

Celebrate and Bless Milton Keynes

A Strategy for Church Growth in our Fastest Growing City

1. Introduction

This is the proposed strategy for the work of Oxford Diocese in Milton Keynes. The background is:

Context: MK is going through a time of massive change as it becomes a regional centre

Challenge: The church needs to grow as the city grows, but is relatively under-resourced

Purpose: To serve God in the city as a more Christ-like Church

We are now in a consultation phase. We want to know if this is the right general direction for us to take? Have we missed anything? We hope to have some extra funding that could be used to kick-start new work. We would appreciate some help in deciding where the emphasis of this funding should fall...

2. Vision

"A More Christ-like Church for the sake of God's World"

The Diocese of Oxford

"MK: A city Alive to God"

Milton Keynes Mission Partnership

There is a need for culture change in the MK Churches with a focus on discipleship and mission. We will also need to build a new "ecosystem" which supports church growth.

3. Mission

The **Five Marks of Mission** encourage a broad approach. We are called to:

- proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God
- teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- respond to human need by loving service
- seek to transform unjust structures of society
- strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain the life of the earth.

Church Growth is a key focus of our strategy. We see this growth in three ways:

- **Depth:** We want churches to grow in theological understanding, reconciled relationships, spirituality, prayer and the beauty of worship.
- **Impact:** We want churches to serve the common good through acts of mercy, kindness and compassion – reaching out to those in need – proclaiming the Kingdom in action not just in words...
- **Numbers:** Growth in numbers is an important aspect of Church life. Jesus calls us to make disciples and we need to take this seriously...

4. Church Growth

Between 2020 and 2025, we will focus on:

a) Building Effective Teams

We want to strengthen existing teams so that they are better equipped to meet the challenge of further growth. We will be investing in training and will open a conversation with our ecumenical partners about leadership within the LEP teams.

b) Pioneering New Worshipping Communities

We want to create new worshipping communities which meet the needs of unchurched and de-churched people. This requires a pioneering approach which responds to people where they are and helps them to discover Christian community.

c) Supporting "Breakthrough" Churches

We want to help some of our worshipping communities so that they can grow beyond the limits of their existing model. There are a number of churches and parishes which could grow further if they receive the right support and develop a more team-based approach.

5. Strategies and Investments

Between 2020 and 2025, we will invest in:

a) Prayer: We will work with other partners to build a prayer network in the city. This will be supported by a part-time prayer co-ordinator.

b) Learning Hub: We will support the Mission Partnership in the development of a learning environment with an emphasis on Leadership, Faith Learning, the Common Good, and Planting/Pioneering.

c) Leadership Capacity: We will seed fund posts that support Church growth:

- Lay Pioneers:** Tapered funding for part-time pioneers who will build new worshipping communities
- Ordained Pioneers:** Tapered funding plus housing for full-time pioneers who will build new worshipping communities.
- Lay Leaders:** Five-year funding for part-time administrators, children's workers, community organisers, etc...
- Associate Minister:** Five-year funding for an extra full-time minister to allow a larger church to support growth elsewhere.

d) Programme Support: In order to achieve this, we will employ a part-time programme manager and provide office/meeting space.

The total proposed investment in Milton Keynes is hoped to be around £3M, although this is dependent on the availability of external funds.

See next page for a number of options...

The following options would all cost roughly the same amount of money. They differ in the number of new posts we might create and the length of time we would support them. Some of these scenarios involve more full-time ordained ministers, while others focus on lay posts. Please let us know which of these options you think would be better, and why?

Option 1: More Ordained Ministers (3-6 years term for Pioneers)		
i) Lay Pioneers:	4 part-time lay pioneers who will establish new worshipping communities. They will be fully funded for the first three years but the funding will taper during the final three years.	4
ii) Ordained Pioneers:	5 full-time ordained ministers who will pioneer or plant new worshipping communities. These ministers will be housed. They will be fully funded for the first three years but the funding will taper during the final three years.	5
iii) Lay Leaders:	2 part-time lay ministers who will help build up existing churches or parishes. Full funding for five years.	2
iv) Associate Ministers:	2 full-time ordained ministers who will support an existing church or parish so that it can meet the growth challenge. Full funding for five years.	2

Option 2: More Lay Leaders (3-6 years term for Pioneers)		
i) Lay Pioneers:	10 part-time lay pioneers who will establish new worshipping communities. They will be fully funded for the first three years but the funding will taper during the final three years. (9 if there is no tapering...)	10
ii) Ordained Pioneers:	2 full-time ordained ministers who will pioneer or plant new worshipping communities. These ministers will be housed. They will be fully funded for the first three years but the funding will taper during the final three years.	2
iii) Lay Leaders:	6 part-time lay leaders who will help build up existing churches or parishes. Full funding for five years.	6
iv) Associate Ministers:	Full-time ordained ministers who will support an existing church or parish so that it can meet the growth challenge. Full funding for five years.	0

Option 3: More Ordained Ministers (5-10 years for Pioneers)		
i) Lay Pioneers:	3 part-time lay pioneers who will establish new worshipping communities. They will be fully funded for the first five years but the funding will taper during the final five years.	3
ii) Ordained Pioneers:	3 full-time ordained ministers who will pioneer or plant new worshipping communities. These ministers will be housed. They will be fully funded for the first five years and the funding will taper during the final five years.	3
iii) Lay Leaders:	2 part-time lay leaders who will help build up existing churches or parishes. Full funding for five years.	2
iv) Associate Ministers:	1 full-time ordained minister who will support an existing church or parish so that it can meet the growth challenge. Full funding for five years.	1

Option 4: More Lay Leaders (5-10 years for Pioneers)		
i) Lay Pioneers:	6 part-time lay pioneers who will establish new worshipping communities. They will be fully funded for the first five years but the funding will taper during the final five years.	6
ii) Ordained Pioneers:	2 full-time ordained ministers who will pioneer or plant new worshipping communities. These ministers will be housed. They will be fully funded for the first five years and the funding will taper during the final five years.	2
iii) Lay Leaders:	4 part-time lay leaders who will help build up existing churches or parishes. Full funding for five years.	4
iv) Associate Ministers:	Full-time ordained ministers who will support an existing church or parish so that it can meet the growth challenge. Full funding for five years.	0