

Cathedral Projects Support Panel Terms of Reference

Background

1. Cathedrals, as centres of Christian worship and mission, open and accessible to their communities, have often responded to their growing popularity by taking on large development projects to provide additional facilities and improved visitor experiences. Some cathedrals struggle with the process of developing these major projects because of the extreme resource constraints under which they operate and because of the wide range of technical and management skills needed.
2. A particular vulnerability is the pre-project stage: the time when the idea grows from an aspiration into the defining expression of the project. Quite frequently, the cathedral has little or no access to or funds for professional advice across the range of business areas that might be needed, such as property valuation, visitor management, engineering, environmental and sustainability issues, options appraisal, and general business and operational planning. It can often be the case that no-one in a cathedral has experience of a large project, so the Chapter is unaware of what should be considered right at the beginning and the interaction of various factors; some handholding is needed to help find a way through complex issues to the best expression of a realistic brief to enable the project to proceed in a cost-effective and timely way.
3. A good start is the best preparation for a successful project, but quality advice at the preliminary stage is hard to access. Once a project moves towards implementation there is a need for practical help with issues such as management of consultants, dealing with project variations, handling permissions and realisation of business plan goals.

The role of the Panel

4. The creation of this panel as part of a two-year pilot funded by Allchurches Trust will be game-changing for cathedrals that are taking on what are often multi-million pound responsibilities.
5. The Panel will be composed of expert volunteers in a range of disciplines including project management, engineering, architecture, management and governance, fundraising and project implementation. The Panel will not meet as a body: advisors will be able to work with cathedrals to identify the areas of skill needed, help a cathedral shape and write its brief, and ensure that the right technical experts are recruited by cathedrals to deliver their plans. Reasonable expenses will be paid.
6. Members of the Panel will be expected to travel to cathedrals either for meetings set up specifically for them or to take part in multi-party visits, as well as provide advice over the telephone. Visits will be co-ordinated with members' diaries in mind. Members will be expected to provide a short note of their visits and any resulting actions or concerns to the Co-ordinator.
7. The scope of advice is not limited in order to allow the project to develop in the most useful direction. Members will be asked for their feedback at regular intervals, including on

the mechanisms by which their work is fed into the work of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE).

Support

8. A part-time Co-ordinator will support the work of the Panel, including liaising with cathedrals, receiving requests for help, providing a link with CFCE and co-ordinating visits. This post will report to the Executive Director of the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC).
9. The project also incorporates a central funding pot of £10,000 to cover expenses and provide specialist facilitation for cathedrals requiring expert input not covered by the Panel. Advisors will be able to recommend cathedrals which would benefit most from tailored specialist input and the money will then be used to pay for the relevant support. This fund will only go towards cathedrals that demonstrate the highest level of need and which are developing sustainable and well-managed development proposals. Members will be involved in allocation of these grants, but the managing body will be the AEC Executive Committee through its Project Board.

Standards of Conduct

10. Members will act individually but will not bear any liability for their advice, or decisions made as a result of them. This responsibility rests with the cathedral concerned.
11. Members will not act in the role of trustees and bear no financial responsibilities or liabilities.
12. Members will be expected to be aware of confidentiality and commercial sensitivity issues and to respect these at all times. Members will receive much information that has not yet been made public or is confidential or sensitive for proper reasons (e.g. matters awaiting final decision by a cathedral Chapter). Members must not breach such confidences or misuse information gained in the course of their membership.

Handling Conflicts of Interest

13. The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, in the exercise of their duties as a member, by their private interests or the interests of persons or bodies they are closely connected with.
14. All members must act independently of any organisation or body on which they sit, or of which they are a member, employee, trustee etc.
15. All members should record their interests using the form circulated when they join, and inform the Co-ordinator of changes.
16. In particular, members should be aware of the need to register:
 - a. commercial or professional interests, whether direct or indirect (e.g. paid work for a professional practice engaged by a Chapter on a project where the Panel will be involved);
 - b. personal interests, including those which arise from membership of, or holding office in, Church and other bodies (e.g. membership of a cathedral Chapter or FAC).
17. Members' interests may be noted in paperwork circulated for consideration at AEC and CFCE meetings, if this becomes relevant.
18. A member must not seek to lobby fellow members about a matter in which he or she has a relevant interest.

Gifts and Hospitality

19. Members must treat with care any offer or gift, favour or hospitality that is made personally and in connection with their service as a member. Members should only accept gifts of nominal value.
20. Members should only accept hospitality in connection with their service as a member where it is necessary to the work at hand and conducive to the successful provision of advice and building of relationships.

Approved by the AEC Executive Committee
4 May 2017