

Submission to Church Commissioners
New Opportunities Funding
Diocese of Chelmsford
15th October 2007

Within the Diocese of Chelmsford it is expected that we will experience within the period **2004-2020 a 15% population increase**. In this period the current plans are for **124,500 new dwellings in Essex and 75,000 in the East London Boroughs that are within the Diocese¹ producing a diocesan total of about 200,000 new dwellings**. However, these figures are being continually and substantially increased as discussions progress, as will be indicated in this paper. With growth being well above the national average there is an obvious need for additional resources to be made available for the Diocese of Chelmsford if it is to have any hope of fulfilling its mission.

Whilst some of the growth will occur within our existing parishes, **significant new communities** will spring up. The developments will be spread over a number of years but from our long experience of population expansion east of London through generations, we know that for the church to be effective it needs to be in at the beginning, helping to build community and a sense of place and meaning.

Within the Diocese the major new developments are -

- **Stratford City** will result in one of the largest mixed-use developments in the UK for many years to come. The development covers 73 hectares of largely derelict land and will include provision for **7000 homes (commencing in 2007)**; 465,000 sq m of offices; 140,000 sq m of town centre retail facilities, together with local retail facilities; leisure facilities; 2000 hotel rooms with conference facilities; an Education campus (nursery, primary & secondary schools in addition to life-long learning; community facilities); healthcare facilities and a Construction Training Academy. The Eurostar service from St Pancras will stop at Stratford International from 2009 with high speed domestic services commencing in 2010. There are also significant planning applications in the pipeline for **Stratford High Street** (close to the site of the Olympic & Paralympic Games). If all these planning applications are successful – as they are likely to be – the result will be about **7500 new housing units** (this is in addition to those at Stratford City on the other side of the regional station).
- **London Riverside**, in the Borough of Barking & Dagenham, includes Barking Reach with **11,000 homes** planned (see appendix 1) and South Dagenham where **5,000 homes** could be built on land formerly owned by the Ford Motor Company.
- The London **Borough of Havering** has vast reaches of brown field land earmarked for development and will see at least **5,000 homes** on that part of London Riverside.

- **Silvertown Quays** will be another significant development area within the docks – the mixed-use developments planned for that area include a spectacular surfing centre, an extreme sports complex, a 14,500 sq m “world-class aquarium” and London’s largest permanent “silver sand” beach. Plans for Silvertown Quays also include **5000 new homes** (including 20 storey blocks), 7800 sq m of office space and 7600 sq m of flexible workspace. This will all commence in 2007.
- In **Canning Town** there are 1350 homes being demolished and **7000 dwellings** currently being built on the same footprint. Over a thousand of these homes are designated as ‘affordable’ to allow Key Workers or ‘essential employees’ such as nurses, teachers, police and other, to live in the area – although these homes are being built as a buffer zone between the busy A13 road and the expensive dwellings. With this level of change there is great need for a community worker to help the existing residents of Canning Town and the newcomers to relate to each other and build a new community. (see appendix 2)
- The London **Borough of Redbridge** has a bold vision for Ilford’s future (“Progressive Ilford”). The plan is for new leisure, retail and community facilities, and much needed housing over a 30-year period. There are plans for some railway lands to be developed to provide housing and associated facilities. There are also plans for high-rise development to the west of the town centre and medium-rise to the east.
- Redevelopment and regeneration in the London **Borough of Waltham Forest** is focused on five wards, which have been determined as priorities as the Borough develops a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Within the wards the Borough has determined some major projects, for example, the Blackhorse Lane area has been identified as a priority investment area within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor. Here there are plans for 1000 new homes.
- **Colchester** - identified as a Haven Gateway Growth Point and also influenced by the Thames Gateway, Stansted and Olympic site developments, and now the Regional Cities East Partnership, Colchester is currently one of the fastest growing areas of Essex, a close second only to Thurrock. The East of England draft plan 2001 - 2021 plans for **17,300 new houses** which currently centre on five main regeneration projects:
 - **The Garrison in Colchester** - identified as a strategic site in the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 the Garrison is, at £2 billion, potentially the UK’s biggest PFI. 2,600 houses are currently planned, 26% affordable.
 - **North Colchester** - Prominent 250 acre site incorporating a 10,000 seater Community Stadium and leisure complex. Also identified as a strategic site in the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11. Phase 3 with 1,500 new homes, 25% affordable, is about to begin. Potential for 4-5000 new homes.

- **East Colchester** - regeneration of the closed port on the River Colne. 2,100 houses.
 - **Stanway** - out of town retail and housing development. 1,000 houses.
 - **St Botolph's** - regeneration of the east side of the town centre. Mainly retail and business. Formation of a new cultural quarter.
- **Chelmsford** - the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 identifies Greenfield Release Land for **2,350 houses**. The town has recently already outgrown what is manageable for our present parish structure to service
 - **Thurrock** - the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 identifies Wouldham Rd/Commodore Kitchens, Askews Farm, Hillside for **3,690 houses**. The poverty of this area is exasperated by its isolation and so has been awarded an Urban Development Corporation to see through extensive regeneration projects.
 - **Basildon** – is now addressing plans for the regeneration of the town centre and commercial sites around the New Town. For example, the East of England Housing Investment Plan 2008-11 identifies Dunton as having **3,000 new homes** with development.
 - **Southend** has already witnessed the recent impact of the new College/University campus in the heart of the town (the seventh biggest in England) with plans for a massive redevelopment of its town centre. Present levels of deprivation, gridlock and the influx of newcomers are formidable problems for a town on the brink of expansion.
 - **Epping Forest** has plans for **6,800 new homes** spread across the district in an area where the church is having to consider the loss of 4 posts due to our budget reductions!
 - **Harlow North** is planning for a population increase of **at least 20,000** spreading across the boundary with our neighbour, St Alban's Diocese. Discussions are just beginning as to how this will be handled, with hopes for a Church School Academy.

In addition to the increases in population and housing there will also be **major developments in employment and communications.**

109,000 new jobs are expected in Essex alone during the current planning period¹. Major new employment areas are -

- **London Gateway Port Development.** This project is to build a major new deep water 4 berth container port on the site of the old Shell Haven oil refinery and the site is expected to generate **14,000 new jobs** in port and associated industries. Plans are to begin building very soon.

¹ East of England Plan Examination in Public

- **Harwich – Bathside Container Port** will also be a 4 berth deep water port.
- **Haven Gateway** - The East of England Plan gives **20,300 new jobs** for the Essex part of the Haven Gateway
- The new **retail and commercial area of Stratford City** is scheduled to be completed for the end of 2011 or early 2012 and from 2009 the Cross Channel high speed trains will be stopping at the new International Station in the middle of this area. If we are to have a viable Christian presence in this major commercial and transport hub, plans need to be in place within the next 3 years. There are significant hopes of appointing workers to create a Christian presence here – but as yet, no funding.
- In the **Royal Docks** area there are already significant developments in place, including the ExCel conference complex, London City Airport, the University of East London Docklands Campus, and various residential developments are in place as for example, Western Beach, Eastern Quay, Britannia Village, Barrier Point, Tradewinds, Gallions Lock, Capital East and Royal Quay. Our present mission outreach is struggling amidst this new and overwhelming environment.
- Within our Diocese, the **2012 Olympics**, at its peak period of construction in 2010, will employ **20,000 construction workers**. A chaplain is already on site and elaborate plans are afoot for the coverage of the Games themselves.

Intense development is already visible. There are already numerous blocks of flats under construction, invariably 20 stories or more, along the A11 between Stratford and Bow and around the Bow Back Rivers, or in the Lower Lea Valley. Prices are high compared with traditional east London homes, yet still competitive with costs elsewhere in London. In and around Thurrock the same story is evident. Across Colchester the speed and extent of regeneration building is staggering – at the rate of one new street every month in the parish of Mayland alone! All this is exceptionally disruptive to the present population.

Timing of developments is always uncertain. Planning Permission is usually given for a 5 year period, coupled with a business plan demonstrating that the developers are able to develop a given site. However, although major schemes including Stratford City and Silvertown Quays will take several years to complete, developers of both are scheduled to **move onto site in 2007**. Indeed, both schemes involve extensive Section 106 agreements, hence comprise more than mere housebuilding. Meanwhile, some smaller schemes for blocks of flats seem to take months rather than years to tower suddenly into the sky.

Transport improvements will underpin much of this regeneration, and will very significantly impact our area which is so dependent on commuting and

the transport service industry. **Crossrail** has recently been given the green light, though with a completion date of 2017. Designed to increase the capacity of London transport by 10%, the counterparts include the Regional Metro (RER) lines of Paris, or perhaps Thameslink, with surface trains travelling underground across London. Crossrail will link Canary Wharf to Liverpool Street and Stratford in just four stops, essentially making the growing business districts on the eastern side of London much more accessible, opening the area to ever greater population inflows. Other notable developments include a Development Application for **London City Airport**, to increase the number of flights from approximately 7,500 at present, to **12,500 per annum**. Already, London City Airport offers over 30 destinations, and is directly served by the Docklands Light Railway, in turn linking to the Jubilee Line at Canning Town. The **Docklands Light Railway (DLR)** is privately operated (by Serco), on behalf of Transport for London (TfL). The extension from King George V station (North Woolwich; near to London City Airport) to Woolwich is already under construction, due to open in 2009. The next extension, into Stratford City / Stratford International station, is due to open in 2010, with direct links to ExCeL exhibition centre, London City Airport and Canning Town. Beyond that, detailed plans for extension into Barking Reach and Rainham marshes are being drawn up.

Overall, transport is a crucial factor, since it will enable new residents in London Boroughs within our Diocese readily to reach the growing business districts of Canary Wharf and also Stratford. Developments elsewhere in Thames Gateway may be slower, reflecting poor journey times into the business centres. By contrast, many new developments in Newham will be perhaps only 20 minutes from Canary Wharf or Liverpool Street. *Because of the intense importance of London to the growth within the whole of our Diocese, these transport and infrastructural developments will impact our area in ways of which we can only now dream.*

Diversity is also key. If London is a world City, then our population now reflects the world. Newham is arguably the most ethnically diverse Borough in London, or even the world. Images of large populations from south Asia are understandable: Green Street, Upton Park, is a major international shopping centre for` jewellery and food. Indeed, Newham now hosts one of the largest overseas populations from Sri Lanka. Yet the Sikh population is now only 2% of the total; Gants Hill has become a popular destination. Residents with family roots in Pakistan have been moving out to Ilford, as have people from south India to the southern parts of Ilford. Families with roots in Bangladesh have continued to move into Newham from Tower Hamlets, though this ethnic group is also moving eastwards. Newer migrants from Poland and Lithuania have arrived in Newham; comprising perhaps 7% of the school population. Yet Africans probably represent the largest single ethnic group; often highly educated and with professional occupations. All these communities are now moving eastward across our diocese, offering us unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

Two key points stand out. Firstly, **religious faith is more important** in such places as Newham than for the population as a whole. In the 2001 Census, 91% of respondents in Newham claimed to believe in God. Secondly,

the fastest growing groups (eastern Europe, Africa) are Christian, replacing earlier waves of migration comprising Moslems Sikhs and Hindus, who are now moving in large numbers into the rest of our diocese. Among members of St Mark's Church, Beckton, are a Barrister (and former MP), a retired Airline Pilot, a qualified Accountant, plus several more with professional occupations. Yet these people are all Africans! Indeed, more than one half of the Congregation is now from Africa, as is the Vicar. In other Churches, people born in the West Indies are also well represented.

Summary

We trust that the foregoing description of some of the regeneration and development in our Diocese, with its varied implications, makes it very evident that the Diocese of Chelmsford is exceptionally impacted by this overwhelming increase in housing, commercial and retail development. It is doubtful if any other diocese is facing the rate of build and international profile which the regeneration and development in our Diocese is creating. We are a strategic Diocese but being already under-resourced, our aspirations and plans for Mission are at risk of failure if no new and additional funding is available to face the disproportionate challenges facing our Diocese.

Essex and East London have experienced staggering population increases generation after generation but the scale of change now forecast for this Diocese is beyond anything the United Kingdom has experienced for at least the last fifty years.

Appendix

The pages which follow offer examples of Diocesan Plans for Strategic Mission in the areas of development listed above.

EXAMPLE 1.

BARKING RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Deanery is hoping to make the Barking Riverside development area, south of the A13, a deanery project. This will be ecumenical. The Salvation Army development officer (an ECCIC workplace and community chaplain) is in post in the parish licensed by the Bishop to work alongside the vicar of the parish. Currently discussions are ongoing with the Methodist Circuit, possibly with

some funding for housing being available. The Vicar is the local Faith Forum representative on the Borough regeneration team.

The Borough is to make four worship centres available in the community complexes and the Christian churches will be allocated one and possibly two. This facility will need to be furnished and equipped as an office and worship space.

Christ Church is the only Christian worship site on the current housing estate and will be the base for the beginning phase of the outreach work. The Vicar and chaplain serve on many of the local bodies such as the Police Safer Neighbourhood team, the Borough Neighbourhood Management Team and other service providers such as the previous 'SureStart' facilities. The 'Network Group' that comprises all these players is considering a mobile office site (white transit or small bus) that can serve the Advice centre (Matrix accredited church facility), church, police and borough officials as a contact point on the new development.

Previous developments have led to isolated pockets of people with too few facilities to evolve a sense of community and have alienated the older housing estate community. One of the vital functions of this work would be to break down some of the barriers between the old and new communities. A new post at Christ Church, licensed to the deanery would be a great boon to this work.

The estate is one of the most deprived in East London and has very little in the way of resources (PR of 35), and is largely aged white or migrant population. It is becoming very ethnically diverse and is in the area where the BNP have made large electoral inroads. It is an area that has significant needs but few resources.

EXAMPLE 2

The Job Advertisement which follows offer an example of their work of parishes in these areas of development.

CANNING TOWN & CUSTOM HOUSE

'COMMUNITY BRIDGEBUILDER'

St. Luke's Church & Newham Deanery are seeking to appoint a suitably qualified priest or lay person to build links between the existing communities and the newly built parts of Canning Town and Custom House. The role would seek to prevent the 'new' and 'old' parts of the community, in terms of the people who live there, being distinct from each other and unable to relate to each other. This has happened in other local regeneration areas such as the Isle of Dogs.

Canning Town and Custom House is the largest ever regeneration project to be carried out by a Local Authority, rather than by a regeneration agency,

within the UK. The Regeneration of this community is a bigger project than the Olympics. The person appointed would build upon the good links that exist with the 'Canning Town & Custom House Regeneration Project' (Newham) and the 'London Thames Gateway Development Corporation' (Central Government) who are the Planning Authority for some of the area.

This role would seek to offer a focus for mission goals and community cohesion, as expressed in St. Luke's Parish Vision. We want to enable the powerless and powerful, who by and large will form two distinct communities of 'old' and 'new', to live in harmony and to mutual benefit. Over the next 10 years an estimated 10,000 new people will move into this community. We want someone to help local churches offer the hope of the Gospel to all within a dramatically changing area. In effect, this role is about building truly sustainable communities where faith is an important part of the rich mix. The person appointed would be based at St. Luke's Church and would be Licensed to Newham Deanery as they undertake this important mission and ministry opportunity for the church.

EXAMPLE 3

THE ABBEYFIELD COMMUNITY PROJECT

What is the AbbeyField Community Project?

It is a Christian ecumenical project centred on the major new housing development of Abbeyfield, just south of Colchester town centre. This is ex garrison land that is being vacated by the army as they move to new purpose built barracks further from the town. The project, involving five local congregations, has been able to purchase a Community House on the new estate in September 2006 and a Methodist deacon has moved in to begin a 'presence ministry' in the emerging community. The house is being used as an initial base with the vision to 'seed' a variety of community groups and services alongside worship opportunities. There are fairly advanced plans for one of the ecumenical partners to secure a lease on the use of the Garrison Theatre to run larger events and establish a regular worshipping community and ACP (AbbeyField Community Project) would have full access to share this as well.

The Vision

There has been a long held dream among Christians in the locality that the church could respond proactively to the building of this vast new housing estate which stretches from almost the centre of Colchester town right to the very outskirts. So often the church has tried to play catch up, but for once we could be in there right from the beginning.

ACP has been able to respond very quickly to a unique set of circumstances. The United Reformed Church sold a redundant church in Colchester and

indicated its willingness to reinvest some of the proceeds in new mission initiatives in the area. Through their generosity we have been able to purchase one of the first houses to be built on the Malborough Estate with a meeting room large enough to seed some initial community projects.

The Methodist Circuit have, at the same time, offered to release their Deacon, who has a special interest in pioneer ministry, to give three years of her time to the project. In practise about 18 months has been spent with the practical details of setting the project up and the pioneer work among the new residents is only really just beginning. It has become clear that the original three year time frame is unrealistic and that five years will be needed to get the project onto a stable footing. The extra money will enable the employment of the community worker working for the project to be extended by two years to the full five years.

The Anglican Church has contributed £7000 to equipping the house and adapting it so that it can be both a home for the deacon and a usable community space. This money was raised largely by the deanery. There was also an important contribution from the Mission Fund.

The building blocks are in place. The vision is to see the pioneer work grow and prosper. The project involves churches of different denominations, some of whom do not have a long history of being in partnership, working together. There has been a lot of positive support from local council and councillors, developers and the army garrison itself who are all keen on partnerships working to create good community. The project is also able to share its learning with the wider church, particularly other community initiatives in regeneration areas. It is probably fair to say that it is already something of a flagship project among the Methodist and URC denominations.

There are risks. Not everything is clearly worked out. That is always going to be the case with pioneers. But the potential benefits are great, not just for Abbeyfield, but for other similar regeneration areas, of which there are many throughout the diocese at the moment.

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