
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 13 December 2006

SUBJECT: Primary Review: Outcome of Statutory Notices for the Reorganisation Proposal in the Meanwood Primary Planning Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Executive Board of the outcome of the statutory representation period for the reorganisation of primary provision in the Meanwood Primary Planning Area.

2. Background

- 2.1 The report provides a summary of the representations received in respect of the statutory notice to close Miles Hill Primary School and Potternewton Primary School in August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry primary school on the current Potternewton site in September 2007.

3. Main issues raised as a result of Statutory Representations

3.1 Opposition to the proposal

From the representations received, there was considerable opposition to the proposal to close Miles Hill Primary School from pupils, parents and the local community. The school was described as being at the 'heart of the community' and the closure of the school would have a detrimental effect on the local area and the extended services on offer.

3.2 Education Leeds response:

Education Leeds acknowledges the concern expressed about the potential impact of the closure of Miles Hill Primary School on the local community. However, the Education Leeds' Organisational Change Team will work with the school providing support through the transition phase to minimise the impact on the community. In addition, the City Council may wish to consider retaining the Miles Hill site for community facilities to support extended services and continued regeneration of the area. This could, however, impact on available investment in the new school that would be funded from a capital receipt for the site.

3.3 Social provision at Miles Hill Primary School

Representations from a number of pupils spoke very highly of the play facilities

on offer at Miles Hill Primary School and of the many awards achieved by the school. These, in addition to the caring nature of the staff at the school, made the school a “fun place to be”.

3.4 Education Leeds response:

The new school presents the opportunity to establish a sustainable, extended school to serve the local area with similar facilities to those that currently exist in both schools.

3.5 Disruption to the children’s education

The school has a number of children with additional needs and concern was expressed that the transition to a new school would be very difficult.

3.6 Education Leeds response:

The proposed new school would build upon the strengths of the existing schools with as much continuity preserved as possible. It is anticipated that careful management of the transition period will minimise disruption and provide the appropriate support for all pupils, parents and staff.

3.7 Class size

The view was expressed that the children at Miles Hill have benefited from being taught in small classes.

3.8 Education Leeds response:

Low enrolments and falling pupil numbers tend to have a detrimental impact on school budgets. This in turn has implications for staffing and delivery of the curriculum. How the new school chooses to organise pupils will depend on the number of children at the school, however, class size is best managed with viable schools to address curriculum needs rather than ad hoc arrangements potentially caused by falling rolls.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Executive Board is invited to:

- i. Consider the representations received
- ii. Agree to proceed with the proposal to close Miles Hill Primary School and Potternewton Primary School on 31st August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry school in the existing Potternewton building on 1st September 2007.
- iii. Note that as a result of the representations the determination of the notice falls to the School Organisation Committee
- iv. Agree that the comments prepared by Education Leeds and contained in this report serve as the Local Authority’s response to the representations for consideration



Agenda Item:

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Electoral wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in

(details contained in the report)

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The report provides a summary of the representations received in respect of the statutory notice to close Miles Hill Primary School and Potternewton Primary School in August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry primary school on the current Potternewton site in September 2007.

2.0 Background

2.1 At its meeting on 14th June 2006, the Executive Board agreed the publication of a statutory notice to close Miles Hill Primary School and Potternewton Primary School on 31st August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry primary school in the current Potternewton building on 1st September 2007.

2.2 The objective of the reorganisation proposal was to address the long-term viability of schools in the Meanwood Primary Planning area, which comprises Miles Hill, Potternewton, Carr Manor, Meanwood CE and St Urban's Catholic Primary Schools. Potternewton and Miles Hill Primary Schools have both felt the impact of low pupil numbers and have the highest surplus places in the area at 59% and 46% respectively (Pupil Level Annual School Census 2006 (PLASC)). In January 2006,

there were 232 pupils in total on roll in the two schools. September 2006 figures indicate the number on roll for both schools is currently 241 and around 43 Reception aged children in the two schools with a combined admission limit of 90. There are approximately 204 surplus places across the five primary schools that make up the Meanwood Planning Area (PLASC 2006).

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The Issue: Statutory Representations:

A total of 175 statutory representations have been received from individuals connected to Miles Hill Primary School, 172 of which were opposed to the proposal. The majority (162) of these are duplicate copies of the same letter that have been signed by parents or carers of children at the school. Eleven letters have been received from pupils at the school, one letter from a local resident and one from the Management Committee of Sure Start Mellow Valley which is located in the former bungalow on the site. A summary is available in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Statutory Notice period for Potternewton Primary School ended on 20 November 2006. No representations have been received in response to that part of the notice referring to the closure of Potternewton Primary School with the exception of the representation from Sure Start Mellow Valley referring to both schools.

3.3 All the written representations received have been analysed in detail and the key issues have been summarised below along with Education Leeds' response. It should be noted that this is a summary of more detailed information. A copy of all written responses is available for inspection from the clerk to the Executive Board, named on the front page of the agenda.

3.4 Opposition to the proposal:

There was considerable support from parents/carers and pupils to retain Miles Hill Primary School within the community to meet the needs of local children and families. Concerns were expressed that the closure of the school would have a detrimental effect on the area. Sure Start, in particular was concerned about the possible loss of a valuable resource for the local communities providing services that local people would otherwise find difficult to access. Furthermore, Sure Start also felt extended services were best achieved through the retention of both schools in the Meanwood area.

3.5 Education Leeds' Response:

Concern about the impact on the local community of the closure of the school is acknowledged. Education Leeds will engage with local agencies and Council departments to plan the transition and implementation to support the families affected. Education Leeds' Organisational Change Team, which has considerable experience of managing similar proposals, has started discussions with both schools and will continue to support the schools to minimise the impact on the community.

Options for consideration include continued use of the Miles Hill site and use of other facilities within the locality. Consequently, the City Council may wish to consider retaining the Miles Hill site for community facilities to support continued regeneration of the area. This could, however, impact on available investment in the new school that would be funded from a capital receipt for the site. Education Leeds will also work with all schools in the area, including the new school, to provide extended school provision that can be tailored to the community's needs.

- 3.6 Social and welfare provision at Miles Hill Primary School:**
The view was expressed that the school has worked hard to provide many facilities to enhance the quality of the learning experience of children at the school. The closure of the school would result in the loss of a number of achievements and developments especially the play provision currently enjoyed by the pupils who attend the school. The grounds in general provide a valuable resource to the children in the area.
- 3.7 Education Leeds' Response:**
The new school presents the opportunity to establish a sustainable, extended school to serve the local area with similar facilities to those that currently exist in both schools.
- 3.8 Disruption to the children's education:**
Concern was expressed that the children at Miles Hill, particularly those with additional needs, would find the transition to a new school difficult.
- 3.9 Education Leeds' Response:**
The review of the provision of school places in this area indicates that there are not currently, nor projected to be, sufficient pupils for both Miles Hill and Potternewton to be retained. An amalgamation would be founded on the strengths of the existing schools, with as much continuity preserved as possible. Schools going through similar proposals in the past have successfully managed transition arrangements whereby the process to enable a smooth integration of the pupils starts prior to the establishment of the new school. It is anticipated that careful management of the transition period will minimise disruption and provide the appropriate support for all pupils, parents and staff.
- 3.10 Children benefit from small class sizes**
It was felt that children benefited from smaller class sizes at Miles Hill Primary School.
- 3.11 Education Leeds's Response:**
Although small schools receive additional, small school funding, this does not necessarily allow for small, single age classes. Low enrolments and falling pupil numbers tend to have a detrimental impact on school budgets. This in turn has implications for staffing and delivery of the curriculum. How the new school chooses to organise pupils would then depend on the number of children at the school. Class size is best managed with viable schools to address curriculum needs rather than ad hoc arrangements potentially caused by falling rolls. The Potternewton building is sufficiently large to accommodate an intake of up to 45 pupils per year (315 in total). The building is large and light and has the potential for additional facilities to be provided.
- 3.12 Community Impact Assessment**
Education Leeds commissioned the Inner North East Area Management Team to undertake a full Community Impact Assessment on this proposal. The purpose was to investigate the impact of the closure of Miles Hill Primary School on community provision on the Beckhill estate, within which the school is situated.
- 3.13** There are a number of facilities available in the area for general community use. Other facilities are located nearby but are considered to be less accessible due to the geographical location; in one direction this involves a steep hill. The facilities located at Miles Hill school are not generally accessible to the wider community with

the exception of Mellow Valley Sure Start which is based in the old Superintendent's bungalow within the school grounds. The continued speculation about the future of Miles Hill Primary School has possibly hindered the development of services at the school. Furthermore, evidence from recently organised events within the community show there is no demand for services nor do residents of the estate access those services that are available close to the estate.

- 3.14** Education Leeds acknowledges that the community around the school has been identified as a priority neighbourhood for action by the North East District Partnership. However, there is no reason to believe that the community provision currently located at Miles Hill Primary School would not be replicated at the proposed new school, or would not exist in another neighbouring school.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

- 4.1** Planning primary school places is relevant to a number of key priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan, the Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Plan, in terms of managing the supply and demand of school places and school improvement. It is also relevant to the Closing the Gap agenda, with the planning of school places taking consideration of wider socio-economic factors and regeneration.

5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.2** There would be an annual revenue saving of approximately £147,710 from this amalgamation proposal.

- 5.3** The Miles Hill Primary School site would be declared surplus to educational requirements if this proposal proceeds. If there is a capital receipt generated from the site, a bid would be submitted to fund primary review works, including improvements proposed on the Potternewton Primary School site. A business case would be developed to identify how the potential costs of spending in advance of the capital receipt would be funded.

5.4 Statutory Implications

- 5.5** The review of primary provision fulfils the LEA's statutory requirement to keep under review the supply and demand of school places.

- 5.6** After full consideration of the views expressed during the Statutory Representation period, Education Leeds is of the view that this proposal should proceed. As statutory objections to the proposal have been received, the proposal falls to the School Organisation Committee for determination.

5.7 Equality Implications

- 5.8** The proposals have been subject to equality impact assessment which indicates that these proposals are not likely to have differential impacts on the basis of ethnicity, disability or gender. The five schools in the area have different ethnic compositions, with the percentage of White British pupils ranging from 39% in Carr Manor Primary to 84% in Meanwood CE Primary. The schools likely to be most impacted on by this proposal all have black and minority ethnic populations. The composition of the new school could be different from the two original schools, dependant on parental choice.

5.9 Indicative Timescale

5.10 Miles Hill Primary School was considered to require special measures following an Ofsted inspection in May 2006, therefore the statutory notice period required was one month from the date of publication of the notice which ended on 6 November 2006. The statutory notice for the closure of Potternewton Primary School, and the establishment of a new one and a half form entry school expired on 20th November 2006.

5.11 The statutory process requires the Local Authority to formally place the proposal before the School Organisation Committee.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Executive Board is invited to:

- i. Consider the representations received
- ii. Agree to proceed with the proposal to close Miles Hill Primary School and Potternewton Primary School on 31st August 2007 and to establish a one and a half form of entry school in the existing Potternewton building on 1st September 2007.
- iii. Note that as a result of the representations the determination of the notice falls to the School Organisation Committee
- iv. Agree that the comments prepared by Education Leeds and contained in this report serve as the Local Authority's response to the representations for consideration

Appendix 1

Representations received in response to the proposal to close Miles Hill and Potternewton primary schools and to open a new one and a half form entry primary school on the Potternewton site.

The following is a summary of the issues raised in written communication during the Statutory Representation period. They reflect the views as they have been expressed. They are not necessarily either accurate or substantiated.

Early Years	Concerns over losing Surestart facilities	2
Access	The Miles Hill pupils will have much further to travel to school	2
Site & Buildings	Make Miles Hill a 1FE primary school	1
	Potternewton not large enough	4
	Should merge both schools on Miles Hill site	3
	Close Potternewton instead	3
	Share pupils from Carr Manor instead	1
	Improve/extend facilities on Miles Hill site instead	1
	Miles Hill provides a valuable play resource	170
	Miles Hill would lose their breakfast and after school clubs	1
Community	Small community schools are beneficial to the children	1
	Miles Hill is at the heart of the community	162
	Don't want to lose facilities	7
	Develop community cohesion by keeping Miles Hill and Potternewton as separate schools	1
	Keep Miles Hill open and improve community resources in the area	1
	Established links with other agencies and voluntary organisations	2
Disruption to children	Concerns about difficulty of pupils adapting to transition	161
Finance	Money invested on facilities wasted	1
Parental Choice	Parent will not send child to Potternewton	2
Process	Proposal has a negative affect on Miles Hill school	1
	Not enough information given	1
Pupil Numbers	Accepts numbers issue	1
	Potternewton has less pupils than Miles Hill	9
SEN issues	Miles Hill provides well for North West SILC	1
Staffing	Dedicated staff at Miles Hill	5
Standards	Small classes are better than large classes	161
Achievements	Miles Hill is a level 3 Healthy School	6
Other	Against proposal	172