

Mark Chivers
Government Chief Property Officer
Office of Government Property, Cabinet Office

Dame Caroline Dinenage
Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA
By email: CommonsCMS@parliament.uk

2 March 2026

Dear Chair,

Re: Follow-up to evidence session on protecting built heritage – 3 February 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee on 3 February regarding the protection of built heritage. During the session, I committed to providing further detail on two specific areas: examples of government asset disposals involving community or social value, and heritage routes in the Department for Education's (DfE) recent apprenticeship announcement.

Government disposals and social value

There are several successful instances of government disposals prioritising community and social value, often resulting in transfers at less than market value. Notable examples include:

- **Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes:** The freehold interest was transferred for £1 to the Bletchley Park Trust. This ensured the preservation of the site's unique World War II code-breaking history and its continued operation as a major heritage attraction.
- **Kneller Hall, Twickenham:** Originally slated for a high-density housing development to maximise capital receipts, the site was instead sold to an educational institution. The sale was concluded at c15% below the projected residential value but, in doing so, secured a long-term educational and community legacy for the site.

Apprenticeships and heritage skills

Following the evidence session, I met with officials from the DfE to discuss the 13,000 newly announced apprenticeships. They confirmed that the program will encompass a broad spectrum of construction roles from Level 2 through to Level 7. This will include heritage roles.

Furthermore, the newly launched Foundation Apprenticeships are specially designed to support young people to enter the construction sector. DfE has committed to ongoing engagement with construction employers to ensure the apprenticeship offer creates more opportunities for young people, while also meeting the skills requirements of the industry (including heritage).

I hope this information is of use to the Committee's inquiry.



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I have copied this letter to my fellow witnesses - the Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling, and the Deputy Directors for Heritage at DCMS - as well as the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Chivers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Chivers
Government Chief Property Officer
mark.chivers@cabinetoffice.gov.uk