

FIT FOR MISSION

**Consultation on the proposals
for new Deanery arrangements
in the Diocese of Manchester**



November 2019

 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
Diocese of Manchester

**CHURCH
FOR A
DIFFERENT
WORLD**

How to use this document

This document has been produced to provide information on the proposals to change our working arrangements at deanery level in the Diocese of Manchester.

This information was shared at four Archdeaconry briefing meetings in September 2019 and is also being shared at meetings in every deanery between November 2019 and February 2020 during the formal consultation process on the proposals.

You are invited to read this document explaining the proposed changes and then to complete an [on-line survey](#) which addresses the two main changes being proposed:

- ◆ the proposal to move from 20 to 7 deaneries
- ◆ the proposal to create the new full-time role of Area Dean

The survey will also be available in the January edition of Crux.

The consultation and decision-making process is set out below:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| June 2019 | initial discussion of proposals at Diocesan Synod |
| September 2019 | agreement at Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee to proceed with a formal consultation on the proposals |
| October 2019 | final proposals received at Diocesan Synod |
| November 2019 – February 2020 | formal consultation exercise via an on-line survey, including face-to-face meetings in each deanery |
| March – April 2020 | finalisation of model following formal consultation exercise |
| May 2020 | consultation feedback and final proposals considered by Diocesan Mission Pastoral Committee and recommendations agreed for Bishop David |
| | final model presented to Bishop's Council |
| June 2020 | final presentation at Diocesan Synod |
| July – December 2020 | implementation of new model |
| from January 2021 | new deanery arrangements fully in place. |



Dear Friends

In June this year our Diocesan Synod had a first look at, and encouraged us to go forward with producing proposals to change the number and structure of deaneries. The proposals lie at the heart of enabling us to be Fit for Mission at a time when big challenges and huge opportunities face us. In September, the proposals were discussed further at meetings in each Archdeaconry which were attended by over 400 people. A formal consultation on the proposals is now underway.

In summary, we want to move to a place where we have fewer deaneries - potentially only seven. Larger deaneries will strengthen mutual support, and crucially allow each to have an Area Dean whose full time ministry will be focused on leading transformation at local level – as well as providing hands-on support for parishes undergoing significant change.

Change is exciting, energising and refreshing. Change can also be uncomfortable, troubling and unsettling. These proposals are bold, they are ambitious and they will require a lot of work to implement. I believe these changes offer an exciting way forward so we can live out our diocesan vision. It's not just about management speak or putting in place another tier of administration. It's about us truly being able to support parishes and deaneries to focus on mission and to enable us to become the Growing, Nurturing and Serving Church that we seek to be – God's Church for a Different World in Manchester.

None of us believes God is calling us to manage endless decline. God is giving us endless opportunities to shape a positive future for ourselves and for the Church. Ultimately, the Church is called to be obedient to God's mission revealed in Jesus Christ. John's Gospel reminds us that Jesus came that people may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). In committing ourselves to growing churches in depth and number, to nurturing disciples, and to service, we commit ourselves to serving God.

With every blessing

+ *Andrew Mandale*

WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE

The main reason for these proposals is to ensure that as a diocese we have the leadership and capacity, amongst both clergy and laity, so that we can make the changes that are urgently required for us to become a truly vibrant and healthy Church - the Church described so clearly in our vision for 2030 set out below. Much of what we are doing in the Manchester Diocese is already contributing to a culture of hope and an expectation of growth. Our aspirations and plans for the future are set out in our new 10-Year Strategy document which was recently agreed by Diocesan Synod. This describes our approach to achieving our vision for 2030 and investing for the future.

We also face serious challenges as the number of people attending our churches continues to fall. All-age average weekly attendance fell by 20% over the five years from 2012 when it was 32,200, to 25,800 in 2017. On this measure, attendance fell by a further 6% in 2018. In 2018, 89 of our 256 parishes had average weekly attendance of fewer than 35 people. Falling attendance has a direct impact on congregational giving which also continues to decline each year. Only a third of our parishes have been able to cover their clergy costs in 2019. This will result in an operating deficit for the diocese of £1 million in 2019 which means that we are no longer able to afford the current number of clergy.

We are completely focused on reversing this decline in church attendance. We also want to make the most of new opportunities, for example, the increase in the number of vocations to ordained ministry. These new, younger ordinands have a vital role in growing our churches. Above all else, we recognise that we are a Church in transition. We need to organise ourselves so we can lead and deliver the radical changes that are required to build the Church of the future. This means investing in clergy and lay leaders to develop their capacity, skills and experience.

We believe that the proposed changes to the deanery arrangements set out in this document are a necessary step on that road to change and transformation. They will mean we have the leadership and support in place to make the fundamental changes needed at parish level to ensure that our parish system is able to flourish as the basis for our future success and survival.

It is no longer an option to do what we have always done. Our belief is that God is calling us to do new things, and in so doing is leading us into a new place. We are clear that in making these changes we are drawn by hope and faith, not driven by fear.

OUR VISION

Manchester is a vibrant diocese of opportunity and creativity. Its rich mixture of church traditions makes it a wonderful place to engage in Gospel ministry.

Our vision is to be a worshipping growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community.

We want to be a Church for a Different World. All our energy, effort and prayer is focused on achieving our vision by 2030. This is the sort of Church God is calling us to be:

We are growing - a church for everyone



- ◆ we appeal to all sorts of people – we are vibrant, living, God-centred communities
- ◆ people who weren't involved ten years ago, feel comfortable here now
- ◆ there's a wide range of different traditions of prayer, praise and thanksgiving
- ◆ people of all ages can be together – everyone can belong
- ◆ we love inviting people along
- ◆ people experience the joy – as well as a sense of awe and wonder
- ◆ our leaders and congregations reflect the diversity of our local communities
- ◆ children and families have lots of fun here, as well as being safe
- ◆ we are good at reaching out to and inspiring young people
- ◆ children and young people are leading the way in changing the way we do things

We are nurturing - a church which is focused on discipleship and evangelism



- ◆ we are able to develop our spiritual lives, teaching the Gospel and the faith
- ◆ we are imaginative with worship and liturgy – it’s not just about the written word
- ◆ we worship at different times during the week – not just on Sundays
- ◆ we are able to tackle the deep, difficult questions
- ◆ we are able to develop our faith in different ways – from small groups to social media
- ◆ we meet together in different local places – cafes, libraries, schools, home
- ◆ what we experience helps us live and share our faith in the rest of our lives
- ◆ there are opportunities for development and sharing expertise - for clergy and laity
- ◆ we are generous – with our time and talents and our financial support
- ◆ we have great leaders – clergy and laity - who get the best out of everyone



We are serving - a church which leads the way in every local community



- ◆ we are good at working with other organisations and building local confidence
- ◆ people come to find out what we are doing and learn from us
- ◆ we are at the leading edge with our environmental projects
- ◆ we support and promote the creative arts
- ◆ we have a high profile – we are active and visible in our local communities
- ◆ we bring different communities and people of different faiths together
- ◆ we are a base for lots of different activities
- ◆ we work closely with our schools and our chaplains working out in the community
- ◆ we are open and welcoming and our buildings are sustainable and accessible
- ◆ we support those who are deprived and excluded and speak out for justice and peace



We want to reach out to individuals and communities across our diocese so that our message of God's love is heard amidst the noise of the modern world.

This is where we believe God is calling us to be.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES

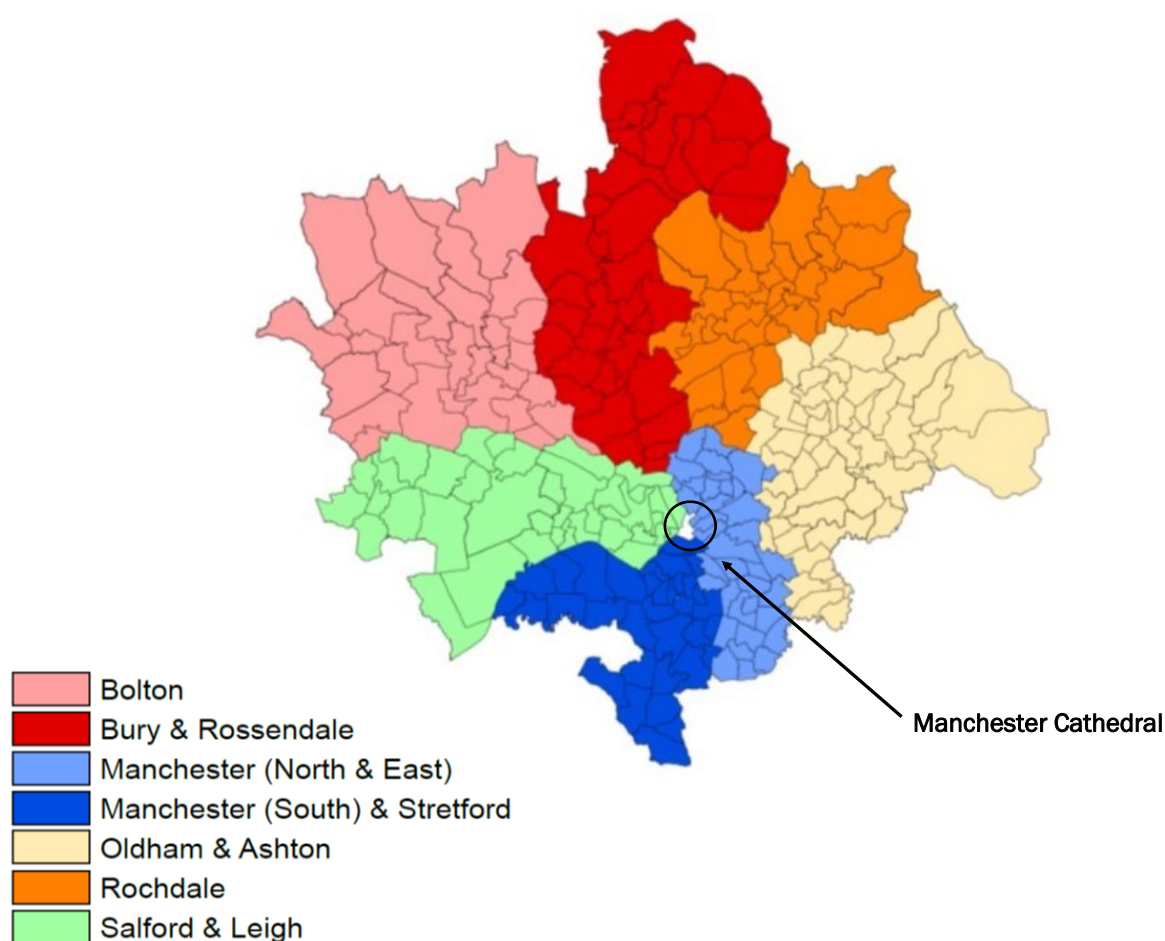
We recognise that to achieve this exciting vision for the future, we need to change the way we organise ourselves as a diocese.

A set of proposals has therefore been developed by a number of 'task and finish' groups set up by Bishop David, each with clergy and lay representatives selected because of their individual gifts, experience and insights.

The proposed changes are:

- ◆ **a consolidation of the current 20 deaneries into 7 deaneries – as set out in the map below:**

Proposed Deaneries



- ◆ **a move towards a new full-time Area Dean role, providing leadership for change and development, as well as the capacity to be directly involved at parish level when there are vacancies.**

There has also been work to develop a model of Mission Units for the Diocese. This work needs to continue and is not likely to conclude until mid-2020 – at which point proposals will be subject to formal discussion via the relevant governance processes. Once the general model for Mission Units has been agreed, we would expect discussions on how this is to be rolled out to take place from 2021, once the new deanery arrangements are in place.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Moving from 20 to 7 deaneries

The current structure of 20 deaneries was set up at a time when we had many more clergy and church members than we do now. Creating larger deaneries will help us focus on mission and growth by increasing the opportunities for joint working and sharing resources. We believe that having a smaller number of larger deaneries is central to transforming the diocese and achieving our vision for the future. This change will also make it easier for us to develop clergy and lay leaders at local level. Providing excellent support for clergy and lay people in their leadership roles is key to our future success – we are committed to having support in place which is meaningful and robust and enables our leaders to be effective and enthused.

We considered a range of different options for reducing the number of deaneries. These included creating deaneries that align with local authority boundaries. This would have resulted in 11 deaneries of very unequal size ranging from 15 to 52 parishes. We also considered a model with 8 deaneries but this would have meant making changes to Archdeaconry boundaries which would have resulted in a complicated transition to the new arrangements and led to delays.

Our proposal to reduce to 7 deaneries is the preferred option for the following reasons:

- ◆ this proposal entails joining deaneries together – aligning the new boundaries with existing deanery boundaries will minimise disruption and make implementation easier
- ◆ this will enable us to build on the relationships in the current deaneries, as well as creating opportunities for new relationships by joining together deaneries with a shared sense of geography and community
- ◆ the deaneries are broadly the same size in terms of number of parishes
- ◆ this arrangement will enable us to invest in the new role of full-time Area Dean—if we had more deaneries, this would not be affordable.

The new Area Dean role

Creating the role of full-time Area Dean will help us focus on mission and growth by strengthening local leadership. The new full-time Area Deans will be able to enable changes on the ground, and focus on transforming our churches by leading and developing the strategy and mission of the deanery and supporting its implementation. The Area Deans will act as mentors, particularly to the new, younger clergy who are coming into ministry. Alongside this, they will be able to promote team-building amongst clergy and laity to enable them to focus on mission and growth. They will support all clergy in the deanery with their professional and personal development. They will also be involved in the recruitment of all clergy in the deanery and any other deanery-level appointments.

Alongside this, Area Deans will have the flexibility to get directly involved at parish level and manage change and build resilience when there are vacancies, enabling them to continue to fulfil their pastoral and spiritual duties.

We will be recruiting on the basis of skills and abilities—rather than selecting by rotation as is currently the case—and will be able to involve local lay people in that recruitment.

We recognise that the twenty Area Deans currently operating in the Diocese are already fully committed and dedicated to that role. However, they have to carry it out alongside their parish duties, which limits their impact in the role. This is one of the learning points from the four pilot deaneries which were set up two years ago. In a full-time role, Area Deans will be able to be fully effective in driving the changes that are needed at local level and provide focal leadership to help churches bring about transformation in their parishes.

The relationship between the Area Dean role and the role of Archdeacon will be as it is now, with the Archdeacons continuing to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and provide pastoral support in relation deaneries and parishes, as well as providing leadership on cross-cutting issues at diocesan level.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THESE CHANGES

The proposed deanery changes, if they are implemented, will have implications for other aspects of deanery life:

- ◆ Deanery Synods – it has been agreed that with the proposed deanery structure, the arrangements for electing members to Deanery Synods and to Diocesan Synods will remain as they are now. This will ensure that parishes, and in particular lay members, will continue to have the same levels of representation as they do now.
- ◆ Lay Chairs – the important contribution that Lay Chairs already make to the life of the Diocese is recognised. Discussions will be had with the Lay Chairs, as part of the consultation process, to ensure that Lay Chairs can continue to provide effective leadership in the new arrangements.
- ◆ Deanery governance arrangements – deanery governance arrangements are also being reviewed to ensure that we build on the strengths of the current arrangements and take the opportunity to make improvements.
- ◆ Deanery Mission Action Plans – work will need to continue during 2020 on Deanery Mission Action Plans as the aim is for these to form the basis of the Mission Action Plans for the larger deaneries from 2021.

CONCLUSION

We live in a time of great opportunity for the Diocese of Manchester. We are aware too of the huge challenge to share the love of God in word and deed, not least in those parts of the diocese where we see fewer than one in a hundred of the local parishioners coming to church, or where the bulk of our regular churchgoers are of retirement age or older. Our opportunities will only bear fruit if we face up to our challenges boldly, head on, and with urgency.

The church of even ten years ahead will both resemble and differ significantly from the church of today. We will need to do less of some of the things we have put lots of energy into to date in order to free up our capacity to reach out into new, fruitful fields. The hardest part of the challenge is that such a change will require those of us who like things the way they are to take the decisions that will mean the future will be different.

This is a hard ask. But we believe that the ask is coming from God himself. He yearns for us to become the fullness of the Church that will worship him and serve our communities most effectively, and be fit to do so into that time when many of those of us who are currently involved will no longer be around. He will bless us - our challenge is to allow him.

We conclude with a prayer to guide us:

Faithful God,

In you hope is founded and

Through you love is known.

Fill your church with joy and peace;

Overwhelm us with the love of Christ and

Renew us through your Holy Spirit.

May your church grow as we welcome all.

Inspire us to share the good news of Jesus;

Send us out to be

Signs of your Kingdom

In our communities and for your world.

Open hearts and minds to your generous love;

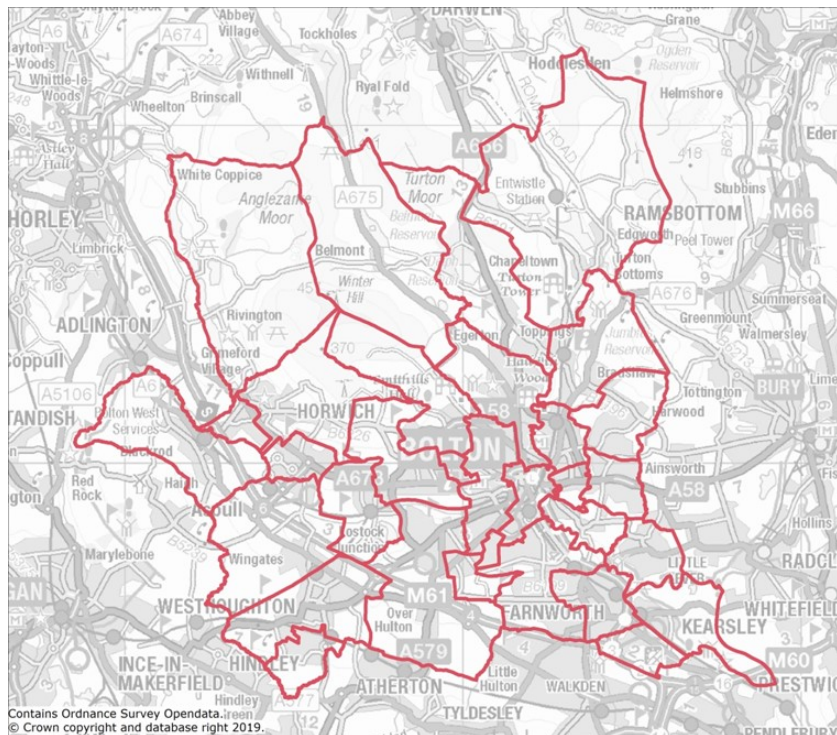
Nourish us with faith and fill us with hope.

Amen

Appendix: Proposed Deanery Boundaries

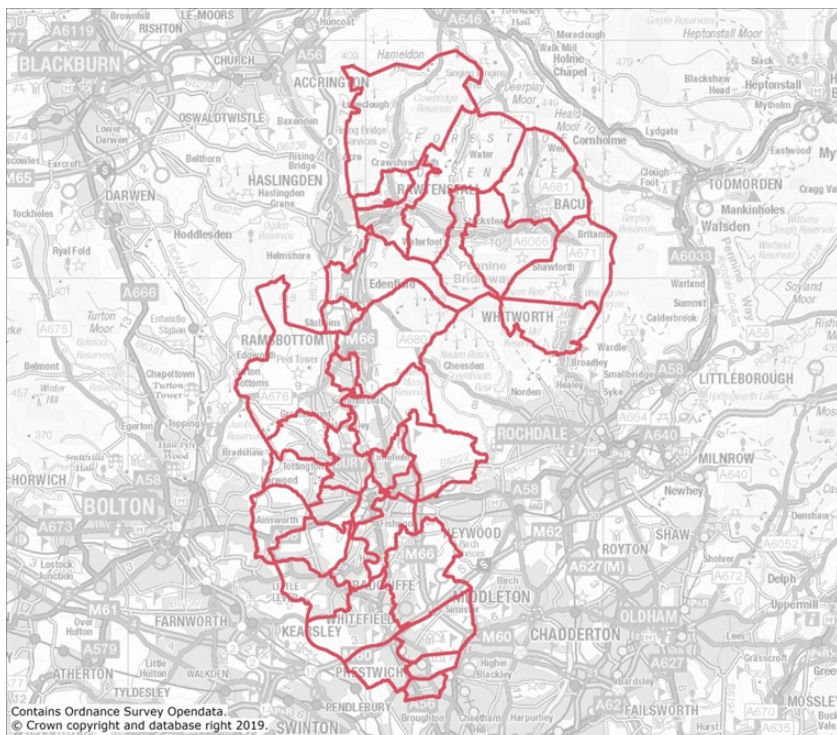
Bolton (comprising the current deaneries of Bolton, Deane and Walmsley)

Parishes: 32 / Population: 289,100



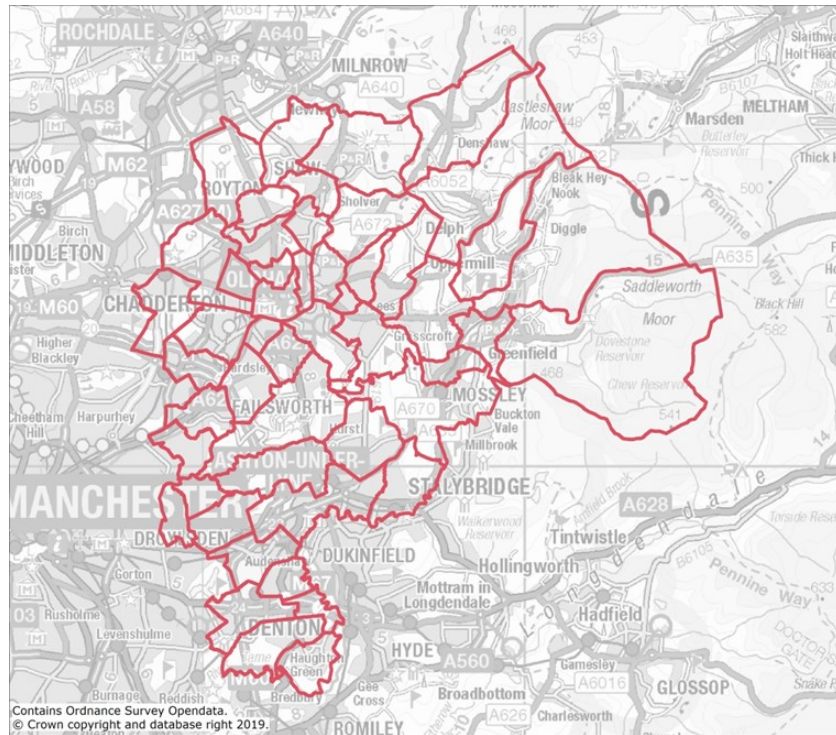
Bury and Rossendale (comprising the current deaneries of Bury, Rossendale and Radcliffe & Prestwich)

Parishes: 34 / Population: 238,000



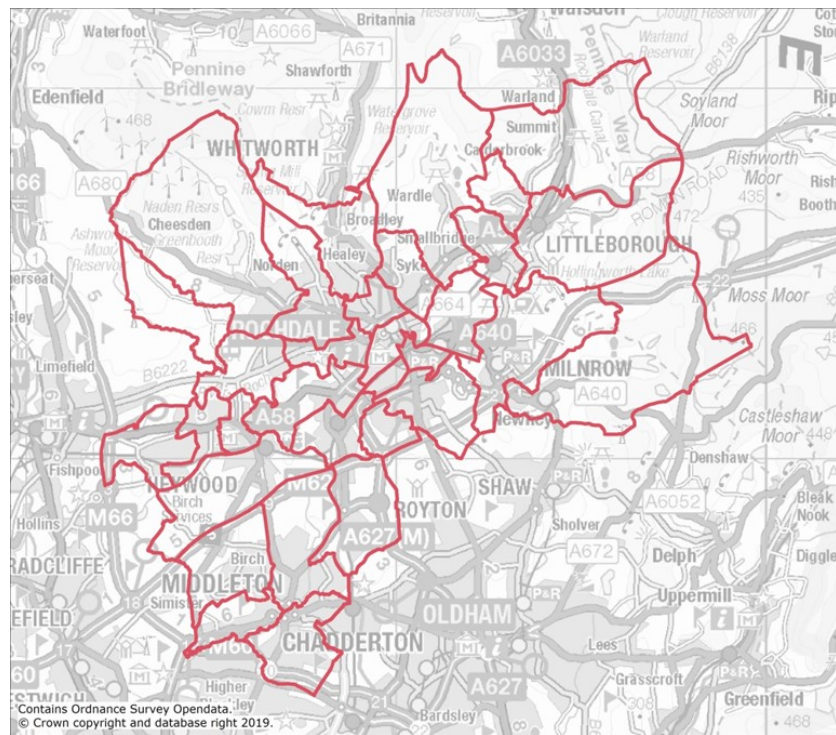
Oldham and Ashton (comprising the current deaneries of Oldham East, Oldham West and Ashton)

Parishes: 50 / Population: 377,000



Rochdale (comprising the current deaneries of Rochdale and Heywood & Middleton)

Parishes: 32 / Population: 215,200



Salford and Leigh (comprising the current deaneries of Eccles, Leigh and Salford)

Parishes: 38 / Population: 357,400

