

Miles Hill School consultation – NE Area Management involvement

DOCUMENT (D)

Below is a chronological list of meetings where Miles Hill School was discussed. Not all can be considered consultation because they were not public meetings (eg BIG).

Most of these involve the Beckhill Implementation Group (BIG). BIG is a multi-agency partnership, established in May 2005.

BIG is accountable to the North East District Partnership and its main aim is to 'work in partnership to identify opportunities and challenges to reduce social exclusion, inequality and disadvantage experienced by people living on the Beckhill estate and to take action to improve their quality of life in relation to health, education, employment, housing, environment and crime in accordance with the principles set out in the Leeds North East District Partnership Regeneration Plan'.

An Area Management Officer sits on the partnership, and the Area Management Team provide the administration function to the partnership. There are no Elected Members or residents in the membership of the partnership.

The local Members (Chapel Allerton ward) and the Beckhill Tenants & Residents Association receive copies of the minutes of BIG meetings. The ward Members are also given verbal briefings on progress at the regular ward Member meetings held between Area Committee Members and the Area Management Team.

27th June 2005 North East (Inner) Area Committee: Shirley Parks, Education Leeds attended to seek the views of the Area Committee on the proposed rationalisation of primary school provision in the Meanwood area. Extract from the minutes;

12th July 2005 North East District Partnership meeting: Shirley Parks, Education Leeds attended the meeting to formally consult on the Meanwood Primary School Review. Claire Warren, at the time Chair of the partnership, sent a letter on behalf of the District Partnership giving their response. The Partnership were concerned that the closure of Miles Hill would remove the focus of the community. If it had to close, they would like to see a facility that benefits the community remain.

BIG meetings:

15th July 2005: Shirley Parks, Education Leeds attended the meeting to formally consult with the partnership on the Meanwood Primary School Review. BIG sent a written response representing the views of partners to Education Leeds on 18th July 2005. This expressed concerns with the closure and the need for services to be delivered to the Beckhill estate as this is a very deprived community.

28th September 2005: Group discussed the outcome of the Council's Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board had considered a paper from Education Leeds at its meeting on 21st September. The Board resolved "that Education Leeds be requested to further investigate the option of retaining provision on the existing sites

by establishing a federation of the two schools and to report back to this Board". BIG have asked to be involved in these developments. The group felt this was a positive development and a consequence of BIG's letter as part of the consultation process.

BIG also discussed how residents should be involved in the partnership. The minute states; "Options discussed included formally inviting the Beckhill Tenants and Residents Association onto BIG but it was concluded that the TARA should have BIG as a standing agenda item and feed any issues into BIG via Angela Hughes (voluntary sector representative) or Kate Stephens (Groundwork Leeds)."

9th November 2005: Update on the developments on the Extended Service cluster being developed around Carr Manor High School. Group felt that the Miles Hill school should be included in these developments.

16th June 2006: BIG discussed the paper taken to Council's Executive Board in June which made the decision to close Miles Hill. There was concern that BIG had not received notice of this, nor been invited to comment or be involved in the discussions leading up to the production of this report as agreed with Education Leeds in the original consultation period.

13th July 2006: Further discussion about the Executive Board decision. The partnership expressed unhappiness at not being engaged by Education Leeds on the matter since last summer. However, BIG agreed that they should look forward and discussed the need for more services in the estate as residents do not access, or find accessible, services located nearby including Scott Hall Early Years Centre and Carr Manor High School.

6th September 2006: Education Leeds have asked Area Management to carry out a Community Impact Assessment on the closure of Miles Hill. BIG discussed the questions within that assessment and contributed towards its completion.

18th October 2006: The completed Community Impact Assessment was discussed. Partners are supportive of pursuing the idea of retaining the school site if possible for services to use to deliver direct to the Beckhill community. There was discussion as to what the process involves, how does the partnership express an interest in the site? Clarification would be sought before the next meeting.

30th November 2006: Asset Management had provided advice that a business case is required for any request to retain and reuse the Miles Hill primary school building. A meeting of partners has been arranged for January 2007 to discuss space requirements, service delivery and funding that could be contributed towards the business case.

12th January 2007: The partnership discussed that the school building is included on the Council's Capital Programme list. The meeting of partners at the end of January will feed into the business case the partnership will need to develop if there is any chance of retaining the buildings. Carr Manor Extended Services are supportive of the idea and would like to see the building as a satellite delivery base for their services.

18th April 2007: The partnership discussed a number of meetings that had taken place following the business planning meeting in January. This included meetings with Chris Edwards and the Chief Executive of the ALMO, all discussing the proposal to retain the buildings and aimed at gathering support for the development of a business case.

7th June 2007: The partnership were updated on the report that Area Management are preparing for Asset Management Group in July. This is based on the outcomes of the partnership meeting in January where space requirements, service provision and funding from partners was discussed. Partners were asked to confirm their funding contributions to any scheme so that these can be presented as part of the report.

9th August 2007: The partnership discussed the outcome of the Asset Management Group meeting. Area Management presented a report that requested support to work up an options appraisal for delivering services on the estate, including looking at using the existing school building. This was supported at the time, however the timescale was very tight and subsequently advice from the Leader suggested a report to Cabinet would also be required at this stage otherwise the building should be disposed of. Given this situation, the partnership discussed looking at other ways of improving service delivery on the estate.

4th October 2007: John Ramsden from Asset Management attended the meeting to explain to the partnership how the Council's Capital Programme works and the pressures from a citywide perspective. The partnership were made aware of the opportunity being offered to Area Management to carry out the options appraisal as previously discussed. This will be taken up, and partners will be asked to contribute in terms of confirming their space requirements, capital and revenue contributions to a potential service centre. Area Management will then prepare a report for Asset Management Group at the beginning of November.

29th November 2007: BIG were given an update on progress including the outcome of the Asset Management Group meeting.

Other consultation

Leeds North East Homes options appraisal questionnaire February 2007: The ALMO were undertaking consultation on development options for 3 parts of the Beckhill estate. As part of the questionnaire sent out to their tenants, they included a question on access to services on the estate. They asked; "Would you like to see a purpose built facility on the estate where you could access services?"

53% of respondents said yes (response rate of 41%)

Chapel Allerton ward member meetings: In addition to receiving the minutes of the BIG meetings and discussing these at the meetings that are held every 6-8 weeks with members, they also received a briefing on the Miles Hill options appraisal

report at a meeting on 5th November 2007. This was following the AMG meeting on the 2nd November.

Meanwood Community Forum 28th September 2005: This was an Area Committee forum chaired by Cllr Rafique. It no longer meets since the Area Committee agreed a new community engagement strategy in June 2007. However, at this meeting in 2005 residents raised the proposed closure of Miles Hill Primary School as an item for discussion as they were opposed to it.

Related issue discussed at Overview Scrutiny Committee last year:

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report, together with relevant background papers, relating to the decision of the Executive Board taken on 14th June 2006 (Minute No.14 refers) to publish a statutory notice regarding the proposed closure of Miles Hill and Potternewton Primary Schools w.e.f 31st August 2007 and to create a new 1.5 form entry primary school on the Potternewton site w.e.f. 1st September 2007.

The decision had been called in for review by OSC by Councillors Grahame and Leadley on the following grounds respectively:

- That this decision has been taken without due regard to the implications of closing this school on the local community
- Unclear why Miles Hill was chosen for closure rather than Potternewton.

The following people were present at the meeting, presented evidence and responded to Members' queries and comments:

Councillors Dowson and S Hamilton Chapel Allerton Ward Councillors
Councillor Harker, Executive Member (Learning)
Chris Edwards, Education Leeds
Keith Burton, Learning and Leisure Department
Revd Angela Hughes, Governor, Miles Hill Primary School
Nursery Teacher representative, Miles Hill Primary School
Sandra McCall, Parent, Miles Hill Primary School
Sure Start representative, Miles Hill Primary School

(Councillor Lancaster declared a personal interest in this item in her capacities as Vice-Chair of Governors at Carr Manor High School, a member of the NE Inner Area Committee and Chair of a relevant inter-agency group operating in the area)

Outcome of Call-In

Find out more about item 24:

In accordance with the Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, to consider the Committee's formal conclusions and recommendation(s) arising from its consideration of the Called-in decision.

Minutes:

Following the receipt and consideration of evidence presented to them, OSC deliberated regarding the options available to them, as outlined in Minute No 22. The Committee decided, by four votes in favour to two against, that Option 1 was the most appropriate course of action in this case, and that the Executive Board decision should be released immediately for implementation. However, in doing so reservations were expressed regarding the consultation process, in particular the extent to which the impact of the closure on the community and options for community use of Miles Hill Primary School had been considered, discussed and explored with relevant agencies, the school itself, parents and Ward Councillors.

RESOLVED

That Option 1 be adopted, and the decision of the Executive Board taken on 14th June 2006 to publish a statutory notice to close Miles Hill and Potternewton Primary Schools w.e.f 31st August 2007 and to establish a new 1.5 form entry primary school on the Potternewton site w.e.f 1st September 2007 be immediately released for implementation.

(b) That in consultation with the Chair, the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development prepare and circulate a note for OSC Members outlining the reservations expressed at today's meeting regarding the consultation process in respect of proposed school closures. The note to make reference to ensuring that full and proper consideration takes place of the impact on a local community of a school closure, and an assessment of options, including consultation with interested parties, for community use of school or ex-school premises and facilities.

(c) That when finalised, this note be forwarded to the Executive Board, together with the notification of the Committee's formal decision.