

## DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **NEW HOUSING AREAS AND  
STRATEGIC MISSION PRIORITY AREAS**

Sponsor: **ARCHDEACON OF COLCHESTER**

Date: **18 JUNE 2016**

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the next decade the population of this diocese will increase by 10%, i.e. an estimated 300,000 people as a result of planned new housing areas. There is growth throughout the diocese but particularly in Newham and Barking & Dagenham, plus Thurrock, Chelmsford and Colchester. There will be a presentation at the Synod by Carol Richards, Diocesan Mission in Regeneration Adviser, summarising these developments. This paper provides a background briefing.

### 2. NEW HOUSING AREAS

Over the last three years our Mission in Regeneration Adviser, has built up a detailed picture of the plans for new housing areas in the diocese based on local authority plans.

Particularly notable developments include:

- Barking Riverside – an enormous development at 14,000 new homes
- Stratford / Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- Royal Docks / North Woolwich / Canning Town
- Chelmsford north
- Numerous sites around Colchester
- Purfleet and Lakeside
- Havering riverside

In addition to the above listed developments it is important to recognise that there are also many smaller developments across the diocese. While these may be relatively small in terms of total number of units, they can nonetheless represent a significant percentage increase for smaller communities and thus create a mission field.

### 3. STRATEGIC MISSION PRIORITY AREAS

In line with the priorities set out under *Transforming Presence* the Bishop's Council has been considering the question of how we should be 'church' for these new communities.

This is the question that has dominated in this diocese in every generation since its inception, indeed it was the reason for the Diocese of Chelmsford. As we look back we can see some things our predecessors got right, and many things they got wrong.

How do we proactively look at these developments? Prospective Mission and Ministry Units have been encouraged to think about their 'mission priority areas'. Some of these developments are of a scale that we really need to be thinking of them as diocesan mission priority areas with local churches supported in meeting the enormity of this challenge.

Whereas the old model could be characterised as to build a church and expect people to come, we need to be more creative and effective. Our responses to these strategic mission priority areas would vary according to circumstance but might include:

- Resource churches
- Pioneer ministry or curacies
- Framing appointments to focus on creating church and community in new housing areas
- Church planting and other forms of fresh expression
- A new church school, perhaps as a worship centre
- New or relocated church buildings or vicarages
- Community services

#### **4. SOME POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS**

1. Share the research more widely and follow this up appropriately in Area Mission & Pastoral Committees, identifying strategic mission priority areas.
2. Continue to undertake the research and engage with local plans and developers. Carol's role, which started in the Barking Area, has latterly taken on a whole-diocese view, particularly in looking at how to resource local churches to respond to smaller scale developments as well as looking at the larger schemes.
3. Develop toolkits for local churches to help with their local mission priority areas of new housing.
4. The Bishop's Council has submitted an expression of interest for national Strategic Development Funding to provide resources to local churches support work with strategic mission priority areas, particularly in the area of church planting. This would also include developing our capacity to 'bid' for new schools.

These next steps would sit alongside work that is already happening, particularly supporting parishes in reviewing their church sites.

#### **5. MOTION**

*'This Synod note the mission opportunities and challenges of new housing areas and call on the Area Mission and Pastoral Committees to oversee plans to respond to strategic mission priority areas in this diocese.'*