



30 November 2022

**Re: Church Commissioners' Commitment to the Successful Delivery of Applications
2020/92350 and 2020/92331**

The Church Commissioners submitted two planning applications in July 2020 on allocation MXS7 and we understand that they will likely be considered at Planning Committee in December. I was keen to write to you to set out the Church Commissioners' commitment to ensuring the successful delivery of the new community at Chidswell and our continued positive engagement with Kirklees Council into the future.

The Church Commissioners support the work and mission of the Church of England across the country. We manage a diverse investment portfolio and take a long-term approach to stewardship. Funds generated by the Church Commissioners are used to fund mission activities, support dioceses, especially those with fewer resources and in more deprived areas, to support bishops' ministry and contribute towards cathedral costs and clergy pensions. We manage our investments to generate strong returns, consistent with our ethical and responsible investment principles, in order to maximise the funding we can provide to support the work and mission of the Church of England, meeting our charitable purposes. We are committed to providing £1.2 billion over the period 2023-2025 to fund the Church of England.

The Strategic Land team at the Church Commissioners brings forward land for new housing and employment developments across the country. Our aim is to deliver new homes and employment opportunities which support and enhance their local surroundings. We do this by seeking to build new, and strengthen existing communities, helping to create and sustain vibrant and vital places.

We believe in and support the five core values defined by the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community, which articulate a clear vision of what good housing should be; sustainable, safe, stable, sociable and satisfying. These values are, we believe, at the heart of building thriving and successful communities over the long term. We believe that where there is demonstrable housing and employment need, the delivery of new homes and jobs, alongside key infrastructure and community facilities, is vital for the creation and maintenance of successful and sustainable places. We believe that the development of new housing, both market and affordable housing appropriate for local

needs supports the common good. We believe that these decisions should be led by local planning authorities, where local growth requirements should be set, and land deemed sustainable should be allocated for development in local Development Plans.

We have five strategic objectives for our developments:

1. To deliver, across England, high-quality, safe and stable new homes and communities, focused on those areas with identified housing and employment need, or with specified growth aspirations;
2. To curate sustainable new developments that seek to support, enhance, integrate with and celebrate their surrounding communities and landscapes, over the long term;
3. To create, through high-quality and innovative place-making, sociable, satisfying, vibrant and thriving new communities supported by strong links to vital community services and facilities, recreation areas, walking and cycling links and public transport;
4. To foster strong, ongoing relationships with key stakeholders, adopting a collaborative approach to our engagement with local communities and residents, local Councils, and members of our church community;
5. Embedding environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters into our work to facilitate the transition to a net zero, low carbon future.

We believe we have already shown a long-term commitment to working with the Council over the last 11 years since we bought the land. There has been a strong focus on quality of design, promoting green infrastructure, and delivering an opportunity for a new sustainable community.

We also undertook extensive consultation work, including meeting with we met the previous Council Leader, Mehboob Khan, the Chief Executive Jacqui Gedman, presented at a Full Council meeting during the Local Plan review process, met Ward Members to discuss the proposals, undertook a pre-application presentation to Strategic Planning Committee, held two public consultation events and wrote to over 30 businesses and organisations. We attended a Yorkshire design review panel session and have had at least monthly meetings or calls with your planning and highways team which began in May 2018.

We also believe the following key points are positive aspects of our proposals:

- The delivery of new family homes, including policy compliant affordable homes and up to 1ha of residential institution use (C2), which will promote a diverse community.
- A new two-form entry primary school.
- Substantial number of new jobs that will be created through the construction phase (167 FTE direct and indirect), and when operational (3,019 FTE direct). The Church Commissioners will work with the council in promoting learning/training opportunities to leverage the opportunity and beneficial impact locally.
- Provision of a new local centre which would serve the local community with a range of potential services.

- There are opportunities to provide sustainable drainage and green infrastructure that can provide new publicly accessible open space across what is currently private agricultural land.
- There will be a 20m buffer around the Ancient Woodlands (compared to the Natural England recommended 15m buffer) and the implementation of a woodland management scheme.
- This land currently has relatively low ecological value as farmed agricultural land and we are committed to delivering a net gain in biodiversity.

The Church Commissioners are keen to continue working with the council in developing the masterplan and long-term stewardship proposals at detailed design stage, and ensuring the site provides a new high quality scheme with an excellent range of facilities and services.

Yours Sincerely