) portfolio](#). They have put in place 'HUBS' for support and regularly offer training for those engaging with new housing. The Diocese is employing four Rural Field Officers, one for each Archidiaconal area to specifically support mission in these areas. These Rural Officers will be able to signpost interested parties to additional support and resources. The stages that need to be considered to aid communication and the allocation of staff if necessary moves via the following pathways.



### **Senior Diocesan Management**

Creating timelines in relation to new developments can be problematic – as building often starts suddenly, after years of apparent inactivity. Decisions on general principles such as a flexible use of property/staffing resources etc will be reviewed regularly centrally by the senior management team and ideally in advance of the building starting, so that local decisions regarding specific developments can be made and implemented quickly.

"Planning for, executing and overseeing projects in new housing areas can demand substantial amounts of diocesan time. The work needs to be resourced properly at diocesan level if it is to be carried out effectively."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for Mission in New Housing and Other Development Areas – Key Learning Points. By the staff of the Resource, Strategy and Development Unit

This will be undertaken practically at a consultancy level and as part of the M4M resource officer's role, but there needs to be additional capacity found to enable proper engagement with Local Planning Authorities re inclusion of provision for worshipping communities on developments (see planning section below), and to help with initial formation and training of deanery new housing teams.



### **Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committees**

The Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral committees have significant input into boundary changes and all the legalities related to appointing staff into new positions. They meet regularly and can be approached through the Rural Dean or Lay Chair as soon as there is an indication of movement. They would prefer early intervention opportunities as they are able to consider housing options and will engage with planners as to their responsibilities and emphasize the need for places of worship and other opportunities for Church schools.



### **Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees**

The Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees takes the local viewpoint and many deaneries have already begun to factor potential new housing into their 5 -10 year development plans. A good example of this is the work in Wimborne and Salisbury deaneries.

Deanery action plans should be intentional as they look at the creative deployment of resources, houses, property and posts, to further mission to the new developments in their areas. Pastoral change needs to reflect changing local pattern to serve church of future.



### **Deanery New Housing teams**

Deanery New Housing teams are needed to consider appropriate models of mission, and the deployment of resources in the area, and to monitor planning at a local level. They need to consider opportunities for ecumenical work. They should start to put together teams 'on the ground' who can engage directly with planners, attend council meetings and be involved on appropriate committees. Prayer is essential and this should also be factored into the work so that all is surrounded in prayer.

'...To work with local churches in the relevant parishes. For smaller developments, a vibrant local church may be able to undertake mission to the area on its own. On larger developments, the local church may be able to assist with a specific pioneer project by providing, for example, line management for a post-holder, administrative support, or by congregation members forming a team to support the project.....'<sup>2</sup>

'...Early engagement at parish level allows the diocese to tap into local knowledge, gives churches the opportunity to contribute to and shape the plans - and share their own - and helps achieve local buy-in and support for the plans. It also helps the diocese assess the extent to which local churches are able to support pioneer mission in new housing areas....'<sup>3</sup>

Ecumenical partnerships have great strengths but can also be fraught with challenges, if the shared vision is not upheld by all. It is good to explore with other local churches any potential shared resources.



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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE WHEN STARTING OUT AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM

### New Housing Hub

**The New Housing Hub is a gathering of experienced new housing pioneers.** This HUB is a useful point for those ministering in new housing developments to access training and to network with other new housing practitioners across the diocese. **It meets termly.**

### Lay Pioneer training pathway

The Learning for Discipleship and Ministry Team (LDMT) is working on a lay pioneer training pathway which can be offered to those working on new housing estates to help them prepare for ministry. Any model of mission on to a new housing development will require a team of motivated and engaged lay people to help reach the new community, regardless of whether commissioned lay and ordained pioneers are appointed.

### National Resources

There are a number of resources available nationally which are helpful for teams to explore such as:

- **Churches Together in England** has done significant work on new housing and are a good resource for deaneries. [www.cte.org.uk](http://www.cte.org.uk)
- The **Church Mission Society** (CMS) and their work which is based in Oxford. They offer a variety of [training modules](#).
- **Ed Olsworth-Peter**, who oversees pioneer work nationally at [www.cofepioneer.org](http://www.cofepioneer.org).
- More locally, **Paul Bradbury** of the South Central Regional Training Partnership can also be of help at this stage in relation to Pioneer Ministry. [paul@poolemc.org.uk](mailto:paul@poolemc.org.uk). He is also involved with training at CMS.



## ENGAGING WITH YOUR LOCAL KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### PLANNERS

The following is taken from the M4M webpages pages on new housing – '[engaging with the planning system](#)'.

It helps to engage as early as possible with planning authorities so that the local church has a voice into the shaping of new developments in your area. This page explains the relevant planning processes and signposts useful resources.

### The Planning Process

- Click [here](#) for an overview of the planning process from Planning Aid.
  - And here's the [Plain English Guide to the Planning System](#).
  - We strongly recommend that you register as an interested stakeholder with the planning policy/forward planning teams at your local planning authority. This will ensure that you are informed of any news and given updates on progress with local plans, neighbourhood plans and other strategic planning issues.
  - Look out for opportunities to register as a local stakeholder in the LPA's (Local Planning Authority) "Statement of Community Involvement". Once added to this list, you should be consulted on all relevant planning applications and local plan consultations. Look at the LPA's SCI to see who else is listed as a stakeholder, and how the LPA commits to engaging the community on planning issues. James Iles suggests'....Ideally you should have a proactive engagement at the plan-making stage thereby helping to shape policies that subsequent planning proposals will be determined against. Strategic housing developments are normally allocated by policy in a Local Plan following a statutory consultation and community engagement over a period of several years...'
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- **National Planning Policy Framework:** Note that this framework is expected to be confirmed during the year and this document will be updated as appropriate then.

In 2012 the Government published the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) as part of its reforms to simplify the planning process and has recently updated it. This framework acts as guidance to local planning authorities in their decision-making for planning applications on a regional and local level.

[Section 8, para 92](#) sets out the guidance most relevant to churches seeking to engage with planners or developers: “To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

“...plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and **places of worship**) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments...”

The inclusion of 'places of worship' among community facilities in the NPPF makes it possible to justify that the same provision should be written into both Local and Neighbourhood Plans. However, this provision is unlikely to be included in these plans without direct lobbying from churches. It is therefore key to get involved as early as possible in the drawing up of your Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plan (if one exists) to ensure that consideration is given to places of worship in any development. By the time individual planning applications are made, it can be a challenge to get a developer to set aside land for anything other than that required of them by the local policy.

SEE [Briefing on the NPPF from Planning Aid](#)

[Briefing on National Planning Policy Guidance from Planning Aid](#)

### Local Plans

- Briefing on [the Local Plan Process](#) from Planning Aid

### Neighbourhood Plans

- Planning Aid has a particularly comprehensive set of briefings for groups seeking to put together a [Neighbourhood Plan](#), as well as a suite of resources.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government offers funding to provide support and grants for groups wanting to write neighbourhood plans. [Click here for more](#).

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- Planning Aid has a one page briefing on CIL [here](#).
- Register your interest with your Local Planning Authority to be kept informed of consultation opportunities. You can add requests for new community facilities on the LPAs 'Regulation 123 list' which lists the items that LPAs should spend their CIL receipts on. Items not on this list can only get funded through S106 contributions where they are directly related to a specific planning application and needed to make that proposal acceptable in planning terms. The Regulation 123 lists are therefore a key area to engage with and should be updated regularly.

### Useful websites:

- [Planning Aid England](#) is a helpful website run by the Royal Town Planning Institute. It offers jargon-free explanations of the planning system, independent and free advice on planning issues. There is a particularly wonderful set of briefings on different aspects of the planning system [here](#):
- [Planning Advisory Service](#) is geared towards local authorities, but with some good in-depth information should you be lobbying to change a Local Plan, considering a Neighbourhood Plan or wanting to understand the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) better.
- [Churches Together in England](#) has a useful resource section for those interested in mission on new housing estates, though some of the information is slightly dated.

### Good arguments to use when arguing for provision of worshipping space on local developments:

- Churches can play an important role in creating social cohesion in a new community -developers will be more open to working with those who appear to offer added value to their development.
- Know your terminology and be able to quote the NPP Framework.

### Section 106 Documents

- Section 106 documents are the basis for agreement on a New Housing estate. Planning permission is not given until the Section 106 agreement is signed. It is used to legally secure the infrastructure and other developer contributions to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms. It is quite detailed and will indicate for instance at what point a shop would be built. There are usually clear ‘triggers’ for when the community assets must be completed i.e. after a certain number of houses are built. This can be used as a mechanism for calling the builders to account. The plan will indicate the triggers for play areas, community building spaces, green areas, shops and schools.



## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DEVELOPERS

If research and prayer to determine the best model of mission is undertaken early enough by local benefice/deanery new housing teams, this will allow for a quick response once the building begins, regarding any appointments needed.

Whatever the model chosen, the key is to get the mission work going very early on in the life of the new development – preferably right at the beginning. Project workers commonly speak of the ‘window of opportunity’ that exists in the early days of a new development. At that stage, people are at their most open to being visited and to being invited to be involved in the emerging life of the community.<sup>4</sup>

It is also important to have people on the ground who have a stake in the new development. This might be a group of local Christians living on the development, or a pioneer minister appointed by the Diocese and living in a house purchased or rented by the church. Then local Christian residents can work as ‘community champions’ to help shape the identity of the growing community, and to lobby for local resources. Where people are coming in from outside a development, the impression can be given of ministering ‘to’ the community, rather than ministering ‘with’ the community. On-site presence is shown by research to be the most effective model.

This can be seen as advantageous by builders, as they are able to market the ‘community engagement’ in place on these estates. Sales offices can be used to great advantage if a good relationship is built up. They will be able to inform the pioneer when the next ranch of housing is ready for occupation and this allows the delivery of ‘welcome gifts’ or a welcome pack with details of local amenities which are much appreciated.



## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

**Schools and Colleges:** Nearby schools who are impacted by growth of new housing are often interested to work with a community person to start clubs, groups or community events to unify their community.

**New estate Schools:** larger estates often have new schools built as part of the infrastructure and discussion needs to be had with the Diocese re the possibility of their being church schools. Whether a church or community school, the sooner contact can be made with the education department and the offer of governor input the better. The building itself is a vital key to the growth of work on estates as, built early they become ideal venues for community building work.

**Housing associations:** Housing associations will be stakeholders and are usually very open to any community engagement that their households can be part of. They often have specific funds available for community work and may be a good source of revenue.

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<sup>4</sup> Funding for Mission in New Housing and Other Development Areas – Key Learning Points. By the staff of the Resource, Strategy and Development Unit

**The local council:** Ultimately the build will be handed over to parish district or county councils, and they then have the responsibility for maintaining green spaces, litter, playground upkeep etc. Good relationships with them at the very beginning is vital and they are always pleased to see local community representatives at their meetings.

**Neighbourhood networks:** A new housing estate is rarely built at a distance from any other buildings, houses, businesses or gathered groups. The knowledge from these current groupings are vital and straight away links should be made via a business lunch, afternoon tea, network morning or similar depending on what the best mechanism for meeting would be.



## **USE OF BUILDINGS**

Experience around the country has shown that focussing on a church building is not always necessary to creating church, and can often impede community involvement. In the early stages of a development, before a large enough congregation has been gathered, the maintenance of a church building could actually be detrimental to growth.

### **Working from a house**

Occupancy of a house on a development affords the opportunity to be an integral part of the new community. Without this on-site presence, ministry will always be limited. Particularly in the early stages, such a property can be used as a focal point for gathering small groups and building a congregation, functioning almost as a low-key church centre.

- The best chance of negotiating an appropriate property is the engagement of someone from the diocese with authority, to register an interest to buy as soon as new building starts, since many properties are sold from plan long before completion.
- **NB:** There are usually major reductions in property prices at the end of phases i.e. December, April and July when builders are trying to meet targets.
- Practical advice from those who have undertaken pioneer work is to buy as big a building as possible, in the centre of the development, preferably on a corner plot, and with a large downstairs room. A garage can be utilized in a variety of ways. If in the right position to could be converted to make the downstairs room even larger or as a priority, act as a necessary storage space.
- The diocese and its finance department, the property committee, as well as the housing team will be required to facilitate the purchase and respond to suggestions from those 'in situ' as to the preferred area.
- Practically once purchased .....care must be taken from the outset, to build good relationships with neighbours and to avoid problems with constant visitors and their cars arriving, noise in the evenings etc.

This strategy has been employed in a number of developments around the Diocese of Salisbury:

- In Melksham, pioneer minister Alison Sowton works out of a Diocese-owned property on a new development, holding mid-week meetings, social events for neighbours, and acting as a focal point on the estate for residents in need of pastoral care.
- On Old Sarum, a missional community of lay people led by two pioneers has been set up in a 5-bedroomed Diocesan-owned property which will act as a base for hospitality and worship.
- In Gillingham, a priest with a mission heart lives in a house on an existing estate that is due to have further significant growth. She becomes the community priest.

### **Using a community space**

Once sufficient relationships have been built and the number of people in the new missional community has grown, additional space will be needed. Both community halls and schools have been found to work well as venues that are inexpensive compared to the cost of a new church building and they provide links to de-churched and non-churched people. Sadly it is these community facilities such as halls or community centres, that are one of the last resources to be built and so a new school is ideal initially as a base. It will have a potential 'community room' and a hall which can be an asset. Schools are usually built early in the life of the estate, which is particularly valuable.

When using such community facilities, clarity is needed in relation to, for example, insurance, key holders, access and storage space and health and safety and safeguarding issues.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Funding for Mission in New Housing and Other Development Areas – Key Learning Points. By the staff of the Resource, Strategy and Development Unit

Developers are generally inclined to build multi-purpose community buildings for community use, rather than specific church buildings. However, there is potential for churches to lobby for worship space within that building, and possibly for space to store equipment, citing [section 8, para 92](#) of the NPPF (see p4 above).

### Halls or community centres

One other option is for a church group to bid to run the community space/hall/building. This should be approached with caution! The running of such a centre can be time consuming, fraught with expense and potentially a weight around the neck of the pioneers. However, such a church run facility can help when there is competition for use of space, and there are good examples around the country of churches running community cafes, and offering services such as counselling or parenting classes as part of their ministry in new community centres on such developments.

Developers may need to be pushed hard to build community facilities, even when undertakings have been given that they will do so. Community facilities do not bring in revenue as houses do and this is when the Section 106 document mentioned above is essential as it clearly state what the planners and the council have agreed are their 'community contributions' and there are also time scales, i.e. by the 500th house we will build a play area or similar.

**Thinking 'outside the box'** The Reverend Ruth Maxey, Community Minister for Broughton and Brooklands near Milton Keynes, has established [Church Without Walls](#) in which new ways to worship together as a community using different places and styles are being explored. Ruth has made use of community buildings such as the local pub and sports pavilions as well as the nearby church for worship and activities. Currently there are six main places and times when the community comes together to worship.

- Café Church – meeting monthly at The Broughton Pub
- Dinner Church – meeting monthly for a meal and Communion at the Broughton Pavilion
- Forest Church – meeting monthly on a Sunday for breakfast and a walk at various locations
- Quiet Church – meeting monthly for a reflective Communion Service in the Brooklands Pavilion
- Sacred Space – meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings for Prayer and Meditation in the Broughton Pavilion
- Breaking Bread – meeting on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings for a Service of Communion in the nearby St Lawrence Church.<sup>1</sup>

### Building a church

A place of worship will be stipulated in the local plan policy for the new community, hence the advice to 'engage early' with the Local Plan at the plan-making stage. Opportunities should be considered by the Diocese with a clear strategy for new planned Christian churches across the diocese. It will be considerably harder, and more costly to find land to build a place of worship later in the life of a development. The benefits of having a designated and visible focal point for worship on a new development should be weighed against the possible burden for a new pioneer in trying to run a building.



### GOOD COMMUNICATION

Communication is essential from the beginning to the end of the new build process, as has been noted many times, and there are many experienced groups and organisations in the country who can advise and input knowledgeably into the situation if any benefice or deanery requires it. Clear and focussed communication by all involved and forward planning is essential for the smooth running of such initiatives. It helps if one key person acts as the 'voice' of the project. All communication should be open, transparent and details of discussions documented. Avoid 'the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing'!



### ACCOUNTABILITY

It will be vital that records are kept of the success, challenges and difficulties of working on new housing estates. The diocese will expect this.

To keep the focus on what needs to be done, it is important to identify what outcomes (i.e. the changes, impacts, benefits or any effects that take place because of the mission work) and plan for short, medium and long term goals.

Information that will help to check progress towards achieving outcomes should be collected routinely and systematically from the beginning. Identify the outcome indicators (which describe the progress towards achieving an outcome) and think about how often they will be monitored. There should be a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators and information might be gathered using, for example, attendance at worship data, giving figures, numbers being baptised, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and diaries.

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<sup>i</sup> Information about the Church Without Walls found at <https://www.mkchurchwithoutwalls.org.uk/> Accessed 24/08/2016.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Our thanks are extended to James Iles for his professional help and knowledge of planning policy and practise.

Please contact Archdeacon Alan Jeans or the M4M key link Penny Joyce on [pennyre.joyce@gmail.com](mailto:pennyre.joyce@gmail.com) if you have queries or questions.

Ring the LDMT office at Church House if you wish to leave a message for her.