These pages present a framework for conversations within the Deanery at Parish & Benefice level and within groupings which seek to become MMUs.
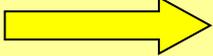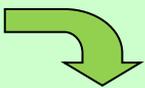
The first column (Blue) recites the Diocesan criteria for consideration.

The second column (Pink) translates these into questions each Parish or Benefice should be asking, in order to ensure a mission-focussed ministry.

The third column (Yellow) is intended to assist discussion at proposed MMU level, exploring the opportunities for enhanced effectiveness.

The final column (Green) is intended to assist in bringing the grouping to the point of readiness to become an MMU.

It is unrealistic to expect that an all-encompassing vision and strategy could be quickly published by a proposed MMU to satisfy all criteria. We invite Parishes and Benefices to work through the questions, to the point where there is confidence in declaring a readiness to proceed; and then produce a short paper based on the questions in the fourth column to support a formal request to become a MMU.

MMU Formation Criteria	Parish / Benefices Questions	MMU parish grouping questions	MMU Formation questions
Mission and Ministry Vision			
A clear focus on mission (which takes account of context, demography, schools, businesses etc)	What is the vision for mission and ministry of the parish in its setting and context? What are your mission priority areas?	What similarities / differences are there in parish vision and mission priorities? How do these affect the shaping and dynamics of the MMU structure?	What strategies exist and need to develop to ensure effective mission across the MMU to all sectors of the community?
Note on Mission priorities	A Mission Priority Area is: • a planned (or existing) housing estate that isn't really being served by any of the parishes or one that straddles several parish boundaries. • a people group such as young people or men or families that many Churches struggle to attract. • a social need that is particular to your deanery and that could be met in some way if the Churches worked more closely together. • a community drawn from a different cultural or ethnic background, some of whom may be Christians • a Church which is really struggling, perhaps unable to pay its share and with an ageing and dwindling congregation, or making a low impact in terms of average attendance relative to the size of the population. • a successful Church on the threshold of breakthrough to higher numbers or planting out. • a local FE College, Secondary School or cluster of Primary Schools		Each unit should identify its Mission Priorities. How will you identify and develop ministry in your Mission Priority Areas? Which of these mission priority areas will you focus on first? What additional resource do you need? Money for this could be available from something like the Mission Opportunity Fund, or from the Interim Ministry scheme.

Growth in every congregation and ministry (i.e. this is not an initiative for closing congregations or buildings, unless they are no longer sustainable or appropriate for future mission and ministry opportunities)	How does the parish vision set out initiatives for planned and sustained growth?	What opportunities are there for parishes to collaborate in developing planned and sustained growth across the MMU?	Or you could use one of your own posts; or raise money for the post yourselves.

What steps may need to be taken to ensure no congregation is left behind? |
| Working with all ages and with particular reference to children, young people schools and young adults | How 'all age focussed' is the parish vision for mission and growth? | What opportunities are there to share experience/ expertise /spiritual gifting to encourage mission and ministry that reach all ages? | |
| Pioneer and mixed-economy working, including formation of new congregations where appropriate | Are 'fresh expressions' and the reaching of new 'communities' part of the parish vision for mission and growth | What can parishes learn from one another in the developing of fresh expressions/ new faith communities? | |

Mission and Ministry Resourcing

Collaboration between clergy and lay people, within and between units (subject to any limits of legislation/resolutions)	Do current clergy and lay relationships encourage collaborative working in single parish and multiple parish settings? If not what strategy do we need to ensure closer participation and collaboration in ministry together?	What initial steps could be made to encourage MMU parishes, their leaders, representatives to begin a process of collaboration in the development of an MMU?	To what extent is there a common understanding of ministry within the proposed MMU?
Avoid abuses of power so that the distinctive, God-given charisms of each church community can be appropriately affirmed.	Are Parish/Benefice leadership structures healthy and appropriate to the context?	How can we affirm one another in working together as people and parishes - distinctive but one body in Christ?	How can we affirm one another in worker together as an MMU without losing our identity but seeking to be the Body of Christ?
Sustainability in terms of ministry and mission resources.	Is the parish vision for mission and ministry regularly reviewed to ensure its sustainability?	How might parishes come together to create a more sustainable vision for mission and ministry together?	How will we ensure that we develop the MMU to be a sustainable and growing entity?

Mission and Ministry Sustainability and affordability

Affordability for the needed stipendiary clergy and paid lay staff, inc working expenses of all ministers/employees (within the diocesan framework for mutual support)	How robust are parish finances? Is there a regular accountability to good stewardship and giving of time, talent and money?	How might parishes collaborate in supporting one another? What imaginative and creative sharing of resources could be developed together?	What specific resources might be shared within the proposed MMU?

Commitment to mutual generosity with their God-given resources within and beyond the unit.	What does the parish understand by mutual generosity? In the light of the new parish share scheme, how can mutual generosity be developed as a key principle in the Parish	In the light of the new parish share scheme, how can mutual generosity be developed as a key principle in the collaboration of parishes?	In the light of the new parish share scheme, how can mutual generosity be developed as a key principle in the gathered MMU setting?
What is the initial ministry plan – including deployment of stipendiary, non-stipendiary, ordained, and lay ministers; how the sustainable minimum number of stipendiary clergy will be reached by 2025; and how vocations of all sorts are to be discerned and developed.	How are vocations being sought and celebrated in the parish?	What do we need to do as an MMU to ensure the church continues to grow? What will parishes do together to ensure vocations of all kinds are developed and the God given gifts of the people are realised and released?	What potential problems can you identify in the period leading up to 2025? In the light of less ordained ministerial resource being available, what strategy will we need to apply to ensure a sustainable ministry?

Agreement and Commissioning

MMU Functionality

The Unit Name (e.g. partnership, network, community, covenant, commonwealth, alliance. Thus 'unit' remains an internal organisational word)			There are a variety of different organisational words that might be appropriate to describe your MMU. Obviously, the different 'titles' are more than just a play on words, in that they describe differing relationships. Which of these words best describes how you understand the relationship between the parishes in the proposed MMU at this present time? Which of these words best describes how you envisage the relationship between the parishes in the proposed MMU once the process has been completed? What is your preferred name for your proposed 'Unit'?
The initial structure(s) for the unit			What shape/ formation or structure will fulfil support the MMU vision?

How the Unit will function. This will include aspects such as ways of working collaboratively in and between congregations; allocation of responsibilities and accountabilities; relationship between mission and ministry leadership and PCC's; and how will disagreements be resolved?			The functionality of the MMU will depend upon strong, collaborative, servant hearted, mutually respective development of relationships between parishes and congregations. How will these (and others locally developed) be applied to ensure the MMU flourishes and prospers?

Unit leadership and team ministry

How the Unit will be led, including issues of authority, representation and collegiality.			What leadership style will be helpful for the flourishing of collegiality and widest possible representation of tradition and ministry?
Unit Leader			Who will lead the unit now, and how will this person or persons be chosen now and in the future, supported and encouraged in this important ministry?
Who will be the local lead person for every worshipping congregation. This person would be part of a ministry leadership team. Further guidance will be offered but these people - ordained or lay - should be chosen with regard to their particular gifts and rootedness in the community. It is expected that they will have a missional as well as pastoral perspective.			Who will be the lead person for each 'parish' in the unit now and how will this person or persons be chosen now and in the future, supported and encouraged in this important ministry? Based on Mission priorities and local pastoral ministerial needs, who will be included in the Ministry Leadership Team?

Administration

How the Unit will be administered. Effective administration to release other ministers for mission and pastoral care is essential and is likely to be bigger than a traditional parish secretary role.			What options might be considered to ensure the effective administration of the MMU and the releasing of gifts to be better used in parishes and MMU?