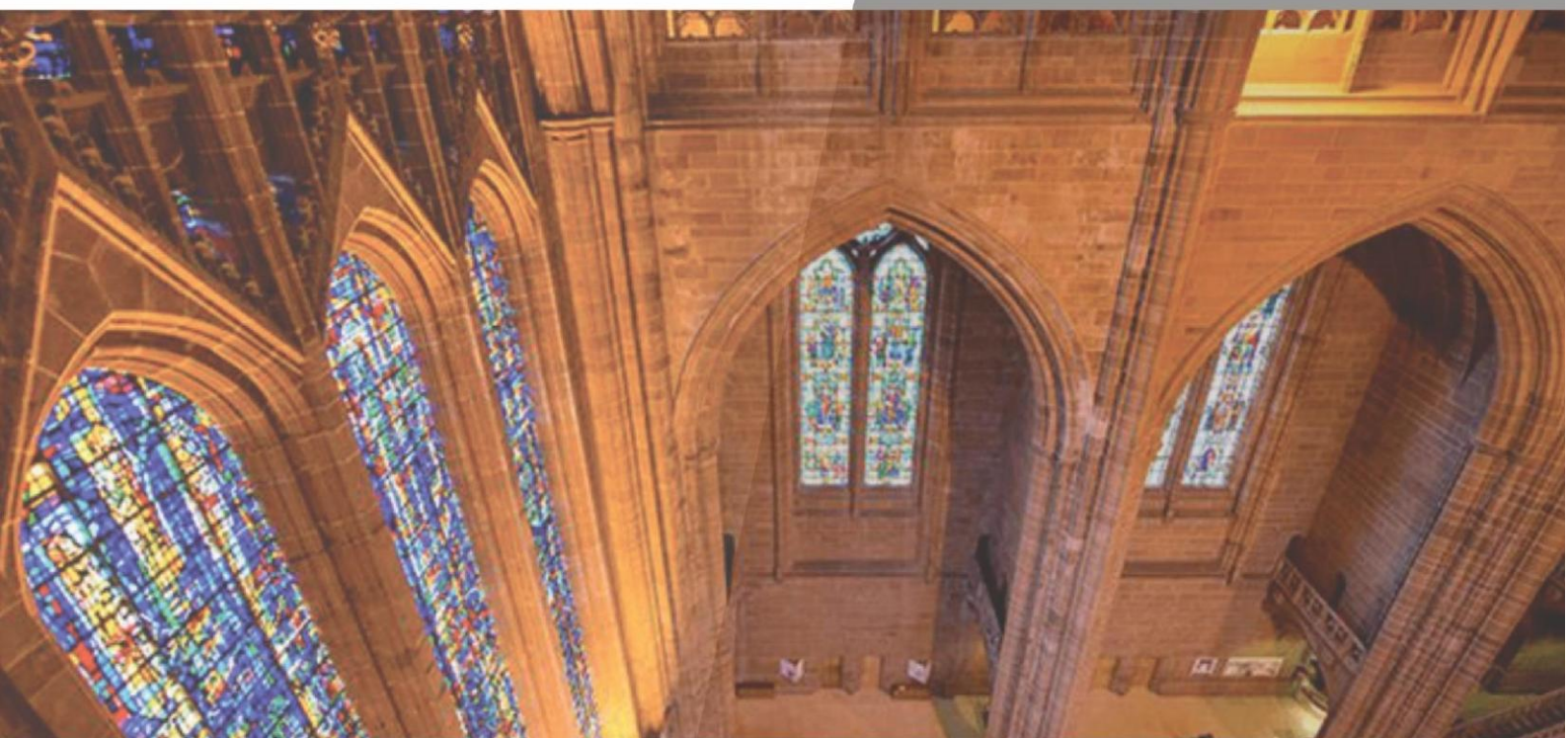


RIGHT BUILDINGS PROCESS

*FIT FOR
MISSION*



Fit for Mission is about courageously addressing the issues that prevent us in mission, and truly releasing people to their God given calling for the sake of the gospel and of
Christ's Church.

Bishop Bev Mason, The Bishop of Warrington.

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Introduction

Welcome to this Right Buildings Process – a process of information gathering and review which aims to help local people make good strategic decisions about buildings as we move towards becoming larger Parishes within the Diocese of Liverpool.

Our Diocese is home to a wide range of church buildings: medieval, Victorian and modern. Whatever kind of building we have, most are well loved by their congregations and often highly valued by their communities. Each of our church buildings presents us with two key challenges:

- The first is the challenge of being a base for worship and mission in the 21st Century; that is what our church buildings are for.
- The second is the on-going challenge of maintaining and repairing the fabric of the building which has been bequeathed to us.

Previously the approach to considering a church building's future has mainly been on a case by case basis, often brought on by a crisis in the parish. The resulting decisions may not be the best possible ones for the wider context of the deanery.

This Right Buildings Process aims to take a step back and focus on what will allow the larger Parish to have a range of buildings that best support mission and ministry in the future. This Process is about good local decision-making only, and doesn't include implementation of the actions, which comes later with additional support from the FfM Team.

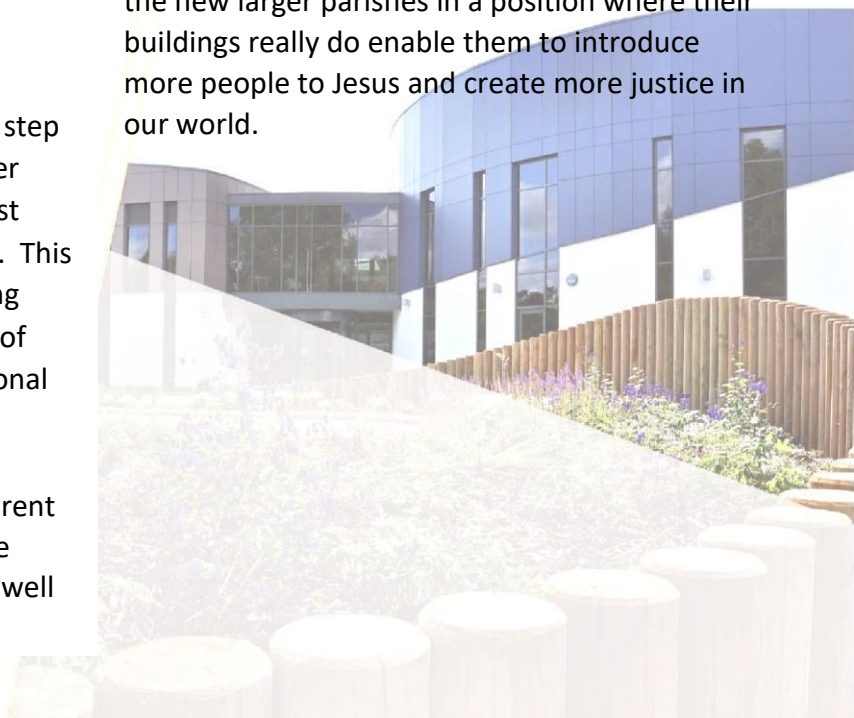
The process aims to be locally-led, transparent and joined up across the larger Parish. The appraisal of the buildings is based on how well they support the following aims:

- *Spiritual & Social – growing and maintaining strong, vibrant and healthy communities of all ages*
- *Environment – welcoming buildings that enhance and protect our natural and built environment*
- *Economic – having buildings that are sustainable and fit for current and near future purposes/context*

These align with the objectives of the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* for sustainable development and the CofE's *Coming Home* report which highlights social and environmental benefit when looking at the use of church assets. These objectives will form the basis of preparing a Right Buildings Proposal for the larger Parish.

This is a big challenge. The larger Parish can't resource all this on its own. The Fit for Mission Team will contain some professionals who are solely there to support the larger Parish in this journey.

We pray that the Right Buildings Process will put the new larger parishes in a position where their buildings really do enable them to introduce more people to Jesus and create more justice in our world.



The Process

This process is led by a locally appointed Right Buildings Team supported and resourced by the FfM Buildings Strategy Manager and the Fit for Mission programme team. In addition, the Bishop's Planning Officer and team will support with any technical and legal aspects.

There are several strands to the Right Buildings process, which focuses on arriving at the Right Buildings proposal:

- Data Collection
- Building-by-building assessments – separate visits to assess the community use and fabric.
- Development Workshops
- The Right Buildings Proposal Report
- Final Consultations
- Right Buildings Proposal agreed for action

The members of the Right Buildings Team are all local, as the success of this process is dependent on local knowledge, good communication, wide-ranging consultation and good and transparent local decision-making. The Right Buildings Teams lead on local consultation and communication; they also oversee the whole process for their larger Parish (see Right Buildings Terms of Reference and Role Descriptions document on the FfM webpage).

The workshops, which develop the recommendations for each building in the parish, draw together the understanding of the Right Buildings Team and the Buildings Strategy Manager, analyse the data and opinions together and jointly agree the conclusions. The Buildings Strategy Manager will lead the building assessments and the writing of the Right Buildings Proposal on behalf of the local Right Buildings Team.



Craig Walker, Buildings Strategy Manager

My career began as an engineer on building sites in the Midlands during the 1980s; this was followed by a 10-year spell teaching construction technology in the UK and overseas.

I then became a Chartered Surveyor shortly before moving home to be closer to my wife's family in Merseyside. This part of my career led me to manage building portfolios for a broad range of businesses and organisations.

Since joining the FfM team in 2022 I have thoroughly enjoyed surveying the buildings, meeting the people who use them and developing an understanding of local church communities.

Data Collection

Data will be gathered by the Right Buildings Team and the Buildings Strategy Manager during the buildings and community visits, as described in Appendix 1.

The data includes:

- Information from Parish Returns, quinquennial inspection reports and other data collected by the Diocese;
- Observations from technical visits by a professional surveyor (the FfM Buildings Strategy Manager) appraising the fabric, facilities, ease of adapting the building and its location;
- Community visits to each church to discuss its life of prayer, worship, fellowship and outreach.

The members of the Right Buildings Team will have access to all the data under consideration and will be encouraged to join the Buildings Strategy Manager when he visits the churches; they may also help gather further information as required.

Buildings Assessment Criteria

The data is then used to score each building against set criteria. The information gathered is analysed by the Buildings Strategy Manager and summarised in draft Building Assessment Reports which rate each building according to the range of criteria set out below. The scores help to guide the workshop conversations, but in themselves are not definitive because the team must consider the interaction of buildings to serve the whole area. The criteria are:

Spiritual & Social – growing and maintaining strong, vibrant and healthy communities across all ages.

1. A building which speaks well of the Christian faith; it looks good and appropriately honours the God we worship.

Questions:

- a. Does the building appear well-used and well-cared for?
- b. Is the appearance of the building at least of the standard that one might expect of public buildings generally?
- c. Are there some easily affordable changes that would make a big difference?

2. A building in which we as the people of God can worship Him - a great place in which to worship God.

Questions:

- a. Does the building currently provide a worshipping congregation of all ages with a sense of the presence of God?
- b. Does the building allow for flexibility and diversity in the worship of God, including a range of worship and musical styles?
- c. Does the building helpfully enable particular traditions or forms of worship?
- d. Does the building allow for worship that is holy and reverent?
- e. Can the building cater for worship by groups of different sizes?
- f. Are there some easily affordable changes that would make a big difference?

3. A building which is well-positioned within the local community and well-located for mission to the surrounding area.

Questions:

- a. Is the building well-located in terms of the main centres of population?
- b. Is the building well-located in relation to shops, workplaces and public facilities (where those aspects are a feature of the parish)?
- c. Is the building prominent and noticeable, or somewhat hidden away?
- d. Does the first view of the church give an obvious understanding that it is open and that something engaging/inspiring takes place there?

4. A building which is easy to get to; access by both private and public transport.

Questions:

- a. Is the walking route to the building safe, clear and well lit?
- b. Is the building within easy reach of local bus routes and/or train stations (where those exist in the parish)?
- c. Is adequate parking space available on site or nearby without causing a nuisance to local residents?

5. A building that supports meeting specific needs in the local community and is well aligned to the community it serves.

Questions:

- a. What are the specific needs of the local community?
- b. Does the building help to meet those needs?
- c. Do any schools use the church building(s) regularly?
- d. Are other churches/community buildings nearby already meeting the needs identified; is this building needed?
- e. Is the building aligned to the feeling/context of the local community, or does it feel distant?
- f. Is the building already well used by community groups other than for services?
- g. Are there opportunities for it to be readily used by other community groups/social enterprises/organisations?

Environment – welcoming buildings that enhance and protect our natural and built environment

6. A building which is welcoming to visitors and newcomers, with an open and inviting appearance to those who don't yet regularly attend services or activities.

Questions:

- a. Are the main entry points into the building clearly marked?
- b. Are the paths well-lit and safe to use?
- c. Can passers-by see into the building or at least be able to tell when the building is in use?
- d. Is it obvious that the church is open and has an active community?
- e. Are the signs outside the building attractive, up-to-date and welcoming?
- f. Once inside the main entrance, is there a welcome area?
- g. Inside, is it obvious where to go with clear signage if needed?
- h. Are there some easily affordable changes that would make a big difference?

7. A building which is comfortable to be in – one that doesn't prevent or distract people from engaging with the activities there.

Questions:

- a. Is the building well heated and ventilated when necessary?
- b. Can the heating and ventilation be adjusted easily throughout the year?
- c. Is the heating 'zoned', allowing different parts to be heated separately?
- d. Is the building well-lit internally and can the lighting be adjusted to create different ambiances?
- e. Is there a range of comfortable seating available in the church?
- f. Are there enough toilets and would you want to use them?
- g. Is the building in good decorative order?
- h. Is there easily affordable potential to significantly improve on these aspects?

8. A building which is accessible to all members of the community - a building that is easy to come into and good to be in.

Questions:

- a. Is there a step-free level or ramp access route with hand-rails from the street to the building?
- b. Can less physically able members of, or visitors to, the church easily access the main areas without the assistance of others?
- c. Is there a good sound system suitable for speaking, singing, instruments?
- d. Is there a working induction loop in the main meeting space?
- e. Are the toilets suitable for children, or is there adaption /assistance equipment readily available?
- f. Are there well-planned facilities for baby changing and an area for parents/carers to feel comfortable with babies/young children?

- g. Can everyone see what is going on in the main meeting space, or is visibility poor from some seating?
- h. Are there some easily affordable changes that would make a big difference?

9. A building which provides the facilities we need to grow and develop as the people of God i.e. it has the facilities required to support and strengthen our life together as part of the Body of Christ.

Questions:

- a. Can the main meeting space accommodate more than one activity format i.e. is the seating fixed or flexible?
- b. Does the building allow people to meet informally, and to have refreshments, following a service or activity?
- c. Does the building provide a range of rooms and spaces for formal and informal gatherings, for small and larger groups of all ages, both for worship and for other activities?
- d. Is there a good kitchen suitable for the provision of light refreshments and/or full meals?
- e. Does the building have enough storage for today's use?
- f. Does the building have areas that could be readily used for additional storage if use increased?
- g. Are there some easily affordable changes that would make a big difference?

10. A building which is appropriately sized for now and the future; the right size to meet both our current needs and our hopes for the next ten years.

Questions:

- a. Does the building happily accommodate the current or planned range of activities?
- b. Would the premises be able to cater for reasonable future numerical growth in the congregation and growth of mid-week programme, or is the building too large, too unwieldy ever to look anything other than rather empty and unwelcoming?
- c. Could justice initiatives readily work from here?
- d. Do the grounds around the buildings allow the possibility of future expansion or redevelopment? [Note: burials/memorial gardens can make this problematic; listed building status also (50% of church buildings in the diocese)].

Economic – having buildings sustainable and fit for current purposes/context

11. A building which is sustainable for the future; can it be easily maintained, readily be made net carbon neutral, and not be an excessive drain financially.

Questions:

- a. Comparatively is the cost of energy and maintenance reasonable for this building?
- b. What is the current status of normal running maintenance (gutters, boiler, roof, statutory checks); is the building in good condition generally?

- c. Is the outstanding cost of quinquennial repairs reasonable?
- d. Would the cost to make this building fit for purpose be reasonable?
- e. Is the building suitable as a net carbon zero project? [Note: Energy Footprint Tool data may help if available – see <https://eft.parishreturns.info/dioceses/22/church/>].

12. A building which encourages service and giving; people will be happy to give their time and money to support and maintain it.

Questions:

- a. Are the current users of the building engaged with its upkeep and keen to invest their money to maintain and improve the building?
- b. Currently, how easy is it to enlist volunteers who provide practical help to upkeep and maintain the building?
- c. Do the people who regularly use the building have a strong sense of identity and commitment to it?
- d. Does the broader local community support fundraising to help maintain and/or upgrade the church?

13. The current income is a sign of sustainability; giving and other income provide evidence for a strong future.

Questions:

- a. Is there evidence of strong financial giving from the worshipping people in this community?
- b. Is there a strong level of other income or reserves available to support the building and its improvement over the long-term?
- c. Would the current congregation(s) be able to make and afford any alterations needed to make the building fit for purpose and net carbon neutral?

14. A building whose location value is high or is about to change; a strong asset value.

Questions:

- a. How likely is it that the current building would be of interest to a party that would change its use, at least partially?
- b. Is the location one that may be sought after for redevelopment?
- c. What is the estimated market value of the building and/ or site?
- d. Are there any future housing or other developments planned that impact the location positively or negatively?

The Scoring Matrix

The Scoring Matrix is given in Appendix 2. Where the word ‘reasonable’ is used in the criteria above the Right Buildings Team will be making a subjective decision against comparative data within the deanery. Outliers will be scored particularly high or low. This way of working allows the team to deal with the inherent complexity of the task.

Please note that the scoring matrix simply gives a way of representing in broad terms the comparative assessment of the buildings. The score does not dictate the outcome. It will not be a case of simply choosing the highest scoring buildings. The team will need to look at the full picture and identify the most appropriate buildings for breadth of worship, mission and ministry that they will need across the larger Parish. The workshops will enable the team to consider all aspects of a building, its current uses and future prospects.

The Right Buildings Workshops

The purpose of the Workshops is, having collected data for each building, to develop Right Buildings Proposal and Recommendations for each church building in the larger Parish.

To use a sporting analogy - we are trying to pick the right “team” of buildings for the Deanery; some buildings will fit into the team better than others to give the best performance of the whole team overall.

Those attending the workshops will be the local Right Buildings Team (RBT) and the Building Strategy Manager (BSM). The Diocesan Buildings Advisor may attend, as well as others with specific expertise, such as from the Net Zero Team.

Although the Right Buildings process is initially led by the Buildings Strategy Manager, members of the Right Buildings Team are encouraged to assist and become as involved as possible from the very beginning. Members of the RBT are welcome to visit the churches when they are surveyed and can be important participants at the community visits. In the latter stages the development of the recommendations are the work of the team, with the BSM lending support at their request.

Key questions the Team ask at the beginning and end of the workshops:

- Are there places that don’t have a building?
- Is the whole of the larger Parish well-served?
- If we have any mission priority areas, are these served by our buildings?

The different characteristics of each deanery will require slightly different approaches to be taken during the workshops and recommendations phases. The process is flexible enough to enable the best outcome for each context.

Prior to the workshops commencing, the RBT will have reviewed the Building Appraisal Reports for all of the properties; they will then compare the comparative strengths/benefits and weaknesses/risks of each church over the medium to long term in relation to the three objectives: Spiritual and Social, Environmental, Economic.

After the members of the RBT have read and analysed the Building Appraisal Reports (BARs) there will normally be two Development Workshops, followed by a concluding Proposals Workshop. The BARs are the starting point for deliberations by the locally appointed Right Buildings Team, who check them critically and amend them if necessary. Then the team uses its local knowledge and experience to develop a well-rounded summary of each church, its community and its relationship with its neighbours and wider deanery. The development of these summaries leads to the Right Buildings Proposal Report which appraises and ranks each church according to their potential for growth and the ease of addressing factors that could lead to them becoming unsustainable.

For each church the level of future viability or sustainability are appraised and classified by the RBT into the following categories:

- (i) 'Low Risk'
 - The building is viable and fit for purpose (or can easily be made so).
 - The building appears to be in the right place.
 - The building has a strong Christian community using and sustaining it financially.
 - The building is or can easily become a "springboard" for mission.
- (ii) 'Medium Risk' – property or its location has potential to support growth of mission if appropriate interventions and/or missional development is committed to.
- (iii) 'High Risk'
 - The building is superfluous or not fit for purpose (and cannot affordably be made so).
 - It is without a strong Christian community using and sustaining the building, or
 - Running and maintaining the building is increasingly sapping the vitality and resources of the congregation.

The Right Buildings Proposal Report

The Right Buildings Proposal Report will include an appendix that will include the BAR for each property, to act as a transparent record to back up the recommendations and proposals made. The report will also include a traffic light (RAG rating) summary and radar chart to show at a glance the comparative strengths/benefits and weaknesses/risks for each building and the community around them.

For each church, whether the proposal is for it to be retained, invested in or released from the parish; the Proposals Report will include a brief summary of the team's reasoning behind their recommendations and their proposals regarding the future treatment of the building. The recommendations are likely to be broad ranging, from simple improvements

such as “improve signage outside the church”, to more costly recommendations to address more significant short-comings. For properties that are identified as not fit for purpose and also not suitable for investment or improvement, the Report will propose that they should be released by their parish and closed for regular Anglican worship.

The Right Buildings Proposal Report is intended to aid the strategic management of a parish’s properties. Initially it will be used by the FfM Project Manager, FfM fundraising coordinator (to invest in buildings) and the Church Buildings Council when they consider the urgent changes needed to the building portfolio. In the longer-term it is intended to give guidance to the new parish if the need for further rationalisation of the building portfolio becomes apparent as the churches develop missionally together.

Final Consultations on the Proposals

Once the draft Right Buildings Proposal Report is completed it will be presented to the Navigation Team. This will lead to final consultations with PCCs, and the wider deanery. These consultations will help decide how the Right Buildings Team’s recommendations should be implemented. The Navigation Team will consider the feedback from the consultations and then make a proposal for implementation to the Deanery Synod. That proposal may be the same as the recommendations or different, depending on the consultation outcome.

Proposals agreed for action

After the Right Buildings proposals have been consulted on and agreed by Deanery Synod, it can then be implemented. Development of buildings would be supported by a Fit for Mission fundraising coordinator and Project Manager. Site development/shared use would be supported by the Assistant Diocesan Secretary and the Project Manager. Sale of buildings would be supported by the Buildings Release Officer, the Assistant Diocesan Secretary and the Bishop’s Planning Officer and team. The team will aim to ensure that no site / building is left derelict.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Data Collection

- 1) Data that can be gleaned from diocesan records or given by the Diocesan Resources team all parishes in the deanery
 - a. Dashboard data (in parish dashboard format and deanery spreadsheet format) including:
 - i. Financial position and trend over last 5 years
 - ii. Income and expenditure broad breakdown from accounts
 - iii. Attendance figures
 - b. Health and viability analysis
 - c. Latest Quinquennial report and latest annual Quinquennial Review Form return
 - d. Latest accounts
 - e. List of active clergy, lay readers, other licenced ministers
 - f. List of names of church officers: Churchwardens, PCC Secretary, Treasurer, PCC Lay Chair.
 - g. Population of current parish, demographic and ethnic mix data
 - h. Deanery maps showing church and other buildings
 - i. List of church buildings and other buildings in each parish and their status
 - j. List of church schools in the parish

- 2) Data required from each FfM parish
 - a. Which non-church buildings do you have in your parish that are controlled by the PCC (halls etc.)?
 - b. Which other buildings do you use, for any purpose, that are not controlled by the PCC?
 - c. Which other buildings exist that could possibly be used by congregations / worshipping communities or groups?
 - d. What other land is owned /controlled by the PCC?
 - e. If there is a graveyard? Is it open or closed?
 - f. What congregations / worshipping communities exist? And for each:
 - i. Where do they meet?
 - ii. Who is the leader of each congregation / worshipping community?
 - iii. Average attendance at each congregation / worshipping community - adults/children (rough estimate only)?
 - iv. Description of each congregation and worshipping community (basic age description, basic diversity description, worship style, spin off activities of this group (e.g. Alpha, justice initiative etc.), other ministry areas associated with this group)

- g. Which paid staff do you have (name, role, number of days/week employed)?
- h. Copy of Parish development plan or similar, vision and strategy document or similar, SWOT or similar (if exists)
- i. Copy of community needs audit (if exists)
- j. Which other churches are there in the parish (other denominations) and a comment on their size and strengths.
- k. Identify which small number of people (two?) who will host the building(s) visit. Please give these persons' names, phone numbers and emails.
- l. Think about which group will attend the community visit (8-10? With good variety of roles, ages, genders etc). Please give a lead person's name, phone number and email for this group.

3) Data required about each FfM building

- a. Are there any existing development plans for the building, if so what?
- b. What maintenance works are planned for the next 12 months?
- c. Is there on-site parking? If so for how many cars?
- d. Which vicarages (if any) are attached to / adjacent to / on the same plot as the building?
- e. Does a school(s) regularly visit this building? Which and how often?
- f. Complete the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) with energy data from last 12 months (copies of gas/ electric bills needed)
- g. Maintenance and repair costs for each of the last 3 years
- h. Boiler type (gas, oil, electric) and age
- i. What other community groups/partners use the building? List group and hours per week.

4) Data from Together Liverpool on Justice Initiatives.

5) List of data required about the deanery/parish context and social environment – to be gathered from internet/local intel by Programme Administrator & Right Buildings team members:

- a. Current housing/housing need
- b. Location of buildings in relation to housing and key local centres
- c. Transport links
- d. Proposed development and regeneration schemes

6) As well as data required to answer the Criteria questions, the following to be gathered during FfM parish buildings visits – to be collected by Buildings Strategy Manager and Right Buildings Team:

- a. Building condition (to be able to assess ballpark costs for refurbishment)
 - i. Structural – are repairs needed to the roof, walls or floors?
 - ii. Functional – is there dampness? Are there draughts? Window assessment.

- iii. Decorative and other.
 - b. Any current proposals for the building's development or wish list to improve the facilities within the building.
 - c. What else is happening in the area that impacts?
 - d. Possible opportunities.
 - e. Possible uses if sold.
- 7) As well as data required to answer the Criteria questions, the following to be gathered / probed further from FfM parish community visits - to be collected by Buildings Strategy Manager and Right Buildings Team
- a. Vision, opportunities for the gospel, weaknesses, creative suggestions.
 - b. Community perceptions and culture.
 - c. Community needs.
 - d. What is God doing here?
 - e. Ecumenical opportunities for shared buildings and mission.
 - f. Existing congregation needs.

Appendix 2 – Example Rating Matrix

	Criterion	Rating
Social and Spiritual		
1	Gives honour to God	5.0
2	Great place to worship God	4.1
3	Location - community & mission	3.9
4	Location - transport	4.2
5	Meeting the needs of local community	3.8
Environment		
6	Welcoming	4.0
7	Comfortable	3.2
8	Accessible	1.8
9	Facilities	3.7
10	Size / Capacity	3.5
Economic		
11	Sustainable	3.1
12	Encourages service and giving	3.8
13	Current income	2.9
14	Asset value / pending external influences	3.0

Rating

Each criterion has sub-questions that are each scored 1-5

The total for each criterion is then divided by the number of sub-questions

The resultant figure is the average for the criterion and is rated from red to green, as shown:

1	The church does not meet this criterion and due to factors outside of its control (such as the constraints of the plot, for example) it is unlikely that the changes needed to meet the criterion can be made.
2	The church does not meet the essential requirements of this criterion, but there is scope to address the shortcomings.
3	The church currently meets the essential elements of this criterion but will probably need some investment in the short to medium term.
4	The church meets or exceeds the essential elements of this criterion and it can viably be maintained at the current level.
5	The church fully meets this criterion and does not currently need investment for improvements in this regard.