

Diocese of Blackburn DAC Environmental Policy

September 2023

Next review date: September 2025

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) is committed to encouraging best practice in every matter relating to church buildings. Increasingly, this includes environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, reflecting the General Synod commitment to reaching net zero carbon by 2030 and the revised diocesan environmental policy and net zero roadmap (to be brought to diocesan synod in autumn 2023).

The DAC encourages all PCCs to complete the Energy Footprint Tool in the parish returns, undertake an energy audit of its church and associated buildings, and register as an Eco-Church.

The DAC will apply the following policies in forming its advice on faculty applications, where an application involves any of the identified areas. These policies aim to encourage PCCs to think about how they might apply best practice in works to church buildings and churchyards, whilst recognising that all measures will not be suitable or affordable for all parishes.

Before starting any work to a church building, the DAC encourages all PCCs to consider the Church Buildings Council guidance on reducing embodied carbon, which can be downloaded [here](#).

1. Building materials

The DAC will positively view applications where it can be demonstrated that any materials used in any works are sustainable, in that they are:

- ethically and/or locally sourced; or
- reclaimed from a reputable source; or
- have minimal emissions and minimal embodied carbon in the production process.

2. Churchyards and church land

The DAC will positively view applications for works within a churchyard which incorporate measures to encourage biodiversity.

The DAC will require applications for the felling of healthy trees or hedge clearance to demonstrate that the PCC:

- has explored options for compensatory planting either within the churchyard or as part of a tree-planting scheme; and
- has a clear proposal for the recycling of the waste timber and brush.

The DAC will positively view applications for paths and hardstanding where surfaces are in natural stone or permeable material, and/or where it can be demonstrated that the design is detailed to prevent run-off to sewers and increased flood risk.

3. Heating systems, heat loss and cooling systems

The DAC will positively view applications for the renewal or replacement of heating systems which utilise sustainable sources of fuel, for all or part of the system.

Additionally, it will positively view applications where the PCC can demonstrate that it:

- is purchasing its energy from renewable/green tariff supplies;
- has considered the possibility of zoned heating and whether this is appropriate for the current use of the building; and
- has considered the incorporation of smart controls.

The DAC will positively view applications for measures to minimise heat loss where it can be demonstrated that the proposals:

- have been prepared with reference to current heat loss calculations; and
- minimise the impact on the historic fabric and character of the building.

The DAC will require applications for the installation of cooling systems such as air-conditioning, to demonstrate all the above plus:

- that other measures such as better ventilation and adaptation of windows have been proven ineffective;
- any additional energy consumption is outweighed by the missional benefits of the proposals.

4. Lighting

The DAC will positively view applications for lighting schemes (both internal and external) which reduce the overall energy consumption through use of more energy-efficient fittings and light emitters.

Additionally, it will positively view applications where the PCC can demonstrate that it has considered the incorporation of smart controls.

The DAC will require applications for the introduction of external floodlighting to demonstrate that:

- the additional energy consumption has been minimised as far as possible;
- any additional energy consumption is outweighed by the public and missional benefits of the proposals; and
- the installation will not negatively impact local wildlife or contribute significantly to light pollution.

5. Renewable generation

The DAC will positively view applications for renewable energy generation, for example by the use of solar PV in line with revised Faculty Rules, particularly if it can be demonstrated that the PCC has already implemented improvements to the energy efficiency of the church, churchyard and associated buildings.

6. Sustainable design

The DAC will positively view applications which incorporate sustainable design (notable BREAM), particularly where this can be demonstrated by:

- a Statement of Needs which sets out how the proposed works will mitigate or reduce the impact on the environment; and
- an accompanying energy audit.

The DAC will set higher expectations on new build works (including extensions and detached buildings), which should meet with the highest standards of energy efficiency or give clear justification why these standards cannot be met.

7. Transport and access

The DAC will positively view applications to improve transport accessibility to the church which are supported by a travel plan, in line with diocesan guidance, that sets out ways that any new provision or enhancement for car parking is to be combined with encouraging use of environmentally sustainable transport forms, for example by providing bike racks.

8. Water management

The DAC will positively view applications to expand the capacity of rainwater disposal goods and/or the inclusion of temporary storage and/or sustainable drainage schemes.

The DAC will positively view applications that use measures to minimise water waste and reduce pressure on local sewerage networks.