

GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FAQs

What is the difference between management & governance?

Governance is oversight; management is execution.

Archbishop's Council governs, as the Standing Committee of the DBF: Board members set direction, provide oversight, and hold leadership accountable.

The executive team manages: heads of department and leaders execute the strategy and run daily operations.

The Governance Review aims to improve the interaction between those functions and oversight of the management by the trustees, ensuring a greater scrutiny. This will lead to a greater confidence in decisions taken.

Episcopally led and synodically governed

The phrase "episcopally led and synodically governed" refers to the structure of governance within the Anglican Church, where bishops provide leadership while diocesan synods, which include clergy, laity, and representatives, make decisions on various matters.

Episcopally Led: bishops hold a special authority and are seen as the leaders of the Church, guiding its direction and ensuring doctrinal orthodoxy. In Canterbury, this is delegated to the Bishop of Dover.

Synodically Governed: the Church operates through diocesan synods, which are assemblies of clergy, laity, and representatives from each diocese. These synods play a crucial role in legislative matters and decision-making processes.

The combination of episcopalian leadership and synodical governance allows for a balance between individual authority and collective decision-making.

The Governance Review is designed to ensure that both the leadership and governance of the DBF are responsive to the needs and voices of all its members.

Why is it important to Map Governance?

We must orient DBF programmes around what is important to our clergy and congregations.

We should clearly identify and define the services the DBF provides and the support the trustees, our clergy colleagues and congregations expect.

Not everyone is aware of the functions provided by the Diocesan Board of Finance. By improving reporting, the Governance Review aims to ensure a greater transparency of the work being undertaken.

What does Archbishop's Council do?

ABC guides strategy, manages risk, and represent Synod.

Responsibilities include:

- Approving long-term strategy
- Overseeing risk, ethics, and compliance
- Approving budgets and key investments
- Ensuring accountability and transparency

The Diocese of Canterbury is episcopally led and synodically governed. The Governance Review envisages an enhanced role for the trustees with greater oversight and a clearer route for the approval of matters.

Strong boards:

- **Understand their role**
- **Balance oversight with strategic input**
- **Foster a culture of trust, challenge, and curiosity**
- **Conduct regular evaluations and refreshes**

How will Archbishop's Council's role develop?

If approved, the proposals will see an enhanced oversight of departmental, project and other committees and boards as well as greater strategic thinking and planning around mission, delivery and finance.

Other changes, most notably in the areas of Safeguarding and incidents relating to bullying and harassment incidents will place a greater emphasis on trustee responsibilities.

The review aims to equip and support the trustees in their endeavours while allowing for a greater scrutiny and transparency and a clear process for decision making.

What are the overall aims of the Review?

The need is to develop a governance structure and operation that;

- Provides clarity over reporting lines, roles and responsibilities of all groups
- Minimises duplication and streamlines decision making at appropriate levels
- Provides effective oversight, support and good practice for delivery of diocesan functions and projects
- Allows statutory bodies to provide appropriate oversight whilst delegating appropriate responsibility and authority to deliver to individual groups
- Enhances lines of connection with funding partners in the national church with regards to nationally funded projects

What are the proposed new structures?

The proposed new approach is to rationalise the current strategic level groups into a single board that oversees the development and delivery of diocesan strategy, which would cover all aspects of how mission and ministry are developed and delivered in the diocese, whether by business as usual activity or change projects.

The proposed title of this new group would be the Board for Strategic Delivery. (This name can change in the future but for now needs to signify a significant step-change in process and delivery within the organisation.)

An additional group, to monitor serious incidents in parishes and diocesan structures that do not meet the threshold for safeguarding will also be established.

The aim is to ensure better cross-departmental alignment and working, enhanced structures for the delivery of programmes and workstreams and more formal reporting through the governance structures.

Why is there a need for a Board for Strategic Delivery?

The governance review identified a need for a single group who can oversee delivery of the diocesan strategy across all areas. Having oversight split across multiple groups has caused lack of clarity.

Since being awarded funding for several programmes in 2023 Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance has better understood the requirements of programme delivery. The current funding being sought by the Board comes with greater scrutiny and with the expectation that the proposed inputs will lead to specific outcomes.

The funding offered is significant – up to £4.2m for the current three-year cycle with a further £5m dependent on the successful delivery of diocesan-wide programmes and interventions.

This places an emphasis on delivering programmes that are interdependent and cross-departmental, and the best chance of success lies in aligning delivery and governance structures.

It is envisaged that a Director of Strategic Delivery will be appointed shortly. This funded post will allow us to split programme delivery from programme office functions.

Why is there a need for a committee to oversee non-safeguarding serious incident reporting?

Recent decisions by the Charity Commission (relating to Chelmsford and Liverpool Dioceses) have placed an additional responsibility on trustees. (The Diocesan Secretary had suggested this committee to mirror work done in the Cathedral around such incidents, so work is relatively advanced.)

The Registrar, Diocesan Safeguarding Officers the Governance Lead and Diocesan Secretary are liaising with other dioceses and finalising proposals.

How will Frameworks and Project Boards be impacted?

The frameworks' role will be replaced by the Board for Strategic Delivery and where appropriate, by operational project boards.

There may also be stakeholder groups to help input from and communication with parishes.

What reviews have taken place?

Wide ranging consultations have taken place since the summer of 2025 and reports sent to Committees and Synod.

Will existing Terms of Reference be replaced?

Yes. A template has been produced to provide greater clarity as to the requirements of any committee or Board. Approval of the Terms of Reference lies with and will remain with the trustees.

How will property be governed?

A new Property Committee is proposed to give a greater focus on this vital aspect of the DBF work.

A separate Investment and Glebe Committee will also be formed, if proposals are accepted to advise Archbishop's Council on the management of assets.

It is envisaged that clergy and laity (both elected and appointed) will play a key role in both committees.

How do I express an interest in serving on a committee or Board?

It is envisaged that appointments will take place within the usual cycles and, where appropriate, people will be asked to continue to serve on the committee closest to the one they serve on now.

A skills audit will also be considered to help identify what skills are need and available for which roles.

What will be the impact of the new governance on the workload of senior staff (e.g. Archdeacons and Diocesan Secretary)?

By rationalising existing committees overseeing mission and ministry and strategy down to a single group as the Board for Strategic Delivery (from five existing groups to one), this will significantly reduce the number of governance group meetings required for Archdeacons and the Diocesan Secretary who are on all these groups currently.

In addition, the clearer structure and authority, once fully embedded should streamline decisions and reduce the need for repeated conversations or resolving confusion.

What is the timetable for approval (or otherwise)?

Subject to approval of the sense of direction of the review by Archbishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, it is anticipated that final proposals will be brought to Archbishop's Council in June 2026 for final approval.