

St Peter and St Paul's Church, Birch, Colchester, Essex

App Ref APP/NPCU/RARE/A1530/73500

Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011: Draft Pastoral (Church Buildings Disposal) Scheme affecting the closed Grade II Church of St Peter, Birch

The Secretary of State's preliminary views on the terms of reference for the holding of a non-statutory Inquiry are as follows, and are set out as the matters about which he wishes to be informed for the purposes of considering the proposed demolition of the church, including investigation of its viability, and any other relevant considerations, and making a recommendation to the Church Commissioners:

- (i) The special architectural, historic or archaeological interest of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Birch, including its contribution to the Birch Village Conservation Area and the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect of the proposed demolition on the character or appearance of the Birch Village Conservation Area;
- (iii) The structural condition of the building and its internal features, and the extent of work required to restore the building, or part of it, the practicality and likely cost of such restoration, and whether such restoration is financially viable;
- (iv) The prospects and practicality of finding a suitable alternative use for the building, or part of it, with or without adaptation, the practicality and likely cost of any alternative use(s), and whether any such alternative use(s) is/are financially viable;
- (v) The views of neighbours and other interested people on the proposed demolition and potential alternative uses;
- (vi) The significance of preserving, appropriating to other uses, or demolishing the building, in relation to the work of the Church of England within the parish of Birch with Layer Breton and the Diocese of Chelmsford;
- (vii) Whether the demolition should be allowed, or whether the Church should be vested in the Church Conservation Trust, its suitability for such vesting, and the financial implications of such vesting, or, whether, although it should not be vested, further efforts should be made to secure its preservation; and

- (viii) Any other related matters including other planning and social factors which the Inspector appointed to hold the non-statutory Inquiry wishes to raise.

The Secretary of State intends to hold the non-statutory Inquiry in the spirit of The Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000, Statutory Instrument 2000/1624 (as amended).

Relevant guidance on the Procedure is set out in PINS' Procedural Guide: Called-In Planning applications – England 23 March 2016.

6 May 2016