

One mission, Many places: Revised Consultation



Between September and November last year, the Diocese invited parishioners, clergy and PCCs to contribute their views to a consultation on Indicative Offers.

Having collated and listened to your views we have made some important amendments to the proposal which we would like to hear your views on. But first...

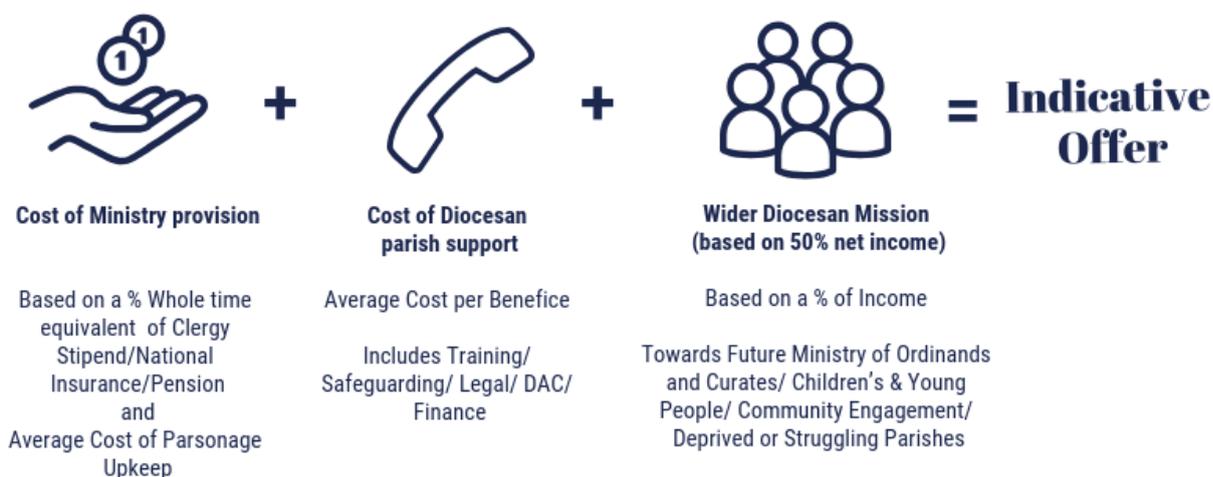
WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL?

At the moment, each parish makes a voluntary but vital Pledge Offer to support the work of the Diocese each year. While parishes are given guidance on overall costs, the amount pledged is largely based on principles of relationship, trust, mutual commitment and freewill offering.

Whilst retaining the voluntary nature of Parish Pledged Offers, the Indicative Offer system proposes to use a formula to calculate a fair and reasonable amount which parishes can afford.

Below is the original proposed formula:

Proposed formula:



The proposal was developed in partnership with clergy and treasurers from a range of parishes across the Diocese, from different traditions and social and economic areas.

THE CONSULTATION

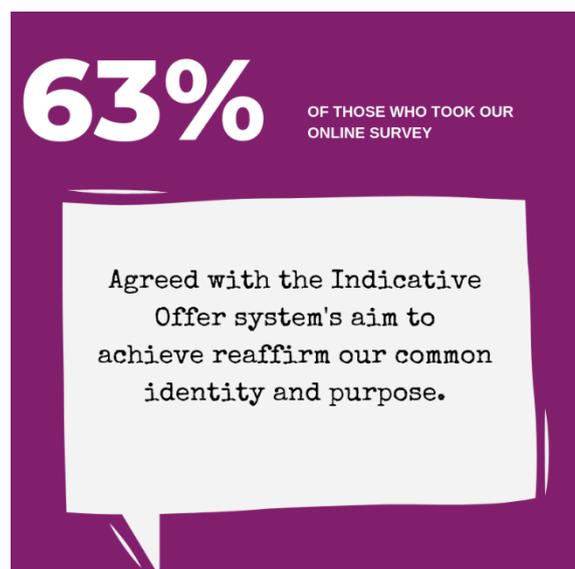
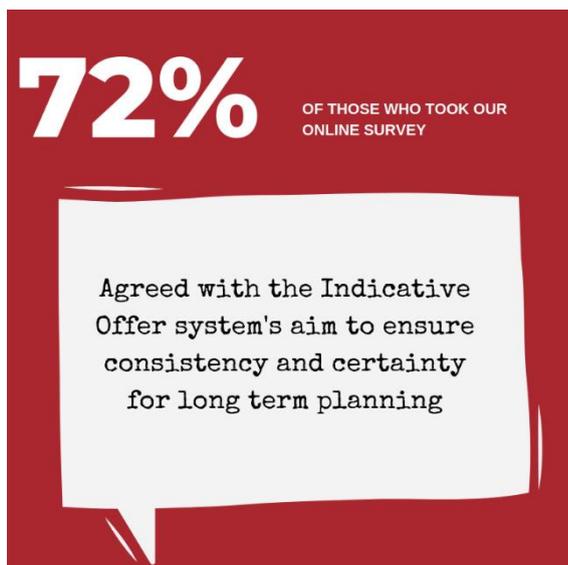
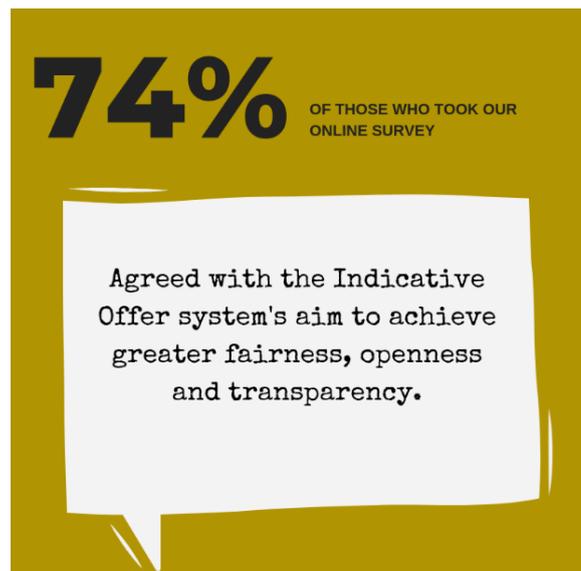
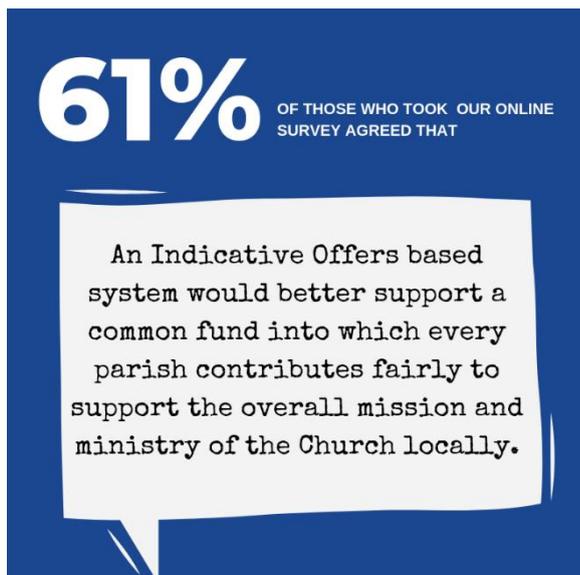
Over 100 submissions were received, either via our online survey or the consultation email.

The Finance team also engaged in many one-to-one conversations and held numerous PCC meetings to help parishes discuss the proposal.

Each parish was also sent an individual calculation to show what their suggested offer might be under the new formula-based system.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Through these engagements, the consultation indicated an overwhelmingly positive level of support for a formula-based system.



POSITIVE COMMENTS INCLUDED

- "In principle we agree with the proposal, which if adopted by all the parishes in the Diocese, will create a fair and more transparent funding model."
- "The idea of a set formula sounds a good one."
- "I believe that the introduction of indicative offers is a helpful step forward and takes us back to a more structured method based somewhat upon affordability for each parish."

LESS POSITIVE COMMENTS INCLUDED

- "It has a complete disregard for the local ministry of a church. It also vastly over estimates the support the diocese has as a credible vehicle for Christian giving."
- "My major concern with the formula is that it does not encourage good stewardship of church funds. It feels like a 50% tax by the diocese."
- "Allow parishes to offer what they think they can contribute. Don't put complicated formulas in the method."

YOUR KEY CONCERNS

A key concern focused on the Wider Diocesan Mission element of the formula being calculated against 50% of 'residual net income'. Others included:

- Mission and charitable giving being excluded from the calculation
- The definition of 'capital' being deducted – e.g. repairs, replacement and decorations
- Concern over long parish vacancies
- Applying a blanket 2.5% inflation factor
- Being based on just one year, i.e. 2017 to start
- The risk to the Diocese of a potentially ever-reducing residual income figure
- Will it be open to manipulation though the use of restricted funds?

There was also a general desire for more communication and for story-sharing about what Diocesan Support Costs are and what the money set aside for Wider Diocesan Mission is being spent on.

SO HOW HAS THE PROPOSAL BEEN CHANGED?

Having listened to the responses and in order to address the concerns raised, we are suggesting that the proposal should be amended in the following ways:

- Retain the formula calculate the Wider Diocesan Ministry cost against **10% of Gross Income (unrestricted)**
- Base calculations on a 3-year rolling average – building up over the next two years - starting with 2017; then adding 2018; and then adding 2019;
- Allow parishes to maintain their current offer level, but with a 2.5% inflation for 2 years from 2020 to stabilise transition;
- For parishes in long interregnums (over 12 months) – some deduction to be considered in consultation with Archdeacon;
- Curates – whilst deployment will be decided by the Bishop, parishes who receive a training curate will be invited to contribute towards the cost;
- Ministry Costs will include a charge at a 15% rate of a Whole Time Equivalent stipend for Licensed Self-Supporting Ministers acting as Incumbents or Associate Ministers to cover the cost of selection, training and ministerial oversight.

"Adapting the formula and the proposal in these ways should make the Indicative Offer simpler to calculate and understand. The church membership should also find it easier to appreciate what is being asked of them in terms of a financial contribution and why."

Rev Richard Williams, Finance Director

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

As has been endorsed by the consultation, we consider that an Indicative Offers system is the right way forward. As we read in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we recognise that we are all part of one body and dependent upon each other. We all have a part to play.

These are important changes and so we would welcome your comments.

You can contribute your views via our online questionnaire at:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/onemissionmanyplaces or you can email your thoughts to: consultation@rochester.anglican.org

By post to: One mission, many places consultation, Diocese of Rochester, St Nicholas Church, Boley Hill, Rochester, ME1 1SL.

This additional consultation will close on **8 March 2019** and a final decision taken by Diocesan Synod in June 2019.

THANK YOU