Consultation Response from KC Policy

2023/91198 St Johns Church, Jackroyd Lane, Newsome, Huddersfield, HD4 6QU

Change of use from place of worship (Class F1) to community centre with ancillary cafe (Class F2)

Date Responded:
Responding Officer: NR/AW
Responding Ref:

This application is for the change of use from a place of worship (Use Class F1(f) – learning and non-residential institutions) to a community centre with an ancillary café (Use Class F2(b) – Local community uses) at St Johns Church, Jackroyd Lane, Newsome, Huddersfield, HD4 6QU. The site is located on an Urban Greenspace (UG155) and is also located within Newsome Local Centre (LCB38) as designated in the Kirklees Local Plan which was adopted on 27th February 2019. The Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be fully considered; however, the following response relates to specific Local Plan and NPPF policies which are of particular relevance to the proposal and other policies that are not mentioned here may also apply.

Currently the site is a disused church and the proposed development would convert the building into a community centre with a cafe. The community centre would be the predominant use of the building whilst the café would be ancillary.

Policy LP13 – Town centre uses

Policy LP13 states that the role and function of Local Centres such as Newsome is to provide for top-up shopping and local services particularly food and drink. With this proposal providing local services in the form of a community centre and a café, this proposal would be appropriate in Newsome Local Centre.

Policy LP48 – Community facilities and service

Policy LP48 states that community facilities should be provided in accessible locations where they can minimise the need to travel or they can be made accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This will normally be in town, district or local centres. With the proposal being located in Newsome Local Centre, it can be considered to be in an accessible location.

Policy LP48 also states that proposals which involve the loss of valued community facilities such as shops, public houses and other facilities of value to the local community will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

a. there is no longer a need for the facility and all options including the scope for alternative community uses have been considered; or
b. its current use is no longer viable; or
c. there is adequate alternative provision in the locality to serve the local community which is in an equally accessible location; or
d. an alternative facility of equivalent or better standard will be provided, either on-site or equally accessible; and
e. any assets listed on a Community Asset Register have satisfied the requirements under the relevant legislation.

In November 2022, it was determined that due to dwindling congregations, the church is no longer needed and the proposed use would represent an alternative community use that would promote social interaction in accordance with Paragraph 92a of the NPPF. This proposal would therefore meet criterion a and as such is in accordance with policy LP48.

Policy LP61 – Urban green space

Green spaces of identifiable open space value (including churchyards and cemeteries) within Kirklees are allocated as urban green space on the Local Plan Policies Map, where they are 0.4 hectares or

above in size. The application site is allocated as urban green space (site ref. UG155) in the Kirklees Local Plan, and as such, this proposal for the change of use from a place of worship to a community centre should be considered against Local Plan Policy LP61 (Urban Green Space).

Policy LP61 states that development proposals which would result in the loss of urban green space will only be permitted where specific criteria listed in the policy can be satisfied. However, in this case, it is evident from the plans that no external works/alterations are proposed as part of this application that would result in a loss of urban green space. Considering that no urban green space is set to be lost as consequence of this development, there is no conflict with policy LP61.

Conclusions

Overall, it is considered that the proposed change of use would be in accordance with Policies LP13, LP48 and LP61 of the Kirklees Local Plan and can therefore be supported on policy grounds.