

SMMIB response to diocesan feedback

October 2025

Introduction

We are grateful for Mark and Sarah and the care they have taken to reflect on the feedback on the Diocesan Investment Programme.

As a board, we want to do what we can to make sure that the Diocesan Investment Programme is fruitful and lives up to our six principles which have been used by Mark and Sarah in structuring their report. We give thanks for the whole Church – parishes, dioceses, and national – as we work together to be a Church which is Jesus Christ centred and shaped.

That is why this sort of feedback is so valuable as we try and play our own part with the responsibilities that have been given to us. We will keep repeating this process, but we will also seek to build our engagement with dioceses in ways that go beyond these evaluations.

Turning to the findings, we will give a response under each of the themes below. It is clear from Mark's findings that while the Diocesan Investment Programme has strengths in being **intentional, relational and evidence-based**, there is more to do in being **humble, transparent and empowering**. Our commitment over the next few years is to grow in these latter characteristics while still holding on to the former ones.

In his executive summary, Mark celebrates the rapid culture change that has come about as a result of diocesan investment. We are all developing in our roles, and we hope we have your support as we learn, just as you can be assured that we will support you.

We are grateful to God and celebrate the impact that has come from the Diocesan Investment Programme through resourcing the Church's mission.

Our continued prayer is that we would all play our part in supporting the Church to be more and more Jesus Christ centred and shaped. A Church of missionary disciples, which is younger and more diverse, and where every kind of church can flourish in a mixed ecology.

With every blessing,

Carl Hughes
+Arun Arora
Andrew Barnett
Alison Coulter

Veda Harrison
Julie Jones
+Stephen Lake
Suzannah O'Brien

Helen Platts
Alan Smith
+Mark Tanner

Relational & Supportive

We are grateful for the role of the diocesan consultants in being the relational glue with dioceses. Their passion, skill and care in their work with dioceses is a gift to the Church, and too often they bear the emotional cost of decisions made elsewhere. The Vision and Strategy Team will commit to supporting them as the conduit for communication and will provide consolidated feedback in a structured way.

1. Publish an up to date key contact list and structure for the Vision and Strategy team.

Agreed – we will publish both a general list and a specific one for each diocese with their key contacts by the end of November.

2. Consolidate feedback on bids at specified moments and share it with dioceses in complete, structured formats through their consultant.

Agreed – we will adapt the process for design reviews and feedback to reflect recommendations 2, 9, 11, 15, and 16. Given the lead time for proposals, some changes will be in place for proposals coming to the July 2026 meeting, others for the December 2026 meeting.

3. Repeat the same online survey as used in this review every 12 months in order to measure progress, with a full review every second year, seeking to reach both the current and new diocese respondents.

Agreed. Beginning in 2026, there will be a light-touch survey every other year which will seek views from respondents on progress against the six principles of funding. A full review will be conducted every two years, with the next one taking place in 2027.

Transparent & Honest

The report makes clear that this is a highly important area for the Diocesan Investment Programme, and that a wider culture of mistrust in the Church of England exacerbates this. We are committed to being transparent with dioceses, with a transparency that goes beyond merely having policies on a website, to being consistent, open to questions and communicating effectively.

Beyond the specific recommendations below, we commit to prioritising transparency with additional capacity being made available for engagement. This will be a focus for us over the next year. As a starting point, we will share more policies in accessible formats and communicate more about decisions made at each meeting.

4. Share this report openly with dioceses.

Agreed. And we commit to fully sharing future survey and report findings when this exercise is repeated (see recommendation 3).

5. Publish a framework of clearer guidance, with specific sums of money referred to, on the level of proposals that will be considered by the SMMI Board, based on criteria such as diocesan stage, size and wealth.

Agreed, and this has already been done as part of the outcomes of the triennial funding review.

6. Communicate how much money is left and whether it will run out. This should be done regularly to maintain confidence levels.

Agreed, a table has been shared with dioceses along with the benchmarks from recommendation 6. This will be repeated after each meeting of the SMMIB (noting that the benchmarks in recommendation 5 have reserved funding for each diocese).

7. Create a more visual and less text heavy overview of the DIP process in the guidelines.

Agreed, this will be part of the revised funding guidelines after our October meeting.

8. Invite the relevant consultant to the SMMI Board to answer questions. This should only be for the duration of the discussion about the proposal so that it doesn't compromise any other confidentiality.

Not agreed. We understand the comments from some survey participants that the member of the V&S team who has worked most closely with them is not the one in the room at the time of decision making. However, there are two reasons why we do not agree with this recommendation.

Firstly, for protecting the role of the V&S consultant. Their role is not as an advocate for the diocese, it is to support the diocese to produce a proposal which best meets the funding requirements and assessment criteria. To introduce them into the meetings would undermine their role. Two examples are introducing the possibility of blame that they didn't make the diocese's case well enough, or by the diocese not being open about areas of weakness out of concern that these would be named in SMMIB meetings.

Secondly, for protecting our decision making in SMMIB meetings. We have a responsibility for discernment of significant sums of the Church's resources, and good practice is for us to avoid bias as much as possible. Diocesan support team consultants could introduce bias in favour of their dioceses. We have always been impressed with the impartiality and quality of discerned recommendations from the review panel process which includes the DST consultant. These recommendations have helped us to make decisions on the well-crafted diocesan proposals.

9. Dioceses are encouraged to make use of the opportunity to invite colleagues from other dioceses to attend their Design Review meeting.

Agreed – and we would encourage dioceses to make the most of this. We will adapt the process for design reviews and feedback to reflect recommendations 2, 9, 11, 15, and 16. Given the lead time for proposals, some changes will be in place for proposals coming to the July 2026 meeting, others for the December 2026 meeting.

Intentional

We are glad to see that this has been seen as a relative strength of the programme. We commit to keeping this intentionality and to supporting dioceses to have outrageous dreams for the mission of the Church.

10. Maintain the bid development process largely in its current format because it is helping dioceses to develop intentional strategies.

Agreed.

11. Create a critical path at the beginning of a proposal development process that includes timings for all diocesan strategy development and proposal writing activity and the subsequent interaction with the Vision and Strategy team and SMMI Board.

Agreed – though we are mindful that there are different ways that dioceses will want to undertake their strategy engagement, one size does not fit all. We will consider the

process for design reviews and feedback to reflect recommendations 2, 9, 11, 15, and 16. Given the lead time for proposals, some changes will be in place for proposals coming to the June 2026 meeting, others for the December 2026 meeting.

Empowering

The report draws out the tension between empowerment and being evidence-based. We value diocesan ownership of their plans and their development of a collaborative and collective vision which supports every kind of church.

There is no one way to be fruitful and a wide range of approaches, contexts and traditions have been invested in. However, there are values which evidence shows are connected with fruitfulness, and we have seen approaches fail elsewhere – it is not empowering for a diocese to fund this (even before thinking about the value for money for the Church).

We will also commit to developing our approach to empowering dioceses. The report names learning and insight as the key to a change of dynamic so that learning isn't held in the national church but is shared throughout the Church. This will mean the conversation becomes more about how to discern an approach together.

12. Consultants should continue to communicate that proposals incorporating the full range of church traditions are encouraged.

Agreed. We encourage all dioceses to look at different examples of approaches on the Church Support Hub, and to share their learning.

13. Facilitate national and relational learning relating to catholic, rural and any other relevant under represented church traditions, in order to accelerate learning in those areas and signal that DIP is for them too.

Agreed. We have been pleased to fund approaches like the Rural Mission Learning Community, and Catholic Mission Network, and have seen different peer learning communities such as for programme managers. The Vision and Strategy team will facilitate more communities among under-represented church traditions, for example parishes under the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's jurisdiction.

Evidence-Based & Realistic

The report talks through the burden on individuals involved in developing a proposal. We will commit to making sure that everything requested is valuable for programme delivery or learning.

14. Continue capacity funding so that dioceses have the time and skills to create a successful bid.

Agreed. Dioceses will continue to be able to access capacity funding within the total quantum of funding they can apply for in 2026-28, in line with their benchmark.

15. Continue to place emphasis on the initial bid briefing meeting, ensuring that budget levels are made clear and that all submission templates and bid requirements are verbally briefed and documented. Ideally an individual from the Grants team should attend to help resolve all questions about the size of the bid.

Agreed. We will adapt the process for design reviews and feedback to reflect recommendations 2, 9, 11, 15, and 16. Given the lead time for proposals, some changes will be in place for proposals coming to the July 2026 meeting, others for the December 2026 meeting.

16. Within the critical path for developing a DIP proposal ensure there is an adequate gap in time between the Design Review and the SMMI Board so there's adequate time for a diocese to make changes.

Agreed. We will adapt the process for design reviews and feedback to reflect recommendations 2, 9, 11, 15, and 16. Given the lead time for proposals, some changes will be in place for proposals coming to the June 2026 meeting, others for the December 2026 meeting.

17. Develop more relational learning communities relating to cultural change and the development of innovation.

Agreed. We have been pleased to fund approaches like the Rural Mission Learning Community, and Catholic Mission Network, and have seen different peer learning communities such as for programme managers. The Vision and Strategy team will facilitate more communities.

18. Consultants should meet to share their experience on the optimum level of appendices included in applications with each other, and subsequently communicate their collective advice to dioceses to help reduce unnecessary workload.

Agreed. New funding guidelines will give a list of appendices. The consultants regularly share experience about their supporting diocesan teams with their funding proposals and this will continue.

Humility – Recognising this is God's Work

We recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that we are not just taking the best practice from grant-making in other sectors, but are making grants as part of God's Church. We commit to developing theological engagement in this area: articulating missional learnings from funded programmes, deepening the theological analysis of work towards the Church's Bold Outcomes, and sharing stories to emphasise God's activity in our midst.

We are all very aware that the impact of funding means real people have their lives changed. Each meeting we start with the stories of individuals and churches who have seen renewal, and with prayers of thanks and for wisdom in discernment. We are passionate about seeing impact but would be wary about creating additional workload for dioceses.

19. Create the option for dioceses to submit a short, timebound (three minute) video submission to accompany their bid.

Not agreed. While the recommendation suggests that videos would be optional, our concern would be that this would create significant additional work and cost for dioceses, with a potential for an 'arms race' on production quality. We would not support extra work specifically for our proposal development processes, but we will look out for opportunities to hear from people and stories of God's work in their lives.

20. Request that dioceses include content in the bids of stories relating to beneficiaries and staff. This can be referenced in the main document and included at more length in the appendices.

Agreed, but this should not be necessary in a proposal. Some dioceses are already doing this and we will encourage others to do so where feasible, avoiding more work in proposals. We will work with dioceses to develop this approach further so that the voices of beneficiaries and staff can be clearly heard.



Diocesan Investment Programme Feedback and Recommendations



May 2025

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Executive Summary

The Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) is an ambitious Church of England grant funding programme which will award over £300million between 2023-2025 towards the three strategic priorities of becoming a church of missionary disciples, being a church where a mixed ecology is the norm and being a church that is younger and more diverse.

There are several points to celebrate about DIP and its impact so far:

- It has been a **catalyst for and a part of a rapid and extensive culture change** within dioceses, whereby conversations about mission, the best use of resources and impact have become a regular feature for senior episcopal and management staff teams across the country.
- A **professional, representative and effective body is now in place to steward decisions** about fund allocations in the form of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board and staff.
- The Vision and Strategy team's **consultants have been essential** in the successful establishment of new, and at times iterative, **relational and supportive** processes.
- The level of **intentionality** of the DIP is highlighted by dioceses as a real strength. The way that the DIP process asks about a diocese's whole strategy, making transformational change and what outcomes will be achieved has been felt to be very challenging, at times difficult, but very valuable.
- And by no means least, many **diocesan teams have already courageously embarked on cultural changes and organisational transformation** to grasp the opportunity to pursue the combined aims of their local area with those of the national church. Many are seeing increasing pockets of growth and some are even in overall net growth.

The emerging resurgence of church is inspiring. But there are some areas to work on still.

At the heart of several issues is achieving the right balance in different tensions that exist. One key tension is that between offering honest, objective advice during the application process versus allowing dioceses the ability to self-determine their activity programme. Dioceses expressed a desire to have more flexibility and consequently fed back **low scores for sense of empowerment**. Another tension is that between providing categorical clarity around the size of bids versus allowing the bid size to be shaped by the diocese around the scale of impact in their proposal. We received credible but contrary feedback from participants about where these tensions need to change, and we have endeavoured to include a representative range of verbatim comments within this report so that all views could be heard. However, it has not been possible for us to suggest simple solutions to address all the frustrations expressed because so many of the views are shaped by each different organisation's aims and needs. However, we do recommend that the SMMI Board continues to remain responsive to feedback and use their best judgement in decision making.

Problematically, **low levels of trust** exist between dioceses and the SMMI Board and the Vision and Strategy team, and this causes suspicion and confused lines of communication. Some confusion can be cleared up through improved day to day communication, but it would be helpful if the SMMI Board created more specific guidance about the acceptable size of proposals and allowed consultants access to the board itself. There is also an existing opportunity for peer feedback within Design Review meetings and dioceses are encouraged to use this in order to bring a more diverse mix of voices into the planning conversation.

Another unintended consequence of the current process is that it can create a **significant level of workload** in diocese teams. Again, this is a complex area because much of the workload comes from dioceses developing their strategies prior to their DIP application. However, there were examples given of delays in feedback to dioceses, reversed decisions and changes of personnel that have wasted some time. We heard that the sum total of all these issues can have a negative human impact on some staff. The simplification of the submission to a single ten page presentation plus appendices is helpful, but more could be done to advise dioceses on how to keep the appendices as lean as possible. Notably, without **Capacity Funding** several dioceses would never have been able to apply, and this aspect of funding has been greatly appreciated by all.

Greater **Innovation and learning** is desired by dioceses, many of whom have been achieving this, peer to peer, in an organic and relational way. Learning reviews have also been recently introduced by the Vision and Strategy team, and further support is available in the form of the Church Support Hub. There is significant opportunity to communicate this emerging support to dioceses to expand the range of opportunities to learn and to increase the amount of emphasis placed on innovation in new bids.

DIP is also starting to support missional activity across a range of church traditions and types but a belief remains among some that this is not the case. It will be important to continue to emphasise to dioceses that bids including support for the full range of traditions are encouraged.

Finally, on behalf of the SMMI Board who commissioned this review, we gratefully acknowledge the contributions to the report made from 28 dioceses, through the completion of a survey and taking part in interviews. They have been courteous, generous with their time and open in responding honestly to the questions that have been asked.

Summary of Recommendations

We have grouped these under the headings of the six principles of the Diocesan Investment Programme.

Relational & Supportive

1. Publish an up to date key contact list and structure for the Vision and Strategy team.
2. Consolidate feedback on bids at specified moments and share it with dioceses in complete, structured formats through their consultant.
3. Repeat the same online survey as used in this review every 12 months in order to measure progress, with a full review every second year, seeking to reach both the current and new diocese respondents.

Transparent & Honest

4. Share this report openly with dioceses.
5. Publish a framework of clearer guidance, with specific sums of money referred to, on the level of proposals that will be considered by the SMMI Board, based on criteria such as diocesan stage, size and wealth.
6. Communicate how much money is left and whether it will run out. This should be done regularly to maintain confidence levels.
7. Create a more visual and less text heavy overview of the DIP process in the guidelines.
8. Invite the relevant consultant to the SMMI Board to answer questions. This should only be for the duration of the discussion about the proposal so that it doesn't compromise any other confidentiality.
9. Dioceses are encouraged to make use of the opportunity to invite colleagues from other dioceses to attend their Design Review meeting.

Intentional

10. Maintain the bid development process largely in its current format because it is helping dioceses to develop intentional strategies.
11. Create a critical path at the beginning of a proposal development process that includes timings for all diocesan strategy development and proposal writing activity and the subsequent interaction with the Vision and Strategy team and SMMI Board.

Empowering

12. Consultants should continue to communicate that proposals incorporating the full range of church traditions are encouraged.
13. Facilitate national and relational learning relating to catholic, rural and any other relevant under represented church traditions, in order to accelerate learning in those areas and signal that DIP is for them too.

Evidence-Based & Realistic

14. Continue capacity funding so that dioceses have the time and skills to create a successful bid.
15. Continue to place emphasis on the initial bid briefing meeting, ensuring that budget levels are made clear and that all submission templates and bid requirements are verbally briefed and documented. Ideally an individual from the Grants team should attend to help resolve all questions about the size of the bid.
16. Within the critical path for developing a DIP proposal ensure there is an adequate gap in time between the Design Review and the SMMI Board so there's adequate time for a diocese to make changes.
17. Develop more relational learning communities relating to cultural change and the development of innovation.
18. Consultants should meet to share their experience on the optimum level of appendices included in applications with each other, and subsequently communicate their collective advice to dioceses to help reduce unnecessary workload.

Humility – Recognising this is God's Work

19. Create the option for dioceses to submit a short, timebound (three minute) video submission to accompany their bid.
20. Request that dioceses include content in the bids of stories relating to beneficiaries and staff. This can be referenced in the main document and included at more length in the appendices.

Introduction

The Board and staff of the Church of England's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) programme commissioned Mark Kitson Consulting to gather and analyse feedback on the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP)¹. The aim was to provide a report with practical recommendations by the end of May 2025, in time for the June SMMI Board meeting.

The Brief

The purpose of this project was to collect structured feedback from dioceses across the Church of England regarding their experience of the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP). The focus was on four key areas of the DIP lifecycle:

- The development of funding proposals, including the guidance and support available.
- Opportunities and mechanisms for shared learning between dioceses and with national teams.
- The ongoing management of DIP awards, including monitoring and reporting expectations.
- The processes surrounding the final evaluation and formal closure of awarded projects.

To maintain focus and ensure the findings were directly actionable, the scope of this feedback exercise was intentionally limited. The review was not to address or draw conclusions about:

- The strategic decision-making process that prioritised certain initiatives for funding over others.
- Theological questions or interpretations.
- The role or conduct of specific individuals.
- Perceptions of fairness or transparency in the broader funding allocation process.
- Variations in diocesan culture, scale, wealth, or theological tradition.
- Wider issues of church decline or structural challenge beyond the scope of DIP.

Project Aims

- To invite and receive feedback from dioceses in a way that promoted transparency and strengthens relationships.
- To provide practical, timely recommendations to the SMMI Board.

Together, these aims reflect the programme's commitment to learning from lived experience, improving processes, and deepening collaboration between national and diocesan bodies.

Methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection was used. This included an online survey and a series of in-depth, guided discussions. The survey was designed to capture both measurable responses and open-ended reflections, while the interviews allowed for deeper exploration of diocesan experiences across all stages of the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP)—from initial proposal development through to programme delivery and outcomes evaluation. Some survey questions were designed with future comparison in mind, enabling tracking of progress over time through repeat reviews in subsequent years.

¹ The Independent Review of Lowest Income Communities funding and Strategic Development Funding, February 2022 recommendation 18 is to gather feedback from dioceses annually.

Background research

- Range of documents and papers from the past four years.
- SMMI board interviews.
- Vision and Strategy team interviews.

Online Survey

- Questions were chosen that reflect the DIP's aims but also allowed space for honest views.
- Sent to all dioceses.

Online interviews

- Representative mix of dioceses.
- Guided conversations with Secretaries and in some cases their teams.
- 8 dioceses

Face to face interviews and meetings

- Representative mix of dioceses.
- Guided conversations with Secretaries and in some cases their teams.
- 5 dioceses

All information collected from dioceses was treated with strict confidentiality. No individual comments or ratings have been attributed to specific individuals or dioceses. In accordance with GDPR and ethical data collection policies, all participants were provided with clear advance information about the purpose of the project, the confidentiality of their input, and when interviews were being recorded.

Participants

Our sincere thanks go to all those who made time to contribute their insight and perspectives to this review. In total **28 dioceses took part across the interviews and survey combined**. Together they represent a mixture of large and small dioceses, large and small bids, and importantly a range of perspectives that include those that could be described as having had very positive DIP experiences and those who have multiple criticisms of the process. In order to provide complete confidentiality to the respondents we have not included a list of them.

Within the survey **44 individuals responded to the online survey from 24 dioceses², representing a 63% diocesan response rate**.

Role	Number to complete the online survey	Percentage out of total respondents
Diocese Secretary/ CEO	21	48
Director of Mission/ Vision/ Strategy etc.	6	14
Programme Manager/ Lead	9	20
Support Officer	2	4
Dean/ Archdeacon	3	7
Bishop	3	7

The criteria for the interviews and visits were that the diocese had gone through the DIP process and were currently either in delivery & implementation stage or about to commence it.

² One declined because they were mid-way through a DIP application.

Five dioceses were interviewed in person and eight dioceses were interviewed via Teams. The sample group represented a positive mix of both population size and DIP award size.

Diocese by Population Size

4 Small
4 Medium
5 Large

Diocese by DIP Award Size

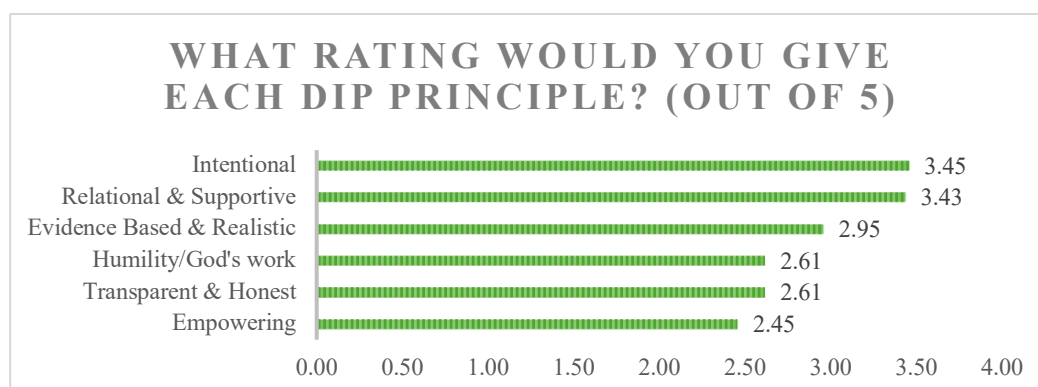
4 Small
5 Medium
4 Large

We are also thankful to the members of the SMMI Board and Vision and Strategy Team members who were interviewed. This included four members of the SMMI Board (including the Chair) and seven members of the Vision & Strategy Team (including three consultants).

Findings & Themes

This section presents the key review findings, organised under the six core principles that underpin the DIP programme. Using this principles-based framework allows for a structured and values-driven analysis of diocesan feedback, highlighting both areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

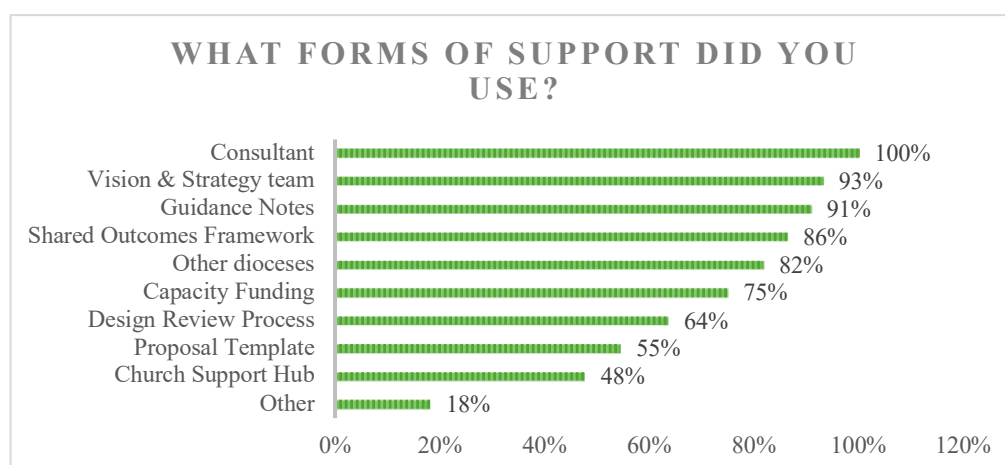
Firstly, we asked respondents to give a rating out of 5 for each of the six principles.



Relational & Supportive

Diocesan rating: 3.43 out of 5.00.

This principle was the second highest rated, making it a relative strength of the programme. When we asked what type of support dioceses had accessed, they told us the following:



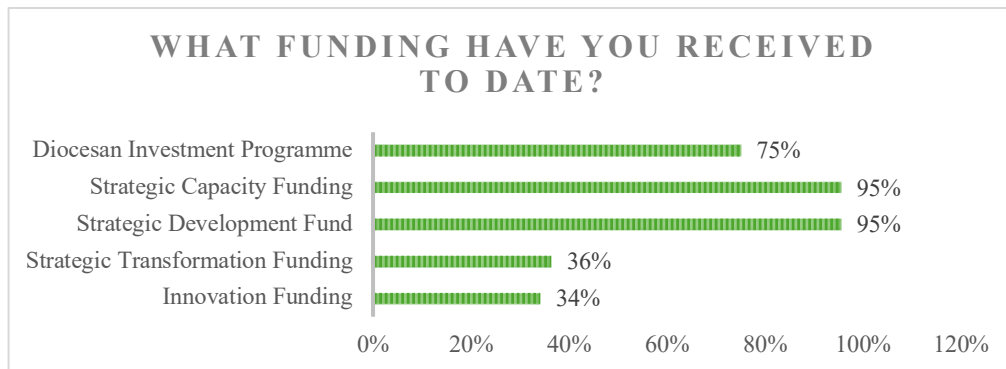
Both survey responses and interviewees indicated that the flexibility of the relational consultant model has been well received, with all participants using consultant support. When asked to rate the helpfulness of consultant support, they gave a score of 3.89 out of 5.

“I think it's great that (our consultant) has been really supportive along the journey and it's great that we have got the (capacity) funding for those roles that support the revised part of the work.” (Interview participant)

If any criticism does exist for the consultants team it relates to the capacity they have to respond to questions and their ability to maintain momentum when they have many dioceses to support:

“It's very, very clear that there isn't enough resource with the consultants covering too many dioceses. You get that sense because of the way they cut in and cut out, you get their attention and then you don't get their attention, tells

you that they're managing their work incredibly tightly. I know it's not about the hours they do or how hard they work, or about their commitment” (Interview participant)



Capacity funding was viewed very positively by those dioceses who had used it, with several reporting that it significantly supported their proposal development to the point that it would have been impossible to deliver otherwise. Among the few dioceses that did not access the funding, some expressed regret later in the process, recognising its potential value in hindsight.

It's not an over statement to say that without the consultant model and capacity funding the DIP would have had a much more limited reach and impact.

However, there was significant feedback that input into diocesan bids from a wide range of people from the Vision and Strategy team can create confusion and additional work. Some of this has been a factor of the programme being an early work in progress that was developing methods to be able to respond to much larger bids than previous ones, but some reflects an over-helpfulness at times. One team told the story of how they were advised by a consultant to remove detail from their proposal, only to be requested by the SMMI Board for more detail. Another shared how they had been asked to present a spreadsheet in a different format, which then took them 14 hours to change. The Vision and Strategy team have fed back that they provide standard templates for such instances to avoid reworking but in this instance there has been a painful break down in communication.

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Publish an up to date key contact list and structure for the Vision and Strategy team.
- Consolidate feedback on bids at specified moments and share it with dioceses in complete, structured formats through their consultant.
- Repeat the same online survey as used in this review every 12 months in order to measure progress, with a full review every second year, seeking to reach both the current and new diocese respondents.

Transparent & Honest

Diocesan survey rating: 2.61 out of 5.00.

The importance of transparency and honesty is particularly high in the case of DIP. To some degree DIP is just a grant making programme, except it differs in two important ways: firstly it comes from the sole or predominant funder for dioceses; and secondly all, or the vast majority of, dioceses will eventually receive a grant. With any other funding stream a diocese could walk away if they didn't like the rules of engagement. In the case of DIP they can't so easily do that and therefore any bid requirements, advice or feedback aimed at making sure all proposals are of a high standard can lead to the recipient being left with a feeling that they are somehow being controlled without any options open to them. This dynamic is an important backdrop to the experiences reported to us.

Trust remains the single biggest issue that affects the smooth working and effectiveness of DIP. It is not a new issue but was highlighted in the STF/LInC review.³

“Support for, and the effectiveness of, the two funding schemes is affected by the lack of trust and unity of purpose for which they (particularly SDF) serve as a lightning rod and Vision & Strategy is a fresh chance to address this.”

The reasons for this come at several different levels.

At the simplest level, most dioceses we met asked if they would receive a copy of this report. We have told them all that we are recommending that they should see it and that it has been written with that recommendation in mind. It's notable that a small number of dioceses were concerned about the confidentiality of our data collection and asked for clarification and a commitment to this – this is not a common feature of research we carry out.

At another simple level, if a member of the Vision and Strategy team visits staff from within a diocese without informing the Secretary or Programme Manager, it creates uncertainty, which results in a fracture within existing trust levels. Examples of this were fed back to us. This problem is reported to have improved since STF and SDF, when some projects and bids operated at a deanery level, but it has not gone away and is simple to address.

A repeated piece of feedback was a lack of clarity around the size of bid that should be submitted. One secretary said that starting a bid was like “pitching into a black hole”, another diocesan team member that had placed a successful large bid wondered if they should have applied for more, and another team had to spend 3 months rewriting their bid when they found the amount they'd planned for was completely inappropriate. Linked to this were other suspicions.

“There's a suspicion that (the Vision and Strategy team) has a spreadsheet and that we're never allowed to know what's on it against the Diocese's name... there's a deep frustration... that because ultimately, you know, I can make sure we come up with a fantastic bid for 20 million. I can make sure we come up with a fantastic bid for 5 million. But what we discern and the scope of it all, that kind of thing is completely different...we all understand the reality of you know, there's only a certain amount of money going round.” (Interview participant)

During our research we found no evidence of a spreadsheet that allocated funding budgets by diocese or one that attempts to apportion a bid budget in any way. However, the Vision and Strategy team have done some work to estimate the range of sizes for appropriate bids. To some degree the outcome from this work is shared with the diocese early in their bid, but the feedback we received was that this was not always the case and that when it hadn't happened it caused uncertainty and wasted time. Our observation is that the DIP has been designed to create strategic space and room for dioceses to be empowered to meet local needs. However, few dioceses feed back their appreciation of this space compared to the many that are confused by the lack of clear parameters for applications – something they feel they get more of from other funders – and so our recommendation is that any estimations of bid size appropriateness should be shared as widely as possible, with particular emphasis in agreeing a bid level as early as possible in the process.

A repeated and complex theme is that of ownership and power. Some of the feedback reflects a general frustration with the presence of the SMMI Board, even though there is agreement among all that an accountable fund application process is a right and helpful process to have. This perhaps describes another tension that exists unavoidably at the heart of the process. This is beyond the scope of the recommendations of this report but it's relevant because it is part of the context:

“Whose power, is it? Whose decision, is it? And I absolutely agree that we need to encourage change and incentivise it with the grant making at national level. But ... there is a groundswell of opinion amongst kind of deanery, diocese and General Synod members of “Who is this committee in London telling us how we should do?””

³ The Independent Review of Lowest Income Communities funding and Strategic Development Funding, February 2022.

However, the SMMI Board has a wide representation including those from dioceses as well as experienced and independent outsiders who collectively are well placed to navigate the decisions they are presented with. It's unfair to label it simply as a group of outsiders, but the criticism does reflect the sense of powerlessness that some feel.

Within this context some participants talked about the conflict that comes into play when there is an urgent need for funds which effectively forces them to apply to DIP:

"You know the power imbalance is massive and unfortunately, it's reinforced unhelpfully by a system of bids and grant giving that mean that we're begging for money. We're writing the bid in the way they want it written with the structures they want us to create because we're afraid that we'll end up with the SMMIB saying "No, we're not going to give you money." (Interview participant)

However, as we will come on to, many dioceses have felt the intentionality that the DIP application process brings has been helpful. There are ways to improve the balance of power slightly although, with the Church of England as the fund holder, it will never go completely. The most obvious method to address this is to increase clarity and consistency.

Several dioceses fed back that the DIP process was unclear – they asked if the same criteria was used by the SMMI Board and the internal Review Group (which they do) and whether another party made the decision about the bid before it reached the SMMI Board (which they don't – the final decision rests with the SMMI Board and this does vary from internal recommendations made to them). The claimed lack of clarity isn't technically true in this respect because the criteria and process have both been published⁴, but we think that the complaint relates more broadly to a lack of trust in the environment and process as well as a lack of confidence around outcome models and other important delivery tools. We also think the sense of lack of clarity is affected by the quantity of feedback which sometimes comes from multiple directions. We recommend that feedback is consolidated and contained to make this easier for dioceses.

Where a number of dioceses have also requested more clarity and transparency is around board proposals:

"What I find remarkable is that not only is a diocesan team not allowed in the room to be able to present or to be questioned about their missional plans by the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board who are the decision makers, but also our vision and strategy consultant...isn't allowed. So the person who walked closest with us, and who we built good relationship with isn't there in advocacy." (Interview participant)

"Sometimes I wonder whose process is this?...But actually because we're not allowed in the room, the only people allowed in the room are those who have changed our application or who have said it's going to be this little bit or this a little bit more...That really is where the shocking lack of transparency is and the issue around control and who is actually running this because frankly, I'm not convinced it is fully run by the members of the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board." (Interview participant)

We understand from the Vision and Strategy team that the decision to not invite diocesan teams to the SMMI Board is to ensure fairness between how bids are considered and decided upon – a practice reflective of other grant funders. However, the consultant is the person who has provided the most relationship and support to a diocese and it would be helpful for them to be present to answer questions as well as to allow them to be a voice of advocacy in the room. It would also go some way to alleviate the concerns we heard about the lack of transparency that is perceived to come from there only being one individual presenting bids to the SMMI Board.

One respondent suggested that more peer to peer decision making would be valuable:

"More transparency around the decisions made - I firmly believe there should be more peer-to-peer review around design and deliverability so there is a transparency around what is being proposed." (Survey Participant)

⁴ Both the criteria and process of applying to DIP are included in the appendices.

There is already an option for peers to be invited to the Design Review meeting. It has not always been popular in the past because coordinating diaries and ensuring that senior people were available has caused logistical delays, but we recommend that dioceses invite peers to the Design Review to increase transparency in the form of collective input.

Other suggestions from respondents included the creation of a clearer escalation process so that a diocese could ask to meet a consultant with a more senior member of the Vision and Strategy team, or a member of the board, that they could call upon outside of the existing Design Review; or that minutes from the board might be published to give greater transparency on the view of the SMMI Board.

Clearly there is a tension to achieve between the accountability that comes from within a defined process and the trust and flexibility given. Our observation is that this balance needs more work and will involve compromises and trust on all sides to achieve a more open working relationship between the parties involved.

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Share this report openly with Dioceses
- Publish a framework of clearer guidance, with specific sums of money referred to, on the level of proposals that will be considered by the SMMI Board, based on criteria such as diocesan stage, size and wealth.
- Communicate how much money is left and whether it will run out. This should be done regularly to maintain confidence levels.
- Create a more visual and less text heavy overview of the DIP process in the guidelines.
- Invite the relevant consultant to the SMMI Board to answer questions. This should only be for the duration of the discussion about the proposal so that it doesn't compromise any other confidentiality.
- Dioceses are encouraged to make use of the opportunity to invite colleagues from other dioceses to attend their Design Review meeting.

Intentional

Diocesan survey rating: 3.43 out of 5.00.

This is also seen as a relative strength of the programme.

"I think this is a great approach to new growth in the Church of England. So, let's not sit on the money in the church commissioners pot, let's invest it in dioceses and parishes to reinvigorate and grow the church, and I'm 100% behind the approach that we should be producing a business case which says invest in us and we will try to do X, Y and Z."
(Interview Participant)

"I greatly appreciate the approach in that investment is based on strategic alignment, having a clear diocesan vision & strategy that is focused on growth rather than simply propping up decline." (Survey Participant)

"If I think back eight years... there wasn't a project manager in any diocese when I joined. There are now between 50 and 70...we now have directors of change... The maturity curve we're going on ... in terms of how to deliver change I have seen nowhere else in my career, not the speed of it in an organisation that is supposed to operate really slowly." (Vision and Strategy Team Member)

There was a positive consensus that the process sharpened diocese strategic thinking and facilitated a more diocese wide collaborative approach to change and transformation.

"It makes you think a lot about why you are proposing to do the things you are doing, and being intentional in where you allocate resources" (Survey Participant)

“It has provided a framework and approach which has been helpful in the development of our wider strategic planning. It has helped make people in the diocese to be strategic who might otherwise have resisted.” (Survey Participant)

“It allows them to have outrageous dreams, which they were able to take seriously.” (Interview Participant)

Although the intentionality of the approach was praised, participants identified a need for improved planning tools that help dioceses better manage time, resources, and expectations. The data showed that without a clearly outlined timeline and process map, some dioceses struggled to coordinate internal strategy development with the proposal submission cycle. Providing a critical path would support intentional planning, reduce last-minute pressures, and enable more effective collaboration with national teams.

“Much greater clarity of expectation in terms of deliverables from the outset. The moving goalposts during the process has been hugely frustrating and demoralising, and actually risks disengaging the diocese from the process.” (Survey Participant)

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Maintain the bid development process largely in its current format because it is helping dioceses to develop intentional strategies.
- Create a critical path at the beginning of a proposal development process that includes timings for all diocesan strategy development and proposal writing activity and the subsequent interaction with the Vision and Strategy team and SMMI Board.

Empowering

Diocesan survey rating: 2.45 out of 5.00.

A consistent sense of disempowerment emerged within the feedback, often linked to a perceived lack of trust from the national team. Diocesan leaders described feeling that a direction was being imposed from the centre, rather than them being trusted to shape strategic responses that reflected their local context and priorities.

“I think we are at a stage where we want to see fundamental reform and trust in diocesan leadership... In most places we now have very professional and dedicated diocesan teams that need to be trusted” (Survey Participant)

“They said it’s a partnership, but it felt like a parent and child relationship” (Interview participant)

A recurring desire is for the SMMI Board to offer more flexibility and show greater trust in diocesan-proposed activities. Diocesan leaders felt their local discernment was sometimes overridden or second-guessed by the national team.

“(The) power imbalance is there. And you’ll quite often get, “our experience tells us that that won’t work.”” (Interview participant)

“I’d like to see a model that is far more trusting of diocesan teams and proposals.” (Survey Participant)

“The agreement with the consultant could be overridden by the national team who had no contextual knowledge” (Interview Participant)

“Our first focus was getting our vision as a diocese right, rather than (thinking) what we’re going to ask for from the SMMIB... we’ve never chased the money... we’ve always said, you know, we want things that will help us grow our diocese in our way.” (Interview Participant)

The Vision and Strategy are endeavouring to share advice on which missional approaches they have seen to succeed in the past, and also to share their experience of the type of proposals that the SMMI Board have approved grants for. This is essential if the Church is to grow and learn, but this has been felt to be disempowering by many.

There is also a perception that certain models and traditions of church are favoured over others. One interviewee described how a colleague in another diocese had been told he “Had to do resourcing churches even though he didn’t want to.” Another told us:

“(It’s) fundamentally wrong that if a diocese, having consulted with its parishes, having worked out a strategy, having looked at where good growth could happen, decides it doesn’t want a single resourcing church or church plant, then the DSU should” accept that.” (Interview Participant)

This is in stark contrast with the Missional Vision for 2030 in the DIP guidelines which is defined as “What could a missionally thriving, growing diocese look like, embracing all contexts and traditions, and aligned to the Church’s Vision and Strategy”⁵ which links with the SDF and LInC funding reviews recommendation to “report on the diversity of projects by tradition (without quota)”⁶. It also doesn’t reflect work we’ve seen funded in recent successful DIP bids in supporting Catholic tradition churches, and support developed for rural churches. However, this perception remains and it’s important to counter it so that future missional possibilities are not restricted.

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Consultants should continue to communicate that proposals incorporating the full range of church traditions are encouraged.
- Facilitate national and relational learning relating to catholic, rural and any other relevant under represented church traditions, in order to accelerate learning in those areas and signal that DIP is for them too.

Evidence-Based & Realistic

Diocesan survey rating: 2.95 out of 5.00.

This principle emphasises the importance of grounding proposals in robust data, realistic expectations, and achievable outcomes. Feedback from dioceses highlighted both the value of this approach and the structural challenges that can hinder it.

“It is a big improvement on the SDF and other preceding programmes in that dioceses are able to set more realistic goals and there is more flexibility about what can be funded.” (Survey Participant)

“Although the application process has felt quite rigorous — at times even rigid and not clearly communicated— this high level of expectation has ultimately been a strength. It pushed us to clarify, refine, and fully articulate a strategic vision that not only met the needs of the DIP process but also provided us with a strong operational tool for delivery and implementation. The structure of the process has helped ensure our proposal is both ambitious and practical.”
(Survey Participant)

The data revealed several other themes across both the survey responses and interviews.

Firstly, capacity is a prerequisite for evidence-based planning. Dioceses recognise the importance of creating well-researched, data-informed proposals — but they need adequate time, staffing, and expertise to do so. The data suggests that, where this funding was accessed, it made a clear positive difference; where it wasn’t, some dioceses

⁵ DIP funding guidelines, January 2023, page 9.

⁶ The Independent Review of Lowest Income Communities funding and Strategic Development Funding, February 2022, recommendation 10.

felt underprepared or regretted not applying. This indicates that equitable access to capacity support is essential for evidence-based planning across all dioceses.

“I think we can't underestimate the time that collaboration takes, and the number of 'layers' one has to work through to achieve it.” (Survey Participant)

Dioceses greatly value feedback when it is consistent, timely and strategic. However, they also felt that sometimes it has been slow to come and that they were not always given enough time to act on it. We were told of how rushed timelines had sometimes limited their ability to make well-informed revisions, which had reduced the quality and realism of final submissions. Giving more time after feedback to reflect and adapt could support an even more rigorous process and stronger outcomes.

“To get that level of feedback to fine tune your application so that when you've submitted, you're pretty confident you're going to get it. That felt quite a privileged position. I've never had that before ever. But at the same time, the Achilles heel was just the constant nitpicking and changing of their minds. It was almost like they were learning with us.” (Interview Participant)

“There were always delays because necessarily the...consultant needed to refer upwards, so you are adding a week to a simple request and that cumulatively makes a very long drag of time.” (Interview Participant)

Our understanding is that sometimes the pressure has come from the Vision and Strategy team but that it can also come from the diocese who are very keen to complete the bid and access new funding. These factors combined create immense pressure when a £20-30 million funding application is in development. We heard reports of programme managers working seven days per week, into the early hours of the morning regularly and an example of one needing time off sick and another leaving their role. None of this should be considered normal or acceptable within the Church, but they are the unintended consequences of a very high stakes, detailed and, repeatedly problematic – in the opinion of many dioceses - process.

There were also requests to reduce duplication in the submission process, such as the previous practice of submitting both a paper and a PowerPoint presentation, indicating dioceses find the current requirements complex and sometimes repetitive. At times this has led to an administrative burden rather than strategic focus at times.

“And it has a huge cost. It requires slide decks to be prepared. It requires a meeting to say yes or no, and then a huge amount of checking and accounting and drawing down the next quarters. And are you meeting your objectives. And we've built a system that has a high overhead cost.” (Interview Participant)

We understand that to reduce duplication dioceses are now only required to submit a ten page presentation plus their appendices. However, we've heard reports of appendices running to hundreds of pages. Within the scope of this report we weren't able to assess to what degree the volume in the appendices was necessary planning work versus it having been overdone in fear of having a bid rejected because of missing a key detail. Our recommendation is that the consultants pool their knowledge to give some advice on appendices to reduce the amount of writing required by a diocese and also the amount of reading required by the SMMI Board.

We also received feedback from dioceses who reported they have added four or six people to their team just to manage and monitor their DIP programmes. Part of this addition will be driven by a diocese's desire to be more outcomes focused separate to DIP, but care needs to be taken to manage outcomes related overheads to ensure it doesn't become disproportionate.

Several dioceses asked for learning to be shared to help them to write better proposals and save time. It's notable that 82% of survey respondents had sought support from other dioceses for their bid, showing that learning is currently being obtained independently. One positive example of this is the South East Programme Managers Network where dioceses share questions and solutions freely among themselves. The Vision and Strategy team have also played a role to connect relevant dioceses, have launched the Church Support Hub and support a growing number of communities of practice and learning. Building learning is one of the recommendations from the SDF and

LInC funding review, to “leverage the lessons from individual projects to inform the design of future ones and maximise the multiplier effect for the wider Church.”⁷ Now is a good opportunity to do more in this area. Our recommendation is that this is predominantly delivered through relational networks, this being the method that has been most successful with other areas of support.

Others observed that while DIP provided money, it is also catalysing cultural change.

“We’re kind of dangling money and pretending it’s about bids, but actually the bigger win for the Church of England is probably about culture and about doing things differently.” (Interview Participant)

One respondent observed that there must be other ways to encourage and facilitate cultural change than just incentivising it through funding. Our suggestion is that this would be another helpful topic to share learning on.

Finally, the DIP process has a strong governance model when it comes to accountability, but this very strength can work against innovation. Put simply, if a process requires significant data and measurement to minimise the risk of mis-spending money, then it can naturally favour existing tried and tested models over new, innovative, previously unknown ones, even though DIP states it is intending to support innovation. There is a tension between innovation and accountability; and our recommendation is to pay careful attention to this to allow more innovation to come through.

“You have a strange dichotomy where you are asked to be more innovative, but to do that you have to prove that it’s tried and tested. And somewhere in between there is the sweet spot that has good evidence-base but has not been done before.” (Interview Participant)

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Continue capacity funding so that dioceses have the time and skills to create a successful bid.
- Continue to place emphasis on the initial bid briefing meeting, ensuring that budget levels are made clear and that all submission templates and bid requirements are verbally briefed and documented. Ideally an individual from the Grants team should attend to help resolve all questions about the size of the bid.
- Within the critical path for developing a DIP proposal ensure there is an adequate gap in time between the Design Review and the SMMI Board so there’s adequate time for a diocese to make changes.
- Develop more relational learning communities relating to cultural change and the development of innovation.
- Consultants should meet to share their experience on the optimum level of appendices included in applications with each other, and subsequently communicate their collective advice to dioceses to help reduce unnecessary workload.

Humility - Recognising this is God’s Work

Diocesan survey rating: 2.61 out of 5.00.

This principle calls all involved to hold the work of mission and ministry with humility, recognising that it is ultimately God’s work, not solely human effort or institutional design. There are some fundamental questions about DIP which go beyond the remit of this review, but which form part of the context:

“We are placed in this time in this place, and we hope for growth and we expect God will work in people’s lives, but we might be in a time of pruning and actually reduction. If that’s what God is calling us to, we ought not to resist that.”

⁷ The Independent Review of Lowest Income Communities funding and Strategic Development Funding, February 2022, recommendation 11.

And so it's not always successful do this, spend that money, get this outcome, that's quite a human based secular model and the theology of what is God calling us to and he will bless it if we join with.” (Interview Participant)

The survey does reflect a noticeable imbalance in who is engaging with DIP. Most responses to both the online survey and interviews came from those in strategic or operational diocesan roles, while participation from episcopal leadership was limited. There were no bishops taking part in interviews and they made up only 7% of survey respondents. One interviewee stated “My Bishop didn’t want to have anything to do with DIP,” but this was by no means a universal feeling. Numerous dioceses have run effective bottom up parish engagement activities that have engaged episcopal staff or been led by them, as well as recognising the need for Bishops and Area Deans to lead initiatives on the ground to avoid a disconnect between stated aims and actual delivery.

“Really important to stress the difference on that...there was very significant and ongoing engagement with people at all levels in the diocese through that...it was not coming from our imaginations; it was properly engaging with others.” (Interview Participant)

The above recommendations relating to Transparency & Honesty, and Empowerment will hopefully partly encourage episcopal staff to engage.

However, the entirely appropriate emphasis on good stewardship of funds is also partly responsible for creating proposal documents that lack spiritual language and stories of people whose lives have been transformed by the activities of the diocese. In contrast, many grant making organisations now include written, visual and video content of beneficiaries so that they can be “brought into the board room” to humanise the cause that is being discussed. Our recommendation is that the SMMI Board make space and time to include such content.

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen this principle.

- Create the option for dioceses to submit a short, timebound (three minute) video submission to accompany their bid.
- Request that dioceses include content in the bids of stories relating to beneficiaries and staff. This can be referenced in the main document and included at more length in the appendices.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – DIP assessment criteria

Several interviewees asked about the criteria for DIP applications, if they had changed and whether different parties were using different versions. The Vision and Strategy team have confirmed that the criteria originally included in the Diocesan Investment Programme Funding Guidelines (January 2024) are still the ones in use by the SMMI Board and the Vision and Strategy team. These have been reproduced below:

Within the context of the diocese's strategy, the funding proposal will be assessed by the SMMI Board using the following criteria:

i) Does the proposal have a significant strategic impact aligned with the Church's Vision & Strategy?

Assess whether the scale and phasing of the resources requested reflects the strategic impact in the following areas:

- Scale of delivery against the bold outcomes:
 - Doubling the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030.
 - A Church of England which fully represents the communities we serve in age and diversity.
 - A parish system revitalised for mission so churches can reach and serve everyone in their community.
 - Creating ten thousand new Christian communities across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital.
 - All Anglicans envisioned, resourced, and released to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the whole of life, bringing transformation to the church and world.
 - All local churches, supported by their diocese, becoming communities and hubs for initial and ongoing formation.
- Scale of the target population.

ii) Will the plans (mission, people and financial) achieve the anticipated outcomes?

- Assess whether any elements of the plans, or how they work together, need further development.

iii) Does the overall capacity described give confidence in delivery?

- Assess whether the diocese has the capacity to deliver the proposed plans.
- Assess whether there is a convincing plan for how the work will be sustained once national funding ceases.

Appendix 2 – DIP proposal development process

Several interviewees asked about the stages of assessment for DIP applications. The Vision and Strategy team have confirmed that the process originally included in the Diocesan Investment Programme Funding Guidelines (January 2024) is still in use by the SMMI Board and the Vision and Strategy team. These have been reproduced below.

The Design Review is the meeting where a diocesan team present to the Vision and Strategy team for feedback.

The Review Group is made up of members of the Vision and Strategy team who review a submitted bid and make a recommendation to the SMMI Board that accompanies the submission. The SMMI Board listen to the recommendation, but their final decision does not always align with it.

Proposal development	Diocesan teams discern and develop funding proposals, in the light of their overall strategy development, in conversation with their consultant from the Diocesan Support Team.
Design review	Review the missional design of the programme and integrate lessons learnt from other work, to support development of the strategic plans. Discussion with NCI staff and (possibly) members of other diocesan teams or external organisations, to enable the diocesan team to access learning from those undertaking similar work. This is expected, unless replicating tried and tested work.
Further proposal development	Taking account of what was gained from the learning review, adapt the strategy and accompanying funding proposal.
Review group	Review the funding proposal in the light of the funding criteria, effective grant-making and existing evidence on approaches being proposed within the missional design, to make recommendations to the Board.
SMMIB – single stage decision-making	SMMIB assess proposals in the light of the funding criteria, taking account of the Review Group’s recommendations. The Board will decide whether or not to approve the proposal and if any conditions should be attached to the grant award.
Detailed delivery planning	Diocesan teams finalise detailed delivery, governance, and stakeholder plans, taking account of any conditions imposed by the Board. The Diocesan Support Team supported by the Funding and Learning Team and other colleagues from the Vision and Strategy team, assess the plans on behalf of the Board.
Funding released	Diocesan team starts to implement plans, supported by the Diocesan Support Team.

Appendix 3 - Online Survey Questions

- Which of the following current and past programmes have you received funding from?
- Can you briefly describe your involvement in the DIP application process and programme delivery so far?
- How clear were the requirements of the programme to you when you started, including the proposal development, monitoring and evaluation, finance and claims?
- Did you use Capacity funding to help prepare one, some or all of your proposals?
- Which forms of support have you made use of?
- How or where would you have liked to have been helped more?
- How helpful on a scale of 1-5 was the support you had from your consultant (with 5 being very helpful)?
- How helpful on a scale of 1-5 was the time you spent putting together the proposal (with 5 being very helpful)?
- What did you learn from other dioceses, either before or during writing your proposal, that helped you?
- When thinking about the DIP proposal development process, what rating would you give from 1 to 5 for clarity on reporting (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP proposal development process, what rating would you give from 1 to 5 for support to develop your target outcomes (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP proposal development process what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for Clarity in how to Measure Outcomes and Report (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP proposal development process what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for Fairness in Decision Making (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the support you have received from the Vision and Strategy team for preparing and updating your budget and cash flow forecasts, what rating would you give this support from 1-5? (with 5 being high)
- When thinking about the processes for making grants claims and receiving timely and accurate payments, what rating would you give these processes from 1-5? (with 5 being high)
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being Relational and Supportive (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being Transparent and Honest (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for it helping you to be Intentional in where you allocate resources (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being Empowering (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being Evidence Based and Realistic (with 5 being high)?
- When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for it showing Humility, recognising this is God's work (with 5 being high)?
- What has been the best aspect of the DIP application and subsequent process?
- What would you like to see changed for the next time you make a similar proposal?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Appendix 4 – Online Survey Scores

Question	Rating
Which of the following current and past programmes have you received funding from?	
DIP	75%
Strategic Development Fund	95%
Strategic Transformation Funding	36%
Strategic Capacity Funding	95%
Innovation Funding	34%
How clear were the requirements of the programme to you when you started, including the proposal development, monitoring and evaluation, finance and claims?	2.45
Did you use Capacity funding to help prepare one, some or all of your proposals?	75%
Which of the following forms of support have you made use of?	
Consultant	100%
Design Review Process	64%
Vision & Strategy Team	93%
Guidance Notes	91%
Church Support Hub	48%
Other Dioceses	82%
Shared Outcomes Framework	86%
Proposal Template	55%
Other	18%
How helpful on a scale of 1-5 was the support you had from your consultant (with 5 being very helpful)?	3.89
How helpful on a scale of 1-5 was the time you spent putting together the proposal (with 5 being very helpful)?	3.61
When thinking about the DIP proposal development process, what rating would you give from 1 to 5 for clarity on reporting (with 5 being high)?	2.77
When thinking about the DIP proposal development process, what rating would you give from 1 to 5 for support to develop your target outcomes (with 5 being high)?	2.95
When thinking about the DIP proposal development process what rating would you give from 1 to 5 for clarity in how to measure outcomes and report (with 5 being high)?	2.68
When thinking about the DIP proposal development process what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for fairness in decision making (with 5 being high)?	3.07
When thinking about the support you have received from the Vision and Strategy team for preparing and updating your budget and cash flow forecasts, what rating would you give this support from 1-5? (with 5 being high)	2.70
When thinking about the processes for making grants claims and receiving timely and accurate payments, what rating would you give from 1-5? (with 5 being high)	3.27
When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being relational and supportive (with 5 being high)?	3.43
When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being transparent and honest (with 5 being high)?	2.61

When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for it helping you to be intentional in where you allocate resources (with 5 being high)?	3.45
When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being Empowering (with 5 being high)?	2.45
When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for being evidence based and realistic (with 5 being high)?	2.95
When thinking about the DIP process overall what rating would you give it from 1 to 5 for it showing humility, recognising this is God's work (with 5 being high)?	2.61

Appendix 5 - The Review Team

Mark Kitson is a Leader and Consultant with extensive experience helping organisations to develop successful growth strategies. Mark currently chairs [Cinnamon Network's Incubator](#) grant making judging panel which has led to new missional projects in over 2,000 UK churches; chairs [Christians Against Poverty's](#) International Governance Council; and chairs the board of trustees at a local community café, [Liberty Tea Rooms](#). As a consultant his clients have included the Diocese of Leeds, Diocese of Hereford, [Lloyds Bank Foundation](#), [Trussell Trust Food Banks](#) and [The Ethical Trading Initiative](#). In his business career he worked in high growth ventures in the UK and over 20 international markets with Costa Coffee. And in his local church Mark volunteers leading children's activities and main Sunday services.

"Mark's trademark is his highly relational and human-centred approach to supporting strategic change. He has a great capability to see both the strategic issues and the people-shaped challenges and opportunities within management teams."

Sarah Taylor has 20 years of experience across the charity, faith, public sector (NHS) and private sectors. From this she has extensive experience of conducting research, collating and analysing data, producing insight, and performance management, in different environments. She is currently in the final months of study for her Doctorate in Theology & Ministry at Durham University where she has spent three years journeying with leaders of mixed denominations to analyse how they navigated the pandemic. She also currently manages the delivery of learning & development programmes and impact measurement at Cinnamon Network. In her local community Sarah sits on the board of trustees for [CARE](#), a local Christian homeless charity.

"Sarah has a wide-ranging skill set that effectively equips her to see and understand organisations at both a macro and micro level. Having attention for detail, while appreciating the big picture, enables Sarah to develop strategies that can be effectively conveyed and implemented at multiple levels within an organisation."