

# **The Dioceses Commission**

## **Review Report No. 2:**

### **Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds, Sheffield and Wakefield**

**November 2010**

## **A Guide to the Report**

### **Introduction**

The Dioceses Commission's report on these four Yorkshire dioceses and their boundaries with the Diocese of York is a substantial document of over 120 pages. This booklet is intended to guide readers in engaging with the Report and to highlight the key themes.

This booklet is available on the Commission's website at [www.diocom.org/yorkshire](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire). Each a section includes a link to the relevant Chapter of the Report, which is also available on the website. Chapters 11 and 12 of the Report are included in full.

### **Extract from the Foreword by Dr Priscilla Chadwick (Chair of the Commission)**

The review and its conclusions are mission-led and not finance-driven (though mission needs to be financed, so financial considerations cannot be ignored). We have asked which structures will best enable the Church of England to relate to the communities of Yorkshire (not just in the parishes but also at city, borough, district and county levels), which will be most intelligible to non-churchgoers, which would eliminate wasteful duplication, and which are likely to prove resilient and sustainable into the medium term.

It has been a privilege to hold conversations with bishops and their senior staff, council leaders and chief executives, and leaders of other churches, and to meet many of the rural deans and deanery lay chairs of the dioceses concerned, as well as significant numbers of parish clergy and lay representatives – around 250 people in all. We are grateful for their time and their frankness, as well as to those who wrote to us with reflections and suggestions.

Some of the aspirations that were expressed to us might at first sight appear to be in conflict – for a mix of urban and rural areas within a diocese and yet for focused attention to rural or urban issues, for example; or for episcopacy that is close to the parishes and yet for structures that offer economies of scale. We hope that in each case our recommendations will fulfil both aspirations.

Our Report plays back much that was said to us – sometimes, perhaps, things that many have been thinking but which may not always have been articulated in local discussions. It is the fruit of a year's work. We hope that it will be read, digested, reflected upon prayerfully, and debated thoroughly. We look forward to considered responses in the light of prayer, reflection and debate – continuing a two-way conversation between the Commission and the people of the dioceses concerned.

## **Chapter 1: The Dioceses Commission and its Yorkshire Review**

### Chapter 1

- lists the Commission's members and staff (section 1),
- explains the aim of the Review (section 2),
- describes the process which led to publication of the Report (section 3),
- gives the addresses for responding to the Report by 9 May 2011 (section 4), and
- sets out the likely future process if the Commission decides, in the light of responses to the Report, to draft reorganization schemes (section 5).

The Commission's aim was 'to establish whether the shape and boundaries of the existing dioceses tend to facilitate the Church's mission to the people and communities of Yorkshire or whether different boundaries would enable the Church to relate to them more effectively'. The Commission looked at how diocesan boundaries correlate with the boundaries of counties and unitary/metropolitan authorities and which configurations might best further the Church's mission. It had in mind other factors, such as

- the sense of local identity resulting from history and shared culture,
- contemporary communities reflecting the places between which people travel for work, shopping, leisure, education and health services,
- road and rail communication routes, and
- the accessibility and distance of cathedral cities by car and public transport from all parts of the diocese.

The context for the Church's mission in Yorkshire has changed since the present diocesan boundaries were fixed, and it continues to do so. Population has grown and demography has changed, overall church attendance has declined, some old industries have declined and new industries have grown up, with consequences for patterns of employment and unemployment. Services and leisure facilities, communications and transport systems have all changed greatly since 1919, when the newest Yorkshire diocese was created. Many of these changes have also had consequences for people's sense of identity and community.

The Commission has been concerned to stress that its Yorkshire review should be mission-led, not finance-driven. In times of financial stringency it is important that any change does not increase the cost of running the Church's structures in Yorkshire. Indeed, it is desirable that the cost should be reduced. This is not the aim with which the review was undertaken, but the cost of bringing change about must at least be offset by likely financial savings in the longer term. It continues to be the vocation of the Church of England to provide a Christian presence in every community, and any changes should be such as will provide more effective support to parishes and enable the Church to relate more effectively to the structures of civil society.

The Commission's review work is conducted within the existing legal framework set by canon and statute law. It is not the Commission's role to propose solutions that would involve major changes to the law governing the roles of bishops, dioceses and cathedrals or indeed to the ecclesiology that the law reflects.

Read Chapter 1 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 2: Bishops and Dioceses**

Chapter 2 sets out the background to the Report in history and ecclesiology. Section 2.2 looks at the role of bishops – as chief pastors of the laity as well as the clergy, fathers in God, principal ministers of word and sacraments, successors of the Apostles and leaders in mission, and ministers of unity. It reflects on what this means for the diocese as a ‘local church’, an area of mission led by the bishop. It argues that the appropriate number of bishops cannot be determined solely by reference to the number of licensed ministers; the population of an area is also highly relevant.

Section 2.3 outlines the history of the diocesan structure up to 1836, noting the relationship between dioceses and political units (kingdoms and then counties). Section 2.4 takes the story forward to 1927, highlighting the guiding principles on which the construction of new dioceses was based. Where secular boundaries no longer reflected social realities, the latter were given priority. The desire to reduce the size of overlarge dioceses without increasing the overall number led the 1830s reformers to divide natural communities and unite unrelated areas; such unions were quickly found to be unsatisfactory and were eventually undone. New models of episcopacy and increased expectations necessitated assistant bishops or smaller dioceses, or both. Suffragan episcopacy was revived from 1870, and between 1836 and 1927 the number of English dioceses almost doubled – from 22 to 42. Parliament’s rejection of the proposed Diocese of Shrewsbury put an end to the creation of new dioceses, however.

Section 2.5 documents the renewed discussion of the diocesan structure that took place between 1967 and 1978. In 1974 the Standing Committee concluded that ‘there is no one pattern of episcopal organisation to which the Church of England would wish to commit itself to the exclusion of all others’, but that legislation should enable new dioceses to be created without the need for a Measure and should foster the establishment of systems of ‘area bishops’. A Dioceses Commission was established, but the initiative was to lie with the dioceses. As section 2.6 shows, a number of area schemes were established within dioceses, but little change in the boundaries between dioceses ensued. The lack of changes initiated by dioceses themselves in turn led to the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007, which created the present Dioceses Commission with a duty to review the size, boundaries and number of dioceses and power to bring forward reorganization schemes on its own initiative.

After this historical look at the development of the diocesan structure, efforts (both successful and unsuccessful) to reform it, and the principles that underlay them, the Chapter returns to ecclesiology. Section 2.7 gives an overview of the discussion about the role of suffragan bishops. Some view the suffragan’s ministry as an extension of that of the diocesan, while others stress the suffragan’s membership of a diocesan college of bishops and locate the basis of his ministry in his ordination to the episcopate and his appointment to an episcopal see. The Commission argues that, where there is an area system, the understanding of the diocesan bishop as ‘father in God’, ‘chief pastor’ and ‘principal minister’ is not incompatible with an understanding of each episcopal area as having a corporate identity and being led in mission by the area bishop who, under the oversight of the diocesan bishop, is the chief pastor and principal minister of his episcopal area. The Chapter concludes (in section 2.8) with the Commission’s reflections, in the light of the history and ecclesiology, on recent discussions of the number of dioceses, the desirability or otherwise of suffragan bishops, and the overall number of bishops.

Read Chapter 2 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 3: History of Secular and Diocesan Boundaries in Yorkshire**

Section 3.1 of this Chapter discusses natural communities and how the Church relates to them. People belong to communities of varying size and geographical extent, including counties (and sometimes, ancient units within them) and cities. Because the Church of England is the established church and understands itself as having a mission to the nation and not just to individuals, it seeks to relate to secular communities at all levels. Some of this work is well known, but much of it proceeds without people in the parishes becoming directly aware of it. The fact that they are not very conscious of it does not mean that it is unimportant, however, or that they do not benefit from it.

Professor David Ford is quoted as asking (in an unpublished paper entitled ‘What is the Diocese?’) ‘Is the diocese only a service organisation for parishes?’ He added, ‘If there is no vision of ministry to the region in ways that cannot be adequately fulfilled by parishes, then there will be a serious breakdown of the polity of the Church of England.’ Moreover, such responsibility was not delegated upwards from the parishes to the diocese: the regional ministry of the diocese should be seen as ‘constitutive of the Church and needing to be recognised by the parishes as the truth of our polity’. Professor Ford concluded, ‘Not to recognise this is to want the character of our Church to change fundamentally.’

The rest of Chapter 3 sets out the history of the particular boundaries with which the report is concerned. Section 3.2 looks at the Yorkshire ridings and how the Church related to them before 1836, while sections 3.3 and 3.4 explain why the Dioceses of Ripon and Wakefield were created in 1836 and 1888 respectively. On both occasions what later became South Yorkshire was recognized as distinct from the rest of the West Riding and was therefore not included. The Diocese of Ripon was problematic in that Ripon was not easily reached from the industrial area that the new diocese was primarily intended to serve. The Diocese of Wakefield had no natural unity and its creation meant that Leeds and Bradford were at the very southern edge of the Ripon Diocese (as Ripon was on its eastern edge).

As section 3.5 explains, a 1907 report called for the creation of dioceses of Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford. Sheffield was created in 1913 (section 3.6) and Bradford in 1919 (section 3.7). However, a Diocese of Leeds could not be created without the addition of territory in North-East Yorkshire to Ripon, as the rural area of Ripon Diocese would not be viable as a diocese on its own. The deaneries of Hemsworth and Pontefract were transferred from York to Wakefield in 1926 (section 3.8).

Section 3.9 looks at the Roman Catholic and Methodist boundaries in Yorkshire. Both treat South Yorkshire as separate from the rest of the former West Riding.

Section 3.10 looks at the new counties of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire that were created within the former West Riding in 1974 and at the other boundary changes in that year. The lack of correlation in many places between the diocesan boundaries and the new county boundaries within Yorkshire is one of the factors that prompted the Dioceses Commission’s review.

Read Chapter 3 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 4: Yorkshire as a Whole and South Yorkshire (the Diocese of Sheffield)**

Section 4.1 of this Chapter looks at Yorkshire as a whole. Though it has a strong sense of common identity, it is too large to form a single diocese.

Section 4.2 looks at the Diocese of Sheffield. Its territory corresponds very largely with a secular community – South Yorkshire. However, it includes eight parishes that are now in the East Riding of Yorkshire but does not include the Barnsley Deanery. These anomalies are addressed in Chapter 9.

Those who gave evidence generally agreed that South Yorkshire is a ‘different place’ from West Yorkshire. It forms part of the Sheffield City Region. (In 2006 the *State of the English Cities* report described ‘city regions’ as ‘enlarged territories from which core urban areas draw people for work and services’. Economically, city regions and other sub-regions make sense because investment, labour and housing markets all tend to cut across local authority areas and their administrative boundaries. People live, work and consume over wider areas.) The relevance of the Sheffield City Region for the purpose of the Report is not so much the need for the Church to relate to its structures (though that is important, such structures and initiatives may come and go as government policy changes) but as another indication that Sheffield is at the centre of a social and economic region or sub-region (a secular community) that is distinct and separate from the Leeds City Region which lies to the north.

South Yorkshire’s physical geography differs from that of West Yorkshire, as does its economic base. Physical geography and industrial history have combined to produce a culture that is distinct from that of West Yorkshire. This is reflected in the fact that BBC Radio has four radio stations serving Yorkshire: BBC Radio York, BBC Radio Humberside, BBC Radio Leeds and BBC Radio Sheffield. The Commission concludes that South Yorkshire is a distinct community and should continue to have its own diocese.

On only one measure of size is the Diocese of Sheffield among the six smallest dioceses, while its population of 1.2 million ranks it at 17 out of 42. Only a very significant reduction in the number of English dioceses would put a question mark against it in terms of size.

The diocese’s financial position is challenging – as, in different ways, is that of all of the Yorkshire dioceses. However, though it predicts a deficit in 2010 and in the next two years, as do the other Yorkshire dioceses, the level of deficit is currently predicted to be lower and to decline more significantly over this period than those of the other dioceses. The Commission believes that the Bishop and his senior colleagues are clear as to what needs to be done. The Bishop is confident that the diocese is sustainable in the longer term and the Commission has no reason to take a different view. The Commission’s review is in any case not finance-driven and financial considerations are only one of the sets of factors that have to be borne in mind, but it does not believe that financial considerations require the merger of the Diocese of Sheffield with another diocese.

In the context of the present review the Commission does not recommend any change to the southern and western boundaries of the Diocese of Sheffield that could not be made under the Pastoral Measure 1983. The northern and eastern boundaries are considered in Chapter 9.

Read Chapter 4 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 5: The Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield**

Section 5.1 looks at West Yorkshire as a whole. It is unique among English counties in having three diocesan bishops resident (and three diocesan offices located) within it. The diocesan boundaries do not match those of the unitary authorities: the City of Leeds is divided between four dioceses, and there is thus no one who can engage with the City Council on behalf of all the Church of England parishes within the unitary authority area.

Key services (public transport, police, fire and rescue) are provided on a West Yorkshire basis, and an active ecumenical council indicates a sense on the part of the churches that West Yorkshire constitutes a community to which and in which the churches need to relate. Leeds is the hub of a wider economic area; commuting patterns and the configuration of public transport demonstrate its importance. West Yorkshire is a recognizable community with a relatively compact area. Bradford and Wakefield Cathedrals are less than eight miles from the Ripon & Leeds diocesan office, Bradford Cathedral being closer to it than to the Bradford diocesan office. Physical, social and economic geography could in the past have supported an east-west division, but though Wakefield and Kirklees still have relatively little connection, Leeds and Bradford are increasingly linked – the opposite of what the diocesan boundaries achieve. Striking differences of culture between and within the three dioceses (section 5.2) reflect social geography but also churchmanship.

In the Diocese of Bradford (section 5.3), the association between the Craven District and the City of Bradford was described as ‘historic and sentimental, not contemporary’. People in the rural area hope for more episcopal attention and have a common interest with the rest of the Yorkshire Dales in the Ripon & Leeds Diocese. Evidence stressed the importance of the Bishopric of Bradford to the City. Within this predominantly low-church diocese there is a desire for episcopacy that is more low-key and even more local. While the diocese faces no immediate crisis in terms of sustainability, there is a sense of it ‘just holding its own’; some saw it as already below critical mass. A significant weight of opinion advocated quite radical change. This would need to combine Bradford’s strengths of smallness and intimacy with more resilient and economic administration.

By contrast, Wakefield (section 5.4) was never a natural unit. In Calderdale and Kirklees, Wakefield feels remote. The fall in the parish share collection rate to 82.7% was raised repeatedly. Projections of a six-figure annual deficit presume a collection rate of 88%; if this is not achieved, deficits will be much greater. Short-term factors should not determine proposals but do have some bearing on opinion about the future. Some argued for fewer dioceses in Yorkshire and hoped for consequential financial savings, but few called for fewer bishops and archdeacons. Indeed there were calls for bishops to be seen in the parishes more and suggestions that in the present context the clergy need more support from bishops and archdeacons, not less.

In Ripon & Leeds (section 5.5) some argued that one bishop should focus on the rural area and its issues and one on the City of Leeds, which may not in the past have received sufficient sustained attention from the Church of England and is currently divided between four dioceses. From a position of stability and confidence, many in the Diocese were ready to contemplate significant change if it would benefit the Church in Yorkshire. Many could see benefits – more coherent mission to the rural area and the City, with more resilient and economic administration. Some recognized that, given the dispersed nature of West Yorkshire, there could not simply be a centralized diocese focused on Leeds.

Existing administrative sharing (section 5.6), though beneficial, often seems opportunistic not strategic. It also raises issues of effective staff oversight and policy co-ordination.

Read Chapter 5 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 6: Our Primary Recommendation**

The Commission has concluded that the existing configuration of the dioceses in West Yorkshire is no longer appropriate for the Church's mission and not sustainable into the future, and that the status quo is not an option. Section 6.1 sets out the reasons why. Some issues prompting this conclusion have existed since the dioceses' inception, but others have arisen from changes in social and economic geography, and in communications, since then. Many commented to the Commission that the benefits gained from 'tinkering' would not justify the effort involved. Some concluded from this that the status quo should be maintained, but a significant majority urged the Commission to 'be radical' in recommending how the Church in these dioceses could best be configured for its mission in the 21st century.

Section 6.2 considers a number of solutions that were put to the Commission (greater administrative sharing between the existing dioceses, division of the Wakefield Diocese between the other two, unification of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds) but concludes that none of these resolves all the issues that need to be addressed. The Report therefore recommends a single diocese for the whole of West Yorkshire. Section 6.3 sets out the reasons for the Commission's conclusion that the new diocese should also include those parts of the Dioceses of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds that are in North Yorkshire.

The Report recommends a decentralized structure for the new diocese (section 6.4). It would be divided into episcopal areas, with area bishops to whom the day-to-day oversight of their areas would be delegated as completely as possible. This structure would enable the Church to engage in mission to this part of Yorkshire effectively and efficiently, yet result in mission and episcopal leadership that are more locally focused and closer to parishes, clergy and people than at present. There would be episcopally-led units of worship and mission that are truly local, within a diocese large enough to be sustainable, with resilient and economical administration, able to relate coherently to civil structures at the county and regional levels.

The precise details of the delegation to the area bishops would need to be worked out in dialogue with representatives of the three dioceses as part of the implementation process leading up to the inception of the new diocese, but section 6.5 outlines the arrangements that the Commission envisages. In summary, functions that relate to the structure of the Church in the diocese, the making of appointments with significance for the whole diocese, and functions with a 'judicial' or disciplinary character would be reserved to the diocesan bishop. The area bishops would exercise the other statutory and canonical functions of the bishop and relate to their areas' secular institutions.

Each episcopal area would have a formally-constituted area council, which would exercise certain functions of the Mission and Pastoral Committee, discuss the deployment of clergy and other ministers within the total allocated to the area, be responsible for money allocated to the area by the Board of Finance and, under the guidance of the Area Bishop, organize area-wide gatherings and events. One paid officer would probably be needed in each area.

The diocese as a whole would need a sense of unity and common purpose, but this would not prevent a sense of corporate identity and mission in each area, which would have its own distinct ethos. Area schemes tend to foster diversity. The diocese would be characterized by unity but not uniformity. The role of the diocesan bishop and the area bishops in the diocese as a whole, combined with extensive delegation to the area bishops and area councils, would support this.

Read Chapter 6 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 7: Bishops, Archdeacons and Episcopal Areas**

The Commission envisages the creation of a new diocese. All three existing dioceses would therefore be dissolved and their diocesan bishoprics abolished. (Section 7.1)

For reasons explained in section 7.2, the diocesan bishop would also be the area bishop of one of the new episcopal areas.

No archdeaconry would be divided between episcopal areas, and in principle no unitary authority area should be divided between archdeaconries. (Section 7.3)

There would be a Bishop of Ripon, whose episcopal area would comprise those parts of North Yorkshire that are within the new diocese. This area could form a single archdeaconry. The See of Knaresborough would be renamed the See of Ripon and the Archdeaconry of Richmond would become the Archdeaconry of Richmond and Craven. The present Archdeaconry of Craven would be dissolved. (Section 7.4)

There would be a Bishop of Leeds, giving dedicated attention to an episcopal area comprising all the parishes in the City of Leeds that are in the new diocese. This would form the Archdeaconry of Leeds. Section 7.5 discusses the parishes in the City of Leeds that are currently in the Dioceses of Bradford and Wakefield.

Section 7.6 explains the importance of there being a Bishop of Bradford, who should focus on the City of Bradford, which would form the Archdeaconry of Bradford.

Section 7.7 explains why Calderdale should not be in the Bradford episcopal area. Instead, the Archdeaconry of Halifax should be expanded to include the whole of Kirklees and form an episcopal area. The See of Pontefract would be renamed and the bishop would move from Wakefield to Kirklees. Dewsbury Minster having been the mother church of the whole area, one possibility would be for Dewsbury to be the episcopal see, but the Report recommends that the episcopal see should be Huddersfield, as the largest town in the new episcopal area. This would not involve any change to the status of Huddersfield Parish Church or imply that episcopal services would be held there more frequently than elsewhere. The Commission would especially welcome expressions of opinion about the name of this episcopal see.

The Commission considers that the new diocese should not be focused solely on any one of the West Yorkshire cities. The diocesan office should be in Leeds, but the cathedral should be one of the existing West Yorkshire cathedrals. Both Leeds and Bradford should be the focus of attention of their respective bishops. For these and other reasons Section 7.8 recommends that the new diocesan see should therefore be Wakefield.

The City of Wakefield is small enough to form an episcopal area for the diocesan bishop of a large diocese. It would form the Archdeaconry of Pontefract. (Section 7.9)

Section 7.10 ('The New Diocese: Statistics and Senior Staff') and 7.11 ('Unity and Leadership of the Diocese: Roles of the Senior Staff') discuss the number of senior staff (which would be reduced from eleven to ten) and their roles in the diocese as a whole. Section 7.12 looks at the Diocesan Office.

Read Chapter 7 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)



## **Chapter 8: Cathedrals**

Section 8.1 explains why Wakefield Cathedral should be the principal cathedral. It is seen as a significant ecclesiastical building beyond the City of Wakefield and to some extent already serves West Yorkshire as a whole. A development project that has been launched should equip Wakefield Cathedral to take on an enhanced role in a larger diocese.

Section 8.2 looks at Ripon Cathedral and concludes that it plays a significant part in the mission of the Church in North Yorkshire and through its educational work contributes to outreach in West Yorkshire as well. The western half of North Yorkshire cannot form a diocese of its own, but the Commission believes that Ripon Cathedral should continue to serve as the focus for the church life in the Yorkshire Dales and should be the focal point of the new Ripon Area. As such, it should retain its status as a cathedral and serve as a secondary cathedral within the new diocese – in a sense, returning to its pre-Reformation role as a subordinate cathedral for the Yorkshire Dales within a larger diocese.

There was little evidence of Bradford Cathedral exerting an influence or attraction beyond the Diocese of Bradford, and indeed it has found it difficult to reach out beyond Bradford itself to other parts of the diocese. However, section 8.3 argues that its importance for the life and cohesion of the City of Bradford is very considerable. It is now a building that it would be very difficult for a parish to maintain in the absence of income from tourism and other sources on a scale that it is very unlikely to attract. It is also now the only Christian place of worship within the city's inner ring-road. Mindful of the likely consequences that the withdrawal of cathedral status would have, in financial terms and in terms of the effect on Christian presence and on perceptions of the Church of England's commitment to the city, the Commission recommends that Bradford Cathedral should continue to have cathedral status as a secondary cathedral within the new diocese.

The three cathedral foundations would remain separate, but the new diocese would have a single College of Canons. Section 8.4 suggests that it will be important to establish a clear division of responsibilities between the Bishop of Bradford and the Dean of Bradford – the Bishop relating to civil society at a City-wide level and across the City as a whole and the Dean focusing on the ministry of the Cathedral and on the immediate inner-city area. Wakefield Cathedral's existing work and new role would justify the allocation of a dean and two residentiary canons paid by the Church Commissioners. By contrast, it has been suggested from within the Diocese of Bradford that it might be possible to reduce Bradford Cathedral's staffing to a dean and one canon. At Ripon Cathedral, the present staffing level of a dean and 2.25 residentiary canons might be reduced at least to a dean and two canons – a level which might be justified by the extent of the cathedral's liturgical, cultural and educational activity and its parochial and heritage responsibilities. The Commission recommends that a review of the staffing of the three cathedrals should be set in train by the diocesan bishop of the new diocese and that the reorganization scheme should permit the Church Commissioners, with the consent of the diocesan bishop, to pay only the dean and one canon.

Each cathedral would be a cathedral of the diocesan bishop, but the Bishops of Bradford and Ripon would have seats of honour in Bradford and Ripon Cathedrals respectively.

The Commission could not recommend that in a diocese with three cathedrals, two of them in the same county, cathedral status should be conferred on any other church.

Read Chapter 8 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 9: Boundaries between Dioceses**

Chapter 9 considers the external boundaries of the new diocese and the boundary between the Dioceses of Sheffield and York.

Some have suggested that there is no point in taking secular boundaries into consideration when discussing diocesan boundaries, since these might change in future. However, to ignore secular boundaries and the shape of secular communities in devising diocesan boundaries would represent a radical break with the Church of England's tradition of relating to the nation and its localities. The boundaries of ceremonial counties and of existing unitary authorities within them are unlikely to change even in the medium term. By contrast, boundaries between the boroughs and districts of 'shire' counties with a two-tier government system are of less relevance and may in some cases prove less durable; they have accordingly been given less weight in the Commission's thinking.

All of that said, it is important to emphasize that a discrepancy between diocesan and secular boundaries raises a question as to whether the diocesan boundary should change; it does not answer that question. If a diocesan boundary reflects the realities of local life better than the secular boundaries do, there is a stronger case for retaining it. But, where it goes against the grain of secular life, there is a strong case for aligning the Church's boundaries to those of the communities it seeks to serve.

Chapter 9 goes on to look at

- twelve parishes in the Bradford Diocese that have been in Lancashire since 1974 (one of which has never been in Yorkshire);
- five parishes in the Bradford Diocese that have been in Cumbria since 1974 (two of which have never been in Yorkshire);
- seven parishes in the Ripon & Leeds Diocese that have been in County Durham since 1974;
- six parishes in the Ripon & Leeds Diocese that might relate more naturally to Northallerton and Thirsk in the Diocese of York than to Richmond in the new diocese;
- the boundary of the new diocese with the Easingwold and New Ainsty Deaneries;
- eight parishes in the Diocese of York that have been in the City of Leeds since 1974;
- four parishes in the Diocese of Wakefield that are in the Selby District of North Yorkshire;
- nine parishes in the Diocese of Sheffield that are not in South Yorkshire;
- the twenty parishes of the Barnsley Deanery, which is in the Diocese of Wakefield but in South Yorkshire.

Chapter 9 sets out the reasons for the Commission's recommendations in respect of these 71 parishes. The recommendations are summarized in Chapter 11 (see pages 14-15 of this Guide to the Report). In some cases the Commission recommends that the parishes remain in the new diocese or be transferred to another diocese. In other cases it simply recommends that the parishes concerned formally consider whether they should be transferred or not.

Read Chapter 9 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **Chapter 10: Implementation**

The recommendations made in the report would be brought into effect by a variety of means.

The principal reorganization scheme would dissolve the three existing dioceses and create the new diocese. A second scheme would transfer territory from and to the new Diocese (once it had come into existence) and the Dioceses of Sheffield and York.

The See of Pontefract could be renamed under section 11 of the Measure either in advance of the creation of the new Diocese or after the new diocesan bishop has taken up office. The See of Knaresborough could only be renamed 'Ripon' after the existing diocesan bishopric of Ripon & Leeds has been abolished and the new diocesan has taken up office.

Much preparatory work would need to be undertaken within the area of the new diocese. The Commission envisages the establishment, by the three bishops' councils, of an implementation group chaired by a bishop appointed by the Archbishop of York. This group would have strategic oversight of the implementation process and would commission implementation work from others within the existing dioceses as necessary. It would need to consist of a small number of key people, representing the three dioceses in roughly equal numbers. The group would, for example, establish shadow diocesan boards (and in some cases companies and/or trusts), appoint a diocesan secretary-designate and other staff, where possible from among the existing diocesan staff, identify the staff who would transfer to the new diocese, and make TUPE and redundancy arrangements as necessary.

There will need to be further consideration of what the proposed changes would mean for the financing of episcopal ministry in the proposed new diocese. It is not the intention of the Dioceses Commission that the proposed changes should lead to savings for one part of the Church as a result of extra costs to another.

Choosing the first diocesan bishop would be a priority once the scheme had been confirmed by Order in Council. The scheme would come into force in stages. A priority for the new diocesan bishop would be the choice of Bishops of Bradford and Leeds. The bishop would be supported in his choices by advisory groups, which we suggest should be drawn mainly from the archdeaconries concerned.

The functions of the area bishops in their respective archdeaconries would be specified in instruments of delegation. The Commission proposes to publish draft instruments of delegation, issue them for comment alongside the draft scheme and then issue revised texts alongside the final scheme. The instruments would need to be executed by the new diocesan bishop after consulting the transitional diocesan synod, but we hope that the fact that they had been the subject of consultation in advance would expedite this. In the case of Bradford and Leeds it might be necessary to delegate functions temporarily to other bishops pending the appointment of the new bishops.

The transitional diocesan synod would need to establish the area councils and approve their constitutions (including membership). Functions would need to be delegated and responsibilities assigned by the relevant diocesan bodies (chiefly the diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee).

Read Chapter 10 of the Report: [www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report](http://www.diocom.org/yorkshire/report)

## **11 Summary of Recommendations**

In summary, we make the following recommendations:

### **11.1 The Diocese of Sheffield**

11.1.1 South Yorkshire is a distinct community and should continue to have its own diocese. (4.2.7)

11.1.2 In the context of the present review we do not recommend any change to the southern and western boundaries of the Diocese of Sheffield that could not be made under the Pastoral Measure 1983. (4.2.11)

### **11.2 The Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield**

11.2.1 There should be a single diocese covering West Yorkshire and also those parts of the Dioceses of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds that are in North Yorkshire. (6.8.1)

11.2.2 The new diocese should be divided into episcopal areas with area bishops to whom the day-to-day oversight of their areas would be delegated as completely as possible, each with an area council to which appropriate functions would be delegated. (6.8.1)

11.2.3 The three existing dioceses should be dissolved, and the diocesan bishoprics abolished, by a scheme that would provide for compensating the diocesan bishops for loss of office, in accordance with Compensation Rules approved by the General Synod under the Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007. (7.1.2)

### **11.3 The New Diocese**

11.3.1 The diocesan bishop should also be area bishop of one of the areas of the diocese. (7.2.2)

11.3.2 The archdeaconry and deanery boundaries within the new diocese should be adjusted so that no archdeaconry would be divided between episcopal areas and that each deanery would be entirely within one of the archdeaconries. In principle no unitary authority area should be divided between archdeaconries. (7.3.1)

11.3.3 Those parts of the County of North Yorkshire that fall within the new diocese should form the Ripon Area of the Diocese. The existing Suffragan See of Knaresborough should be renamed as the See of Ripon. (7.4.1)

11.3.4 The Ripon Area should form a single archdeaconry – the Archdeaconry of Richmond and Craven. (7.4.4)

11.3.5 The City of Leeds should form an episcopal area, receiving dedicated attention from an area bishop whose area should include only the City of Leeds. (7.5.1) It should comprise a single archdeaconry, the Archdeaconry of Leeds. (7.5.4)

11.3.6 All of the parishes in the Dioceses of Bradford and Wakefield that are in the City of Leeds should be transferred to the Archdeaconry of Leeds. (7.5.6)

- 11.3.7 The City of Bradford should be an archdeaconry and episcopal area. (7.6.5)
- 11.3.8 The Archdeaconry of Halifax should be expanded to include the whole of Kirklees, and this archdeaconry should form a new episcopal area. The Suffragan See of Pontefract would be renamed and the bishop would move from Wakefield to Kirklees. (7.7.7)
- 11.3.9 Subject to expressions of opinion on this issue, the episcopal area covering Kirklees and Calderdale should be known as the Huddersfield Episcopal Area and the Archdeaconry of Halifax. (7.7.15)
- 11.3.10 Wakefield should be the diocesan see and the diocesan bishop should also be area bishop of an episcopal area based on the City of Wakefield. (7.8.18)
- 11.3.11 It follows from this that the diocese would be the Diocese of Wakefield, but in letterheads and publicity materials this could be expanded along these lines:
- The Diocese of Wakefield*  
*The Church of England in West and North-West Yorkshire*
- ‘North-West Yorkshire’ is a convenient shorthand for the western half of the County of North Yorkshire. (7.8.19)
- 11.3.12 The Archdeaconry of Pontefract should be reduced in size so as to comprise only the Wakefield Area. (7.9.6)
- 11.3.13 One or more of the archdeaconries might be combined with a cathedral canonry or parochial ministry, or an archdeacon might act as the diocesan officer for an area of work. Bishops and archdeacons would also have diocesan ‘portfolios’. The details of the archdeacons’ diocesan responsibilities, and those of the area bishops, would need to be worked out in the new diocese and by those in the existing dioceses preparing for its inception. (7.11.1-6)
- 11.3.14 The Diocesan Office for the new Diocese should be located in Leeds. (7.12.1)  
Details should be decided locally. (7.12.2-4)

## **11.4 Cathedrals**

- 11.4.1 Wakefield Cathedral should be the principal cathedral of the diocese. (8.1.1)
- 11.4.2 Ripon Cathedral should continue to serve as the focus for the church life in the Yorkshire Dales and should be the focal point of the new Ripon Area. As such, it should retain its status as a cathedral and serve as a secondary cathedral within the new diocese. (8.2.8)
- 11.4.3 Bradford Cathedral should continue to have cathedral status and should, like Ripon Cathedral, be a secondary cathedral within the new diocese. (8.3.9)
- 11.4.4 There should be a single College of Canons to discharge functions for all three cathedrals in accordance with section 5 of the Cathedrals Measure 1999. The Dean of Wakefield should be the dean of the college of canons of the Diocese, and the Deans of Bradford and Ripon should be vice-deans of the college. The suffragan bishops and

archdeacons and the residentiary canons of the three cathedrals would be members of the college. Honorary, lay and ecumenical canons would be members of the college and would each be appointed to a stall in one of the cathedrals as appropriate. (8.4.2)

- 11.4.5 It will be important to establish a clear division of responsibilities between the Bishop of Bradford and the Dean of Bradford, with the Bishop relating to civil society on at a City-wide level and across the City as a whole and the Dean focusing on the ministry of the Cathedral and on the immediate inner-city area. (8.4.3)
- 11.4.6 The staffing of the cathedrals should be reviewed. We recommend that a review be set in train by the diocesan bishop of the new diocese. The reorganization scheme should apply sections 8 and 21 of the Cathedrals Measure 1999 to each of the three cathedrals in such a way as to require the Church Commissioners to pay the stipends of the dean and two canons or, with the consent of the diocesan bishop, the dean and one canon. (8.4.4)
- 11.4.7 Otherwise, we recommend no changes to the constitution and statutes of the three cathedrals, which would continue to be independent foundations, albeit with a common college of canons. (8.4.5)
- 11.4.8 The diocesan bishop would be the bishop of the whole diocese and each of the three cathedrals would be his cathedral. He would accordingly remain the Visitor of each. Consideration would need to be given as to whether he should delegate any of his other powers and responsibilities under the constitution and statutes of Bradford and Ripon Cathedrals to the Bishops of Bradford and Ripon. Be that as it may, we envisage that they would have seats of honour in Bradford and Ripon Cathedrals respectively. (8.4.6)

## **11.5 Boundaries between Dioceses**

- 11.5.1 The Commission invites the twelve parishes in the Diocese of Bradford that are in Lancashire formally to consider, in the light of the proposal to create a Ripon Episcopal Area within a new diocese with its diocesan office in Leeds, whether their own mission and that of the Church in Lancashire would be strengthened by their being transferred to the Diocese of Blackburn. (9.2.6)
- 11.5.2 In the light of the proposal to create a Ripon Episcopal Area within a new diocese with its diocesan office in Leeds, the five parishes in Cumbria that are in the Diocese of Bradford (Sedbergh, Cautley and Garsdale; Dent with Cowgill; Howgill; Firbank; and Killington) should be transferred to the Diocese of Carlisle. (9.3.5)
- 11.5.3 The parishes of Barningham and Hutton Magna should remain in the proposed new diocese. (9.4.2)
- 11.5.4 The parishes of Laithkirk, Romalldkirk, Bowes, Startforth and Rokeby with Brignall, and Wycliffe in County Durham should be transferred to the Diocese of Durham. (9.4.6)
- 11.5.5 The Commission invites the parishes of The Cowtons, Great Smeaton with Appleton Wiske, Birkby, Danby Wiske with Hutton Bonville, Ainderby Steeple with Yafforth and Kirby Wiske with Maunby, and Kirkby Fleetham with Langton on Swale and

Scruton formally to consider whether it would be appropriate for them to be transferred to the Mowbray Deanery of the Diocese of York. (9.5.13)

- 11.5.6 The parishes of Boston Spa, Thorp Arch, Walton, Bramham and Clifford should remain in the Diocese of York. (9.7.5)
- 11.5.7 The parishes of Aberford, Micklefield and Ledsham with Fairburn should be transferred to the Archdeaconry of Leeds. (9.7.8)
- 11.5.8 The Commission recommends that the parishes of Kirk Smeaton and Womersley remain in the proposed new diocese (though it would welcome their views on this). (9.8.3)
- 11.5.9 The Commission invites the Archdeacons of Pontefract and York and the parishes of Kellington, Birkin and Haddlesey formally to consider where the boundary between the two archdeaconries would most helpfully be drawn. (9.8.5)
- 11.5.10 The Commission invites the parish of Brotherton formally to consider whether it would be more appropriate for it to remain in the proposed new diocese or to be transferred to the Diocese of York. (9.8.7)
- 11.5.11 The parishes of Great Snaith, Goole, Airmyn, Hook, Rawcliffe, Goole, Swinefleet, Whitgift and Adlingfleet should be transferred to the Diocese of York and the parish of Eastoft should be transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln. (9.9.10)
- 11.5.12 The Barnsley Deanery should be transferred to the Diocese of Sheffield. (9.10.14)

## **12 Conclusion**

Our recommendations, we believe, are both radical and realistic. They reflect the evidence we received and, in many cases, suggestions made to us during the Review. It continues to be the vocation of the Church of England to provide a Christian presence in every community. We envisage a structure that would enable the Church of England to engage more coherently with the people and communities of West Yorkshire and the western half of North Yorkshire, and with the institutions of civil society there.

Our proposals would eliminate duplication and triplication and offer the prospect of greater efficiency and resilience in the support of parishes, schools, clergy and other licensed ministers. We anticipate consequential financial savings in the stipends and working costs (including staff costs) of two diocesan bishoprics that would be replaced by suffragan bishoprics. The total number of bishops and archdeacons would be reduced from eleven to ten. We anticipate further financial savings in the consolidation of support services in a single diocesan administration based in a single diocesan office.

We propose retention of the three existing cathedrals, each of which plays an important role that is valued by the wider communities and in particular by the local authorities.

The continuance of the see of Bradford as an area bishopric, the establishment of separate sees of Ripon and of Leeds as area bishoprics focusing respectively on the western half of North Yorkshire and on the City of Leeds, and the replacement of the suffragan see of Pontefract with a bishopric for Kirklees and Calderdale offer the prospect of more focused mission and engagement with the important and distinct communities in these four areas.

The creation of episcopal areas with area bishops and area councils is a crucial part of what we propose. Our recommendations involve not only rationalization but also an emphasis on, and empowerment of, the local dimension of the Church's life. The area bishops would be, as many have requested, closer in every sense to their clergy and people than it has been possible for the diocesan bishops to be. Thus there would be a strong element of devolution within a context of rationalization.

At the same time, the creation of a single diocese would place the financial challenges faced by the existing dioceses within a wider framework. A larger structure should be more robust and sustainable into the middle of the century and beyond. Any further reorganization that might prove desirable in response to changes in Church and society could take place within the context of the new diocese and without the need for involvement by the Dioceses Commission or the General Synod.

Finally, it is important to stress that to recommend reconfiguring the Church in Yorkshire for mission in the twenty-first century is not to pass an adverse judgement on the suitability of structures established a century and more ago in response to the circumstances of the time. Nor is it in any way to devalue the life and work of the Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield in their respective histories of 176, 122 and 91 years. There is much to celebrate in their history of worship and witness, and much for which to thank God. What we propose now is that, for the next phase of the Church's worship and witness in Yorkshire, those three dioceses should be brought together into a new structure for episcopally-led mission in the parishes, in the areas that comprise West Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales, and in that part of Yorkshire as a whole.