



## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Council for Christian Unity

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# Finance and LEPs

*Working towards Principles for Good Practice in agreeing financial arrangements in LEPs where the Church of England is a partner:*

### **A: Factors affecting the use of membership as a means of assessment**

\* Most single congregation LEPs will have a single membership roll, which includes those who were already members of one of the partner churches when they became part of the LEP as well as those who have been jointly confirmed, and so are joint members.

\* The LEP also needs to hold accurate rolls recording denominational membership. For the purposes of financial calculation, those who have been jointly confirmed are usually considered as being a fraction of a member in each of the participating churches.

\* Following the changes in the Church Representation Rules in 1995, there are, in addition, people who have declared themselves to be “also a member of the Church of England” and who through this means are members of more than one of the participating churches.

### **B: Clarity.**

\* There is a need for clarity and transparency so that both those within the LEP and those beyond it know that the arrangements are fair.

### **C: Provision of ministry.**

\* In some of the partner churches there is a sense that LEPs are over-staffed, or are not making their proper financial contribution. In a time of pastoral re-organisation, it is important that LEPs are seen to be subject to the same conditions as other churches, and are not either unduly favoured or penalised.

\* In some LEPs of long standing, patterns for the provision of ministry still reflect the original situation when the LEP was set up, perhaps 30 years ago, with a whole team of full and part-time ministers, one from each participating church.

\* The permissions of Canon B44 do allow a degree of shared ministry, so that the life of the LEP can work without this kind of provision, which is difficult both to sustain and to justify. As all the partner churches face a shortage of ministers and money, there may be a natural process of levelling out.

\* Differences of ecclesiology mean that the partner churches have different basis for calculating the amount of minister’s time which is needed; for some churches this will include the contribution made through, for example, Local Preachers. The commitment of a church to an LEP is not only expressed through the provision of ordained stipendiary ministry.

\* There may be occasions where LEP constitutions will need to be re-examined to achieve greater flexibility and to provide a means for re-negotiating patterns of ministerial provision.

### **D: Pastoral reorganisation.**

\* Pastoral reorganisation should be undertaken in partnership with other churches, but this needs pre-existing relationships of trust and mutual accountability to make it happen. To be effective, these relationships need to include those in the diocesan administration and Board of Finance, as well as the Diocesan Pastoral Committee, and not only the ecumenical officers and church leaders who represent the diocese on the ecumenical structures.

### **E: Sponsoring Bodies**

\* should be the means whereby conversations between those responsible for financial matters in the churches can be enabled.

### **F: Formulae**

\* Those dioceses which work to an agreed formula for calculating assessments from LEPs have found that it is the process of agreement, whereby the appropriate people from the churches come together and own the formula, which is important, more than the exact content of the formula itself.

\* Since few dioceses operate identical schemes for assessments of parish share, the arrangements in each diocese will need to be negotiated separately.