

13 March 2026

## **Update for General Synod members on the National Church Governance Measure**

Dear General Synod Member,

Members will be aware from the report and questions at the last Synod that the Legislative Committee decided to withdraw the draft National Church Governance Measure [GS2360] from consideration by the Ecclesiastical Committee. The Legislative Committee has now decided that it will not be seeking to reintroduce the draft Measure to the Synod at its July 2026 meeting.

This is necessarily a summary message to inform Synod members of the position, and to ensure you hear it officially first. The Legislative Committee will of course bring a fuller report on this to the Synod at the next group of sessions.

The decision by the Legislative Committee comes in response to the position taken by the Ecclesiastical Committee in December which deemed that the Measure was not expedient, setting out four areas of concern: safeguarding arrangements; the scope of the delegated (order making) powers; aspects of the financial accountability framework; and the breadth of the Church of England National Services' (CENS) charitable purposes.

Following an informal meeting with members of the Ecclesiastical Committee in January to explore these issues, members of that Committee made clear that their primary concern was in relation to safeguarding, which it felt should be prioritised ahead of further engagement with Governance reform.

At a meeting in early March the Legislative Committee considered two options: (i) to seek to reintroduce the Measure to the General Synod with amendments, or (ii) report on its withdrawal at this stage.

In light of the Ecclesiastical Committee's expressed position, and the absence of clarity that amendments would resolve its concerns, the Committee concluded that reintroduction at this time would not be a simple or straightforward matter.

### **Next steps**

The Legislative Committee will report on the withdrawal of the Measure to Synod in July 2026. The option for the draft Measure to be reintroduced and amended by Synod remains, although the earliest realistic date at which this could happen is February 2027. That level of delay could be damaging for the work of the NCIs.

The Legislative Committee also hopes that National Church bodies will reflect upon what changes can be affected by non-legislative and other routes without the requirement for statute to give effect to the policy intention which the Synod has overwhelmingly supported.

Whilst this is disappointing news, we respect the decision of the Ecclesiastical Committee which is committed to a constructive scrutiny process and seeks to promote trust in the Church's governance. The trustee bodies affected are now being invited to review potential non-legislative opportunities to progress governance work over the coming months while the work on the future of safeguarding structures is progressed.

**William Nye**

Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council

Secretary General of the General Synod of the Church of England