

1st February 2025

9b Questions under Standing Orders

Question received from the Revd Douglas Wren, Powder Deanery

Given the significant amount of money allocated in the Diocesan budget to clergy housing, what steps will the Diocesan Secretary be taking to ensure that the new contract will deliver all that is required as well as providing a high level of satisfaction from those living in parsonages?

Answer from Sophie Eddy, Director of Finance and Assets

Thanks for the question Douglas, which is very timely. Under the Diocesan Board of Finance's schedule for the review of contracts, the contract for the provision of property services is due to be retendered this year and that work is in hand.

The Board are working with an experienced independent consultant to support the tender process, this ensures that we consider best practice in the process. The work will also be supported by specialist advice from our legal providers where necessary. As well as professional support the work so far has already been supported by those living in board or parsonage housing.

Whilst the work is facilitated by officers, non-executive members of the Bishops Diocesan Council (BDC) are involved at every stage, BDC as the trustees of the charity will make the final decision on the award of the contract.

Clergy living in board or parsonage housing will contribute to the interview process, and BDC also includes members who live in board or parsonage housing.

One crucial element of the tender process is to ensure that potential providers understand the nature of clergy housing and how this is different in some regards to the private rented sector - this is written into the draft tender documents. Another important element is cost, whilst the Board is cost-sensitive this will not be the only deciding factor, we also look for alignment with our values, the level of service that can be provided, and the resilience of the provider, amongst other factors.

We will be happy to work with you Douglas if you want to engage further.