

1. Executive Summary

1. The focus of the programme, which arose from the diocesan vision to grow healthy churches and transform communities, is on the outer urban estates where for many years the Church has struggled to survive let alone thrive.
2. The programme's focus relates directly to the Church of England Vision to be present and representative in all communities and to nurture disciples in every setting.
3. The programme is founded on the belief that the experience of the Church on outer urban estates is valuable and instructive, and that in this context important lessons can be learned about discipleship and evangelism.
4. The programme received an SDF award of £1.54m in December 2017 as a contribution to an overall budget of over £2.57m.
5. There were three projects, the Blackpool Ministry Experience Scheme/Freedom Church Mereside, The Blackpool Centre of Mission and the Outer Estates Leadership Hub, all with specific detailed outcomes which were regularly reported.
6. In most cases the outcomes were met, and in some cases targets greatly exceeded, such as the number of new disciples and the numbers participating in lay training.
7. Parts of the programme did not fulfil their outcomes, and some activities were curtailed, such as the Ministry Experience Scheme and the Centre of Mission.
8. The reasons for outcomes unfulfilled, met or exceeded are detailed in this report. The main negative influence was the difficulty in recruiting or retaining suitably skilled project staff.
9. There are many good news stories that have emerged through the programme, only a few of which can be included in this Review.
10. One part of the programme known as M:Power has become well regarded as a model for the development of leadership on outer urban estates, and has been contextually adopted in other dioceses. M:Power relates directly to the need for the Church of England to broaden the social background of ordained and lay leaders, as debated at the February 2025 meeting of the General Synod.
11. During the period 2020-22 the pandemic had the effect of delaying and changing some planned activities, but there was not a significant lasting detrimental influence on the programme.
12. The programme board adapted to changes in project circumstances and the national Church was flexible in approving change requests to utilise projected underspends to extend some of the work for some extra months.
13. There remains an issue about sustainability of projects such as these, since the outer urban estate context will always raise economic challenges, which can probably only be met by investment from national resources.
14. Many people were involved in the reviews of this programme over the last six years, and their contributions have been vital to this final assessment.

The outcomes of the programme are assessed, according to the following scheme.

	Red indicates an outcome that was not fully achieved, ie where a numerical value is recorded it is more than 20% below the original target.
	Orange indicates an outcome that was nearly achieved - that is, where a numerical value is recorded, it is within 20% of the target.
	Light green indicates an outcome fully achieved.
	Dark green indicates an outcome that was more than just achieved - that is, where a numerical value is recorded, more than 20% above the target.

Overview of Programme Outcomes	
Blackburn Ministry Experience Scheme 2017-2023 inclusive	
20 volunteers (interns): 2 in the first year, and 3 in each subsequent year. <i>Result was 13 starters and 12 completers.</i>	
100 connections per volunteer, particularly amongst children and young people, making 2000 in total. <i>Result was 5100, despite reduced number of volunteers.</i>	
Of the 2000 connections, 50 become disciples <i>Result was 103, despite reduced number of volunteers.</i>	
At least half of the volunteers will feel a vocation after their first year to work or live on an outer estate. <i>Result was 50%.</i>	
67% of volunteers within three years of leaving become ordinands or recognised lay leaders. <i>Result was 67%.</i>	
Freedom Church 2018-2024 inclusive	
Mereside Freedom Church will grow from 20 to 100 regular worshippers by 2023. <i>Result was 49, although in previous years it had been higher.</i>	
Mereside Freedom Church to progress 'significantly towards being self-financing'. <i>Result was such progress has been made.</i>	
Blackpool Centre of Mission 2018-2023	
Through contacts and connections on the estate, 20 new disciples made by 2019. <i>Result was 25.</i>	
A further 80 new disciples made by 2023, leading to a new total of 100. <i>Result was 87.</i>	
Mission Network established in the Blackpool Deanery, leading to new congregations and an additional 100 disciples in the deanery. <i>Result was 170 new disciples.</i>	
Engage with 6 other parishes outside the deanery in supporting evangelism on outer estates. <i>Result was 7.</i>	
Create two other Centres of Mission by 2023. <i>Result was the original Centre of Mission closed and no others were set up.</i>	
Leadership M:Power 2018-2024	
12 ordinands (2 per year) trained in the estate context, to equip others in due course. <i>Result was 15 achieved.</i>	
18 short or long-term placements (3 per year) for those training for ordination or preparing for selection. <i>Result was 7.</i>	
72 (12 per year) formally acknowledged 'urban estate lay leaders'. <i>Result was 129.</i>	
Each lay leader to bring 2-3 people to Christ post-training, a total of 180 by 2023. <i>Result was 206.</i>	
2 national conferences to disseminate the learning. <i>Result was achieved.</i>	
New disciple targets for Lower Darwen and Over Darwen, 80 in each by 2023, 160 in total. <i>The result was 136.</i>	