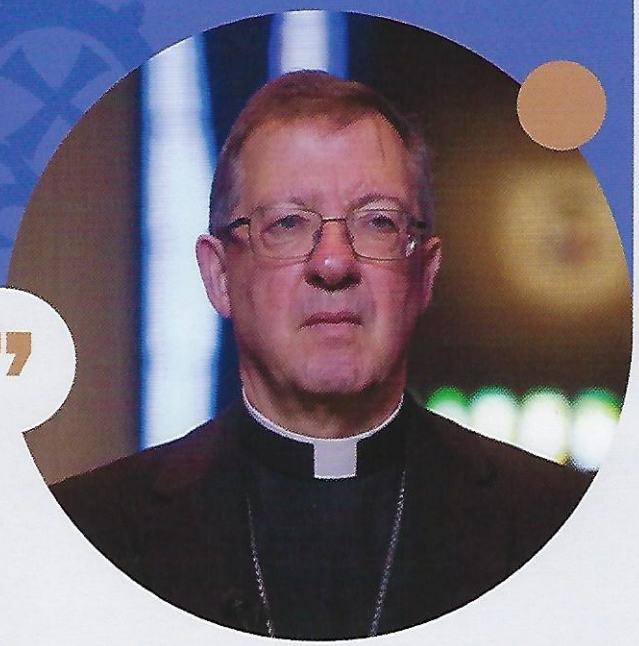
PARISH DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY

Towards the future with hope



"The Church exists to proclaim Jesus Christ to all peoples."

This is our mission. Christ loves us, has saved us, walks with us and offers the hope of eternal life.

We are pilgrims of hope who wish to share the hope of Jesus Christ with others. I invite you to help shape the future of the Church for the Archdiocese.

The mission today, for tomorrow, needs realistic and forward-looking structures because people have moved, the cost of maintaining too many buildings is prohibitive and the number of clergy has reduced.

We need the means that help us proclaim Jesus Christ to all people and help them to participate in the life and mission of the Church. This is the calling of all the baptised.

Our hope in Jesus Christ, our culture of vocation, and our participation in the life of the Church will then foster faith in the family, attract more people to serve the Church as priests and religious, and enable all members of the Church to proclaim Jesus to the world and serve others through faith in action.

Archbishop John Sherrington, April 2025

Archdiocese of Liverpool

Questions for your reflection:

1. **What stands out for (or excites) you in what the Archbishop said?**
2. **What ideas for the future come to the forefront of your mind?**
3. **What worries you as you imagine the future?**

Introduction

The Sefton Inland Deanery faces significant pastoral, financial, and structural challenges. However, this moment also presents a profound opportunity: to reshape our mission, renew our presence, and re-imagine how we serve the people of God.

Two proposals have been put forward to guide discernment about the future of the deanery. This document reframes those proposals through a ***vision-first approach***, placing sharing the good news of Jesus, mission, evangelisation, the worship of God and presence to the community at the heart of any structural decisions.

VISION

A MISSION-DRIVEN DEANERY/PARISH(ES)

The guiding vision for the future calls us to:

- shift from a building-centred mindset to a mission-centred practice
- organise ourselves around what enables evangelisation and ministry, not what maintains structures
- create hubs that allow us to invest resources in evangelisation, accompaniment, youth ministry, social outreach, and effective administration

The vision asks a simple but transformative question:

How can we best serve the people in our communities?

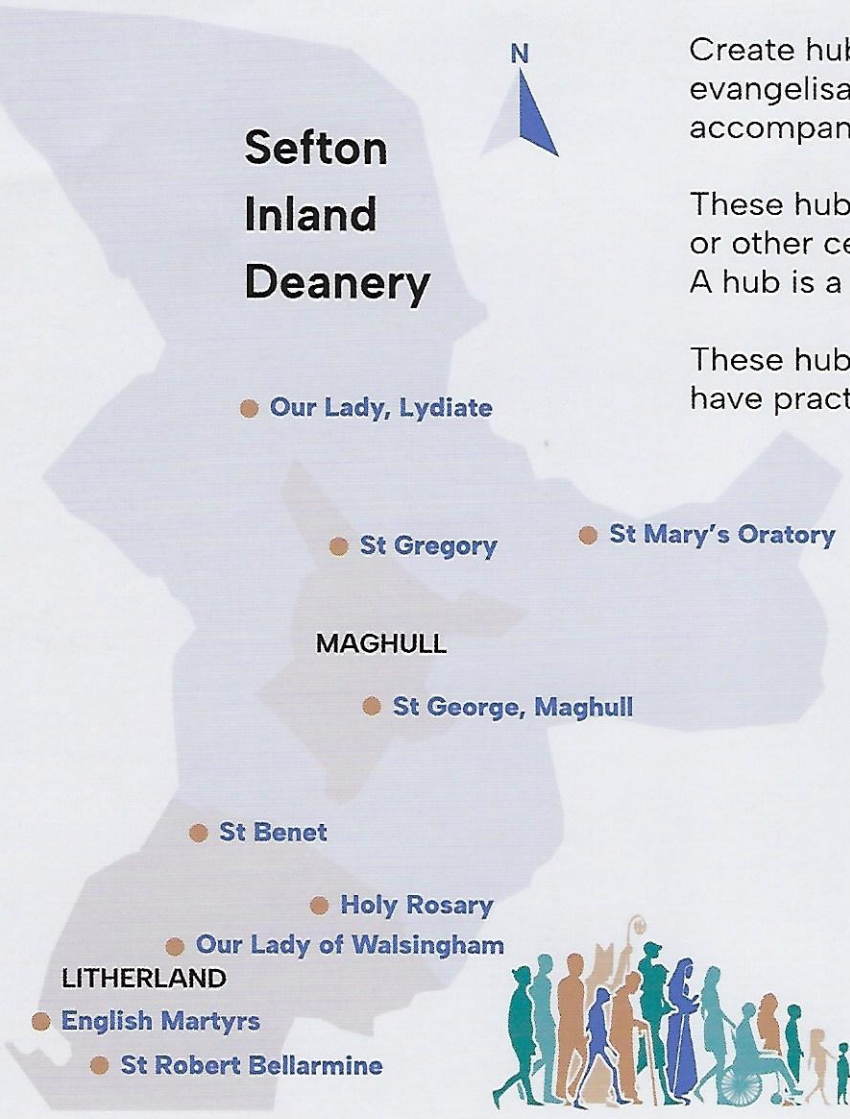
– and not –
"Which buildings must we preserve?"
Everything else flows from this shift.

Preamble - Create hubs across a revised parish structure

Create hubs for administration, evangelisation, youth ministry, accompaniment, and social outreach.

These hubs may be in church buildings or other central community locations. A hub is a centre of mission or service.

These hubs will enable a new vision to have practical shape.



Why this inspires the vision:

- it is proactive, not reactive
- it prioritises mission over maintenance
- it enables coordinated ministry across the deanery
- it supports sustainable staffing and lay employment
- it frees us to evaluate which buildings actually serve the mission

PROPOSAL ONE
One Single Parish

Summary:

Unify the deanery into one parish. Conduct a review to reduce the number of churches from 7 to 4 or 5 to release funds for mission and lay employment.

Why this structure fits the vision:

- it allows the hub model to operate seamlessly
- it avoids duplication of leadership, finance functions, and committees
- it creates one strategy, one mission plan, one financial approach
- it enables the whole deanery to act as one missionary body

PROPOSAL TWO
Two Parishes

Summary:

Divide the deanery into two parishes:

1. St Catherine's, St George, Holy Rosary
2. St Benet, Our Lady of Walsingham, St Josephine Bakhita

Conduct a review to reduce the number of churches from 7 to 4 or 5 to release funds for mission and lay employment.

Why this structure fits the vision:

- it allows the hub model to operate
- it avoids duplication of leadership, finance functions, and committees
- it creates a shared strategy, a mission plan, a sustainable financial approach
- it enables better local access and belonging

Deanery boundary questions

1. **Are the Deanery boundaries the most natural groupings?**
2. **Would some parishes be better in a different Deanery?**
3. **Should all three Sefton Deaneries become one Deanery?**

Through the lens of the proposals, boundaries should be discerned not primarily by historical lines but by:

- natural community patterns
- school and family networks
- demographic needs
- public transport and accessibility
- existing collaborations
- realistic ministry capacity

A mission-first approach may support adjusting boundaries or re-imagining how they function.

Rationale for change

Across the proposals, several core needs are repeatedly identified:

- **too many buildings** for the number of priests, parishioners, volunteers, and finances
- **insufficient investment** in evangelisation, youth work, and lay staff
- **fragmented structures** that inhibit coordinated mission
- **mismatch** between where people gather and how the Church is currently structured

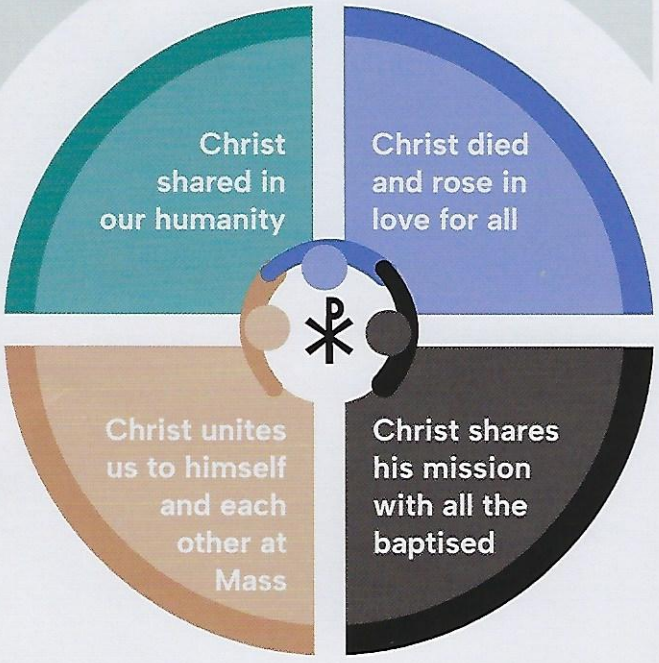
Releasing funds by reducing buildings and reorganising parish structures is not an end in itself – it is a means of creating **a sustainable, outward-facing, mission-driven Church.**

Invitation to participate

This summary is offered for ***prayerful reflection, discussion & consultation.*** Your insights, concerns, and hopes are essential as we discern the best way forward together.

CLOSING DATE:
20th September 2026

forms.office.com/e/1491xJJpV7



Archdiocese of Liverpool

liverpoolcatholic.org.uk

Methods of consultation:

Over the next few months your parish will be organising a number of ways to discern and consult on the two proposals. This process is your opportunity to pray about these proposals and have your say.

- **Online form – you can respond to the proposals using the QR code or link**
- **Open meetings held in your parish/schools (which will offer opportunities to listen to one another and discuss)**
- **Response boxes in your church for paper replies**
- **Email response directly to the Archdiocese at pds@rcaol.org.uk**

Prayer

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we share together in the life of our parish family, we ask you:

Lead us onwards, on the journey of discovering your dream for us;

Lead us outwards, in love and solidarity, cherishing each other and every other;

Lead us upwards, to experience more intensely your inexpressible life;

Lead us inwards, deeper into the mystery of what you have created us to be.