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Job reference: 2026 enquiry 61

Address: Fartown Trinity Methodist Church, Spaines Road, Fartown, Huddersfield, HD2 2SD

Date: 31-10-2026

Extra notes: **community loss report**

change of use from vacant former church (use class F1f) to form nursery (use class Ef) with outdoor play area and associated new mezzanine for tuition centre (use class F1a) and associated car parking.

1. Introduction

This Community Facility Loss Statement has been prepared in support of the proposed change of use of the former Fartown Trinity Methodist Church to an early-years nursery and tuition centre. The purpose of the statement is to assess the implications of the proposal for the loss of the building's former religious and community functions and to demonstrate how the development should be considered against Policy LP48 of the Kirklees Local Plan, which addresses the protection of community facilities and services.

The former Fartown Trinity Methodist church was a place of worship and provided a base for activities associated with the local Methodist congregation. Its closure therefore requires consideration of the consequences for the community, including whether its former functions remain necessary at this particular location, whether its continued use for worship remains viable, and whether alternative provision is available.

The proposal would introduce an early-years nursery and tuition centre, providing accommodation for childcare, learning and educational activities. Although these uses would not replicate the former religious function, they would give the building a new purpose with the potential to serve local families and children. The central question is whether the loss of the former church use is justified in planning terms, having regard to the evidence of closure, the relocation of the congregation and activities, the availability of alternative provision, and the benefits of the proposed new use.

2. Background and Existing Community Use

Fartown Trinity Methodist Church historically served the local community as a place of Christian worship and as a base for associated activities. According to the published information of Huddersfield Methodist Circuit, the church building closed from 1 September 2025 and the congregation ceased worshipping there. The congregation subsequently joined the New Life congregation at Huddersfield Mission for Sunday services. The published information also identifies the continuation of certain activities away from the former church building. Coffee mornings were to take place at the Chestnut Centre in Deighton, while English-language lessons were to be held at Birkby Junior School. Activities for older members of the community were also to continue at alternative venues.

This information is important because it demonstrates that the closure did not necessarily mean that every associated activity ceased. Instead, at least some activities were transferred to other premises. The former church building is therefore no longer functioning as the place of worship it historically provided, while certain activities formerly associated with it have been relocated.

The relevant planning consideration is not simply whether the building once served a community purpose. It is whether the continued provision of that facility in this building remains necessary and viable, and whether the proposed change of use would result in an unacceptable deficiency in local community provision. The published information provides a clear starting point for this assessment.

3. Relevant Planning Policy

3.1 Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP48

Policy LP48 seeks to protect valued community facilities and services. It recognises that facilities such as places of worship and other community buildings can make an important contribution to local life and should not be lost without adequate justification. The policy identifies circumstances in which the loss of a community facility may be acceptable.

These include situations where:

- There is no longer a need for the facility and options for alternative community uses have been considered.
- The current use is no longer viable.
- Adequate alternative provision exists within the locality in an equally accessible location.

An alternative facility of equivalent or better standard will be provided on-site or in an equally accessible location. The policy also addresses facilities identified on a Community Asset Register, where the relevant statutory requirements must be satisfied. Closure is evidence of the change in circumstances, but it does not by itself prove that there is no longer a need for the facility or that its former use was financially unviable. The evidence distinguish between the cessation of worship at this particular building, the continuing needs of the congregation, the relocation of activities, and the wider demand for community facilities in Fartown.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF recognises the importance of social interaction and accessible community facilities in supporting healthy and inclusive communities. Places of worship and meeting places are examples of facilities that can contribute to community life. Planning policy does not require every existing community building to remain in its original use indefinitely, regardless of changes in demand or viability.

The planning judgement considers the evidence of need, the availability of alternative provision, the practical prospects for retaining the existing use, and the consequences of the proposed development. The proposed nursery and tuition centre would introduce new educational and community-oriented functions. These benefits are relevant to the planning balance, although they do not automatically compensate for the loss of a facility if an important unmet need for that facility remains.

4. Assessment of Need for the Former Church Use

4.1 Cessation of worship at the premises

The published closure notice confirms that worship at Fartown Trinity Methodist Church ceased from 1 September 2025. The building no longer provides the congregation's former place of worship and the congregation has moved to Huddersfield Mission to worship jointly with the New Life congregation. The proposal would therefore not displace an ongoing service operating from the building at the time of the application. Instead, it would formalise a new use for premises that have already ceased functioning as the congregation's place of worship.

It does, however, demonstrate that the former church building is no longer required for the congregation's established pattern of worship, subject to confirmation from the Methodist Circuit that the relocation is intended to be continuing.

4.2 Relocation of associated activities

The Methodist Circuit's published information indicates that activities previously associated with Fartown Trinity were to continue at alternative locations. The relocation of the congregation to Huddersfield Mission provides an alternative venue for Sunday worship. The relocation of English-language lessons to Birkby Junior School and coffee mornings to the Chestnut Centre also demonstrates that some associated activities can continue independently of the former church building.

These arrangements are relevant because they indicate that the closure of the building has not necessarily resulted in the complete loss of every associated activity. Nevertheless, the availability and adequacy of alternative provision should be confirmed. The existence of another venue does not automatically demonstrate that it is equally accessible, has sufficient capacity, or can meet every former community need.

4.3 Wider community need

The proposal considers in the context of the range of community facilities available in Fartown and the surrounding area. The existence of other churches, community buildings, schools and meeting venues may be relevant, but their presence does not be treated as conclusive without considering their function, capacity and accessibility. Different community facilities meet different needs. A church providing regular worship is not necessarily interchangeable with a community hall and an educational facility does not automatically replace the social or pastoral functions of a place of worship.

5. Viability of Continued Community Use

The former church has ceased operating as a place of worship, and the current proposal seeks to establish a different use for the building. For the purposes of Policy LP48, the distinction between the cessation of the former use and its financial or operational viability is important.

6. Alternative Community Provision

The relocation of the congregation and some associated activities provides evidence that alternative venues are being used. The published information identifies Huddersfield Mission as the location for Sunday worship, Birkby Junior School as a venue for English-language lessons, and the Chestnut Centre in Deighton as a venue for coffee mornings.

These arrangements to be considered in terms of the functions they provide and their accessibility to the people who previously used the church.

7. Benefits of the Proposed Nursery and Tuition Centre
The proposed change of use development would introduce an early-years nursery at upper ground-floor level and a tuition centre on a new internal mezzanine. These uses would provide accommodation for childcare and educational activities and could support families with young children, school-age learners and those seeking additional educational support.

The lower ground floor accommodates a multi purpose hall where it can be used by the nursery for additional indoor play if required, however, it can be used during evenings or weekends to respect safeguarding of the nursery.

7.1 Early-years provision
The nursery would create accommodation for early-years childcare and development. Subject to the operator's arrangements and the capacity of the proposed premises, this could contribute to the range of childcare options available to local families. The provision of childcare may assist parents and carers in balancing family responsibilities with work, training or other commitments.

7.2 Tuition and educational support
The proposed tuition centre would provide space for supplementary learning and educational activities. This use could support children's learning and provide a local venue for tuition. Its precise contribution would depend on the subjects taught, the age groups served, the operating arrangements and the number of learners accommodated. The combination of nursery and tuition uses could establish a building focused on learning and child development at different stages.

7.3 Reuse of an existing building
The proposal would bring the former church into a new active use rather than leave it without an established function. Reusing the existing building provides an opportunity to make productive use of existing accommodation and infrastructure, subject to the necessary alterations and approvals. An occupied building with a sustainable use is more likely to receive routine management and maintenance than premises that remain without a viable function.

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7.4 Continued contribution to the local community

Although the proposed uses differ from the former religious use, the building would continue to accommodate activities serving local people. The change would therefore represent a transition from a former place of worship and associated community activities to a facility focused on childcare and education. The planning balance acknowledge both aspects of the proposal:

- the loss of the former religious use and the opportunity to establish a new community-oriented function.

The benefits of the proposed use should be considered alongside the evidence required by Policy LP48, rather than treated as a substitute for demonstrating that the loss of the former facility is acceptable.

8. Overall Assessment Against Policy LP48

The evidence currently available establishes the following:

- The former church closed for worship from 1 September 2025.
- The congregation relocated to Huddersfield Mission for Sunday worship.
- Certain activities formerly associated with the church were identified as continuing at alternative venues.
- The proposed development would introduce an early-years nursery and tuition centre.
- The proposal would give the building a new function serving childcare and educational needs.
- These facts support the conclusion that the former church is no longer operating in its established role as a place of worship and that some of its former activities have been relocated.

9. Conclusion

The former Fartown Trinity Methodist Church ceased functioning as a place of worship from 1 September 2025. The congregation relocated to Huddersfield Mission, while certain associated activities were identified as continuing at alternative venues. The proposed change of use would therefore not displace an ongoing worship service operating from the premises at the time of the application. Instead, it would provide a new purpose for a building whose established religious use has ceased.

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The proposed early-years nursery and tuition centre would introduce childcare and educational activities with the potential to benefit local families and children. The scheme also offers an opportunity to bring the existing building back into active use. Having regard to Policy LP48 of the Kirklees Local Plan, the proposal can be supported in principle if the applicant provides sufficient evidence that the former use is no longer viable or needed at this location, or that adequate alternative provision exists in an equally accessible location. It is therefore considered that the loss of the former church use can be justified where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the relevant requirements of Policy LP48 have been met and change of use to create the early years nursery and tuition centre outweighs the community loss of the disused former church. Our client seek Kirklees support.

Prepared by

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