

Background

For a little over a year, Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance has been reviewing the mechanisms and thinking behind the missional and financial strategy needed to enable the church to flourish in this part of Kent.

A comprehensive review of finances has taken place which has allowed the Board to better understand its position both in our own context and in comparison with other dioceses.

We presented plans in March, June and July, setting out how the Diocesan Board of Finance could secure a *sustainable* missional and financial future:

- balancing the budget by 2030
- selling unused housing and bringing together a programme of Glebe sales
- submitting a funding request to SMMIB
- seeking a settlement with the National Church Institutions
- controlling costs

This paper focuses on the wider reimaging of strategic thinking and the likely timing of and total expected of any request to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (“SMMIB”).

Funding to date

SMMIB

Name	Amount	Date	Status	Purpose
DIP 1	£1m	May 2023	Awarded*	Youth Ministers and Capacity
DIP2	£3.2m	February 2024	Awarded	Resource Churches
DIP2a	£0.45m	December 2024	Awarded	Additional Maidstone Resource Church funding

*Some conditions of this award remain outstanding

Other

Funder	Programme	Reason	Amount
CUF	CUF Academy	Churches selected in ten deprived areas for training	Training is provided free
Marshall's Charity	Housing	Annual Parsonages grant	£5,000
Marshall's Charity	PCCs	Grants to PCCs for church building projects	Up to £25,000 for churches

Diocese of Oxford	Glebe distribution	They fund the five poorest dioceses	£300,000 over five years
NCIs	Net Zero Churches	Grants to a small number of demonstrator churches in each diocese	£86,000 in 2025
NCIs	Net Zero Housing	Grant for a demonstrator house in each diocese	£50,000
Benefact Trust	Ignite & CYP	Annual grant towards strategic projects	£81,000 in 2025 (decreasing by 20% p.a. in successive years)
NCIs/NZC	MRI Grants	Minor repairs and improvements	£50,000
NCIs	Quick Wins	Net Zero Carbon improvement grants to PCCs	£50,000

Lowest Income Community Funding (“LInC”)

This funding will increase to £1,145,000 a year (index linked) from 2026.

Likely future SMMIB funding

As we announced at the July Diocesan Synod, in total there is significantly more funding (over £130m more) available for distribution to dioceses in this triennium than in the previous one from the National Church Institutions. However, significantly less is available as grants to support missional strategy.

It can be confirmed that the maximum award that can be made in 2026-28 is £3.5m. The diocese can apply for a larger amount – up to a total of £8.5m – for a programme or programmes. However, it could only be awarded £3.5m in the coming triennium and would therefore need to seek an “in principle approval” for the additional £5m which would be awarded from 2029-2031.

Strategy Reimagined

The Three Things was launched in September with a view to identifying those aspects of mission going on in this diocese. The strength of this diocese lies in the “local” – both at parish, benefice and deanery level. The aim is to highlight and support what is being done and to focus strategy at that local level.

Conclusion

Other avenues of funding have and continue to be explored but we must proceed on the basis that strategic funding for sustainable mission in this diocese totals £8.5m over the next six years.

Because of this change, and those brought by the wider review of strategy (including The Three Things) and governance begun earlier this year, the likely timetable for funding has changed.

The inclusion of Mission Action Plans and the extension of this request to include diocesan support functions added to the work already being done in deaneries across the diocese will support the work to achieve a sustainable missional and financial future.

Any application will need to be diocesan-wide and it is important that this application is strong, rather than being based on any timeframe. At this present time, we are working to July 2026 for a funding grant, but this may change. It is likely to include the following:

- a Mission Action Fund to enable us to provide financial support to parishes and benefices
- Mission Enabler roles aimed at supporting parishes and benefices in growing their churches
- a Rural officer to focus on the church in the seventy percent of this diocese that is rural or semi-rural
- a Children and Young Persons officer

The Venerable Will Adam
Chair, Strategic Programme Board

Next SMMIB DIP funding request key milestones

Date 2025/26	Milestone	
28 October	Mission Design Review with NCIs	Discussion and challenge on current thinking
1-5 December	Planning and engagement	Review of submissions by PCCs and departments of MAPs/The Three Things and Departmental Strategy requests and Health and Vitality Reviews
15 December	Complete first draft of workstream documentation	Report sent to ABC Members
31 December	The Three Things final submission date	
January	Review of work and development of final strategy documents	
27 January	Archbishop's Council meeting	Consideration of the likely funding request
February	Learning Review with NCIs to	Identify areas of the funding request that need further refinement
March	Update to Diocesan Synod following approval from Archbishop's Council	
April	Submission of funding request	To SMMIB
June	SMMIB funding decision	

