



DRAFT Beckhill Neighbourhood Framework

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Foreword

The Beckhill area is a relatively recent addition to the city. Built in the 1970's, the topographical challenges in the area were dealt with in a way which maximised the density of development, but the shortcomings of this approach have over recent years become apparent with poor public realm which has contributed to the occurrence of anti-social behaviour. A number of properties have been cleared over the last 10 years making land available for new development.

This Neighbourhood Framework has been prepared to set out the development opportunities in the area whilst also setting out the design principles that any new development must adhere to. It also identifies a range of other investment requirements in the area to make it an even better area to live for both existing and future residents. Many of these improvements proposals have emerged directly from discussions with residents and we would like to thank everyone for their time and contributions.

Delivery of the proposals is key to the future success of the Beckhill area. The Council will now work hard with partners and developers to deliver the required improvements and secure the delivery of new homes.

June 2014



Cllr Peter Gruen
Deputy Leader
Executive Member for Neighbourhoods,
Planning and Support Services

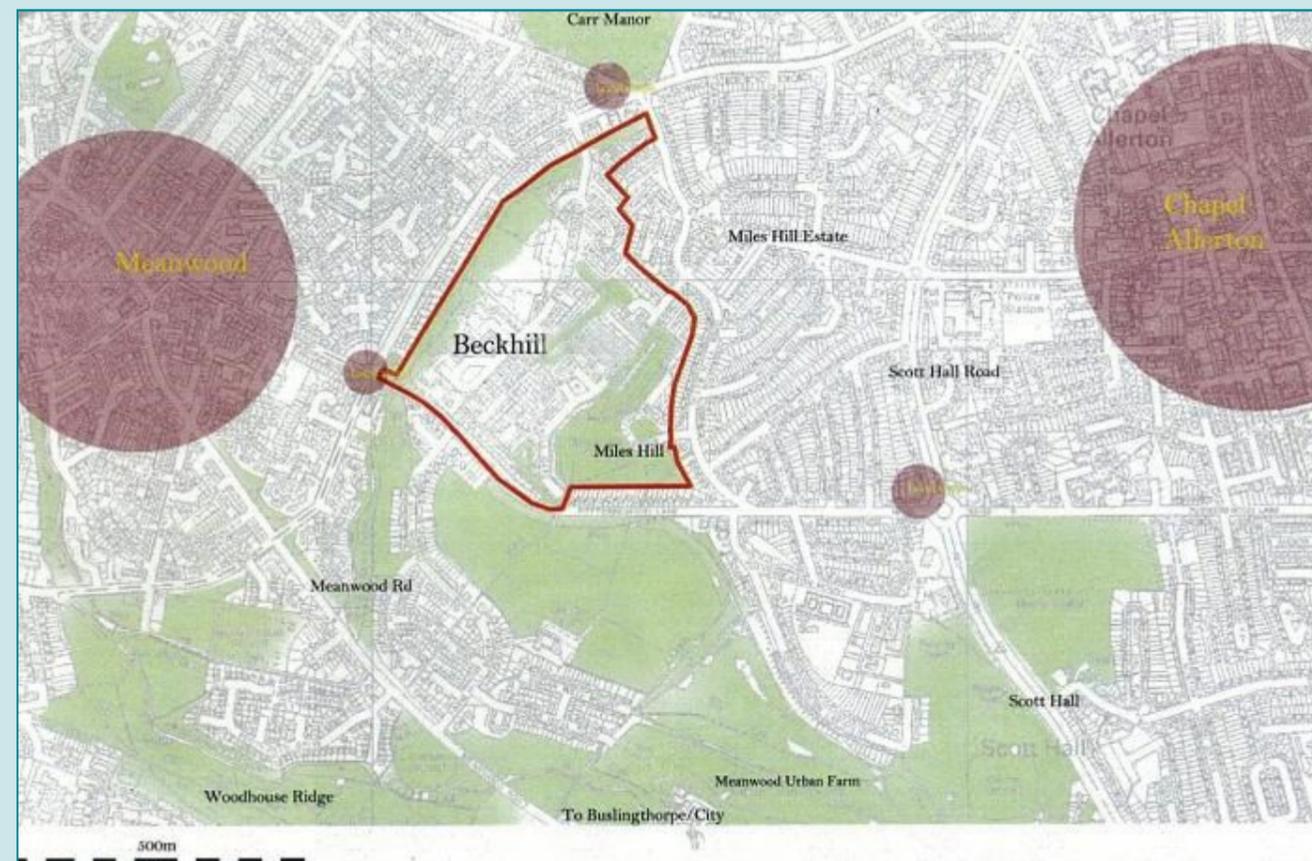


Cllr Richard Lewis
Executive Member for Development and the Economy



Vision

The Beckhill area will provide a range of housing for existing and new residents accompanied by neighbourhood improvements that create a high quality, clean and green environment. The Beckhill area will have a clear identity and will be a place that people want to live, drawn by the unique aspect and setting of Miles Hill, transport links to jobs and attractions across the city and connections into the wider greenspace network.

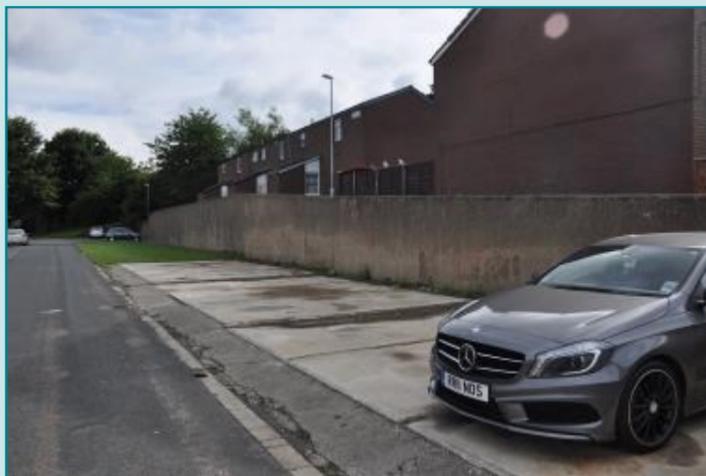


Beckhill Location Plan





This vision focuses the community's aspirations, building on the unique setting of the area whilst addressing the issues that are important to local people. This framework aims to ensure that new development is linked with other investment to the benefit of the wider community and improve the neighbourhood's liveability. Continued partnership working between the council, community, investors and service providers will be the key to successful delivery of this vision and the wider regeneration of the Beckhill area.



A Neighbourhood Framework for Beckhill

What is it and how has it been developed?

What is a Neighbourhood Framework?

This Neighbourhood framework will set out a range of development and investment opportunities for the Beckhill area including land for new housing, improved greenspace and a higher quality environment. The document will be used to help promote the area to developers, guide development proposals, support community projects, help to decide planning applications and help to prioritise investment.

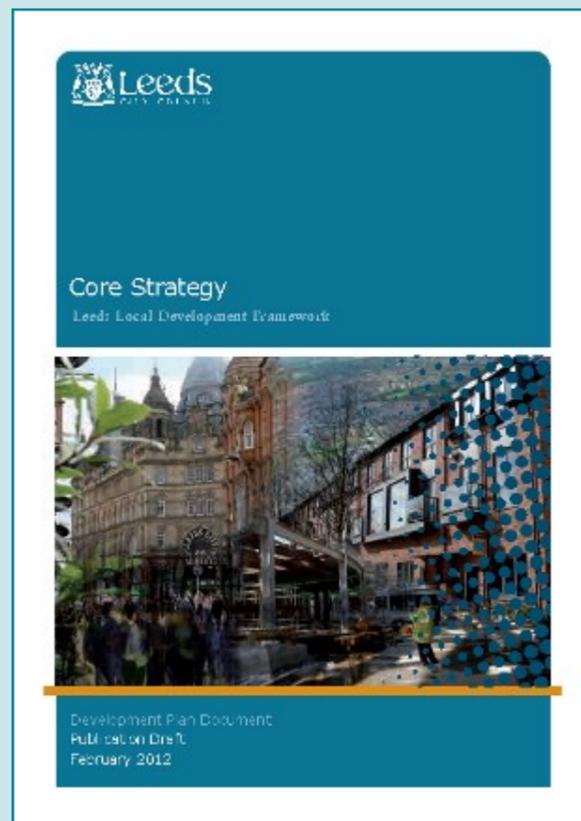
This framework is prepared in the context of a range of other national and local policies and initiatives and seeks to contribute to Leeds becoming 'the best city in the UK'.



Why Beckhill?

The Council owns land within the area which is available for development, these offer an opportunity to meet local housing needs. However, development must be in the right place and must be part of a wider strategy for delivering improvements to the neighbourhood. These wider improvements should be of benefit to existing residents whilst attracting new people to live in the neighbourhood, helping to make it become a vibrant community.

This framework sets out how this could be achieved and includes a 'shopping list' of development and investment opportunities for delivery over the coming years.



Core Strategy



Page 6

A Neighbourhood Framework for Beckhill

Involving local people

Local People know the area they live in better than anyone else. Residents in the Beckhill area have been consulted on many different proposals over the last 8 years and many people have become sceptical about when new development and changes to the area will be delivered. However, the views of local people have been central to the ideas included in this framework. In early 2014, residents were consulted at a drop in session, through door to door consultation and invited to complete an on-line questionnaire. The responses received have helped to identify the issues on the estate which need addressing and how the area can be made more attractive and liveable.

What residents like.....



Things residents would like to see change...



How might the Beckhill Area Change?



This Neighbourhood Framework aims to:

- provide a context and design guidance for the delivery of new housing in the area which will help to meet future housing need and further diversify housing tenure;
- ensure that new development is well designed and integrates with the existing neighbourhood; and
- identify a range of improvements in the area that can be delivered to make it a more attractive area to live and ensure that the benefits of new development are felt by existing residents.

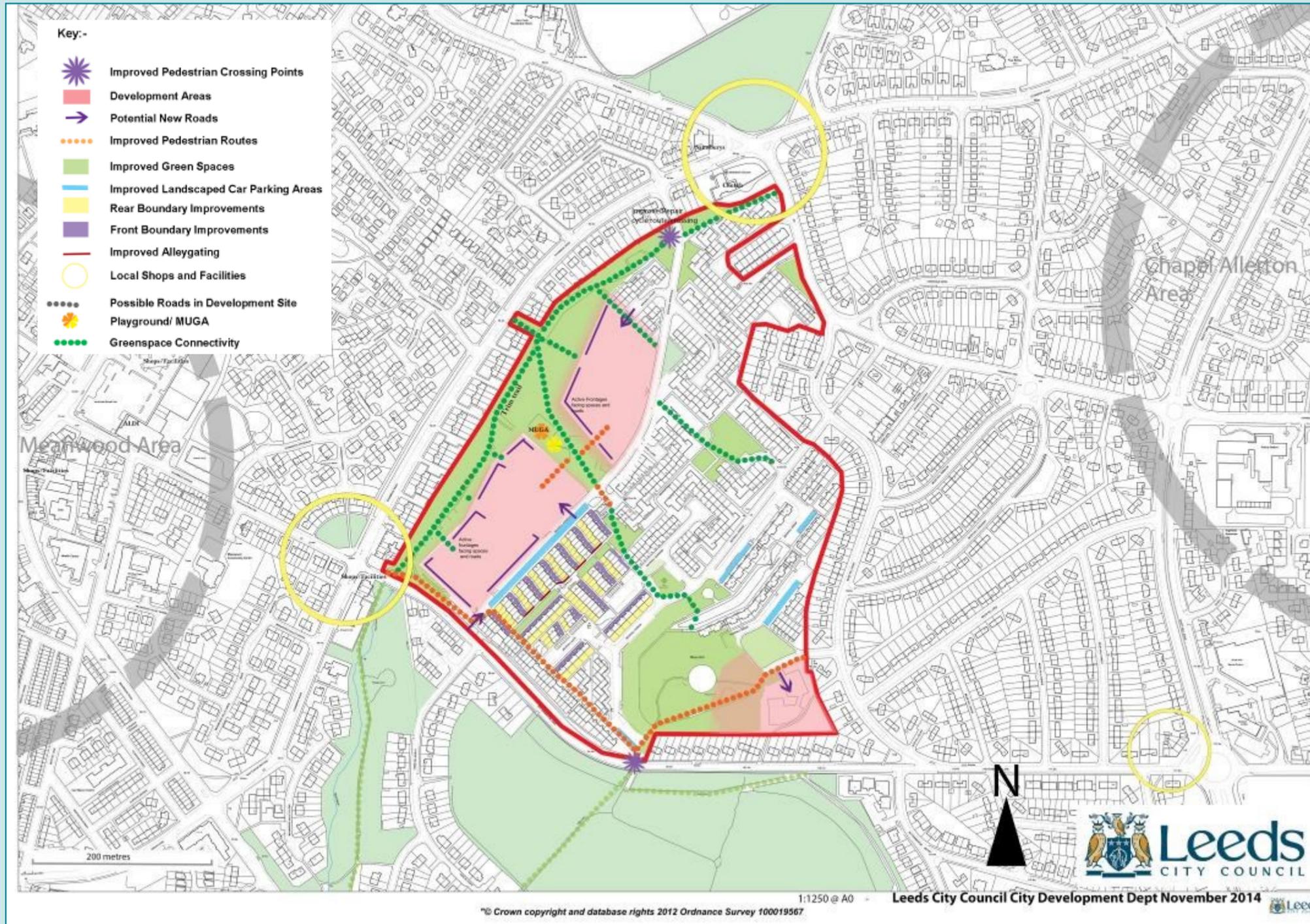
The Neighbourhood Framework proposals plan sets out development opportunities within the area and sets these within a wider context of neighbourhood improvements, focusing primarily on:

- improved connectivity through the area;
- reducing the impact of the topography and the concrete wall along Beckhill Approach;
- reducing concerns about safety; and
- better waste management arrangements;

All of the ideas included in this framework will need to be worked up in more detail and will be subject to further consultation with those residents who are directly impacted.



How might the Beckhill Area Change?



Beckhill Neighbourhood Framework

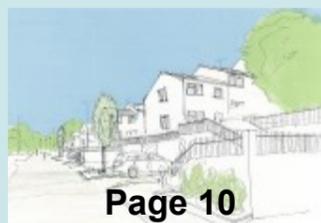


History of Beckhill

There is little known about the history of the immediate area of Beckhill but one thing that seems to be clear is the dominance and recognition of Miles Hill itself which was referenced on the Ordnance Survey plan of 1854. Grindstone Lane (later Potternewton Lane) would likely be a very early route and runs directly to Miles Hill before splitting with one route running to the north and Grindstone Lane continuing to Chapel Allerton.

Up until the 1930's there was little development in the area as it was outside of the industrial growth in Meanwood and Buslingthorpe. In the 1930's however the first semi detached red brick houses began to appear in Miles Hill. It wasn't until the 1970's that the Beckhill neighbourhood we know today was constructed.

At the time of construction, the neighbourhood design was a Radburn layout, based on the earlier Garden Cities Movement pioneered by Ebenezer Howard around the turn of the 20th century. The Radburn style layout attempted to segregate vehicles from pedestrians and integrate car free open spaces for residents to enjoy in a communal manner. This led to the introduction of numerous parking courts and alleyways to serve the houses. The topography of the area resulted in large concrete retaining structures being required which present a poor face to the public realm. The 1970s design has resulted in a poorly defined urban environment that has little relationship to its natural setting as well as feeling isolated from surrounding communities.



Beckhill & Miles Hill
Ordnance Survey Plan - 1854



Beckhill & Miles Hill
Ordnance Survey Plan - 1938



Beckhill & Miles Hill
Ordnance Survey Plan - 1984



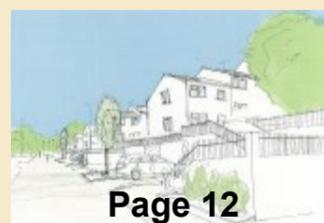
Beckhill & Miles Hill
Aerial Photograph - 2009



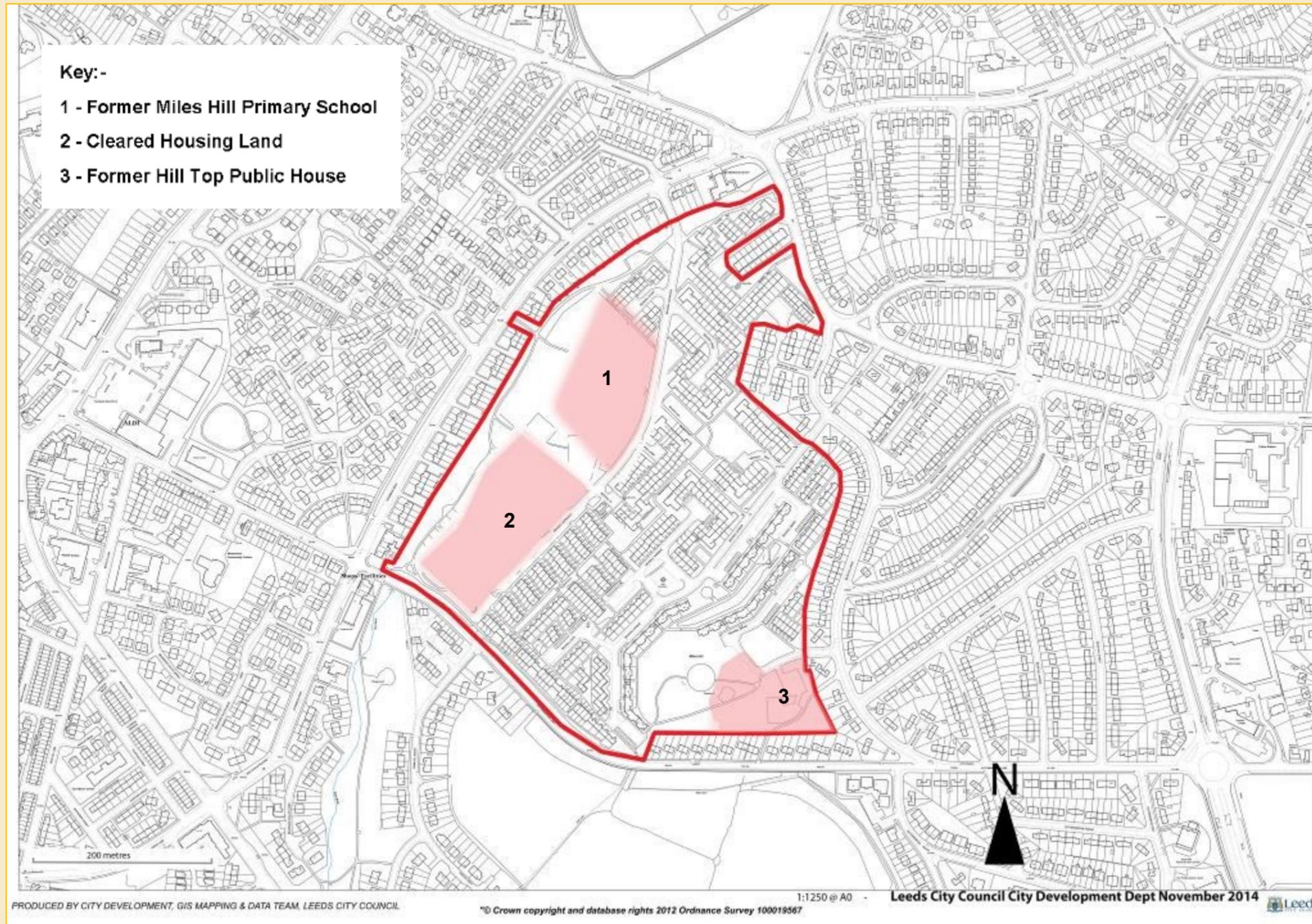
Development Opportunities

Given the density of existing houses in the area, care needs to be taken to ensure that any new development sites which are identified will not add to the problems the estate faces and that there is an appropriate balance between the retention of open space and development of new housing. The former Miles Hill Primary School and adjacent cleared housing land on Beckhill Approach, as well as the former Hilltop Public House on Beckhill Grove are the most obvious locations for new development given that they are cleared sites which currently contribute little in the way of function or amenity to the area.

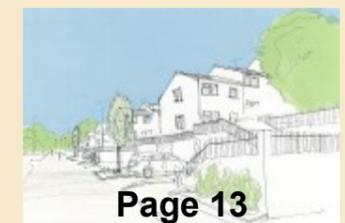
These development opportunities are outlined in more detail in this section of the Neighbourhood Framework, which includes high level design principles to ensure that new development integrates well with the existing urban form whilst contributing to the delivery of wider estate improvements such as open space improvements. The sites are all owned by Leeds City Council who will promote the sites to developers supported by this framework.



Development Opportunities



Beckhill Development Opportunities Plan



Development Opportunities

Beckhill Approach — Former Miles Hill Primary School and cleared housing land

Site Description

This is a cleared site of approximately 5ha. The northern half of the site comprises the area of former school buildings (demolished in early 2008), and the remnants of car parking, hard play area, multi-use games area (MUGA), playing field and areas of landscaping. The southern half of the site previously included terraced houses and flats. The site is currently accessed from Beckhill Approach which in turn joins Stainbeck Road to the north. A strategic open space corridor featuring a culverted beck and pedestrian route runs along the sites western boundary. The eastern boundary is defined by Beckhill Approach and its southern boundary by Potternewton Lane. The northern boundary is bounded in part by the open space corridor and in part by terraced houses. The site falls steeply from Beckhill Approach before levelling out at a point where it meets the open space corridor.

Open Space

The open land previously associated within the former school site (1.5ha) is designated as N6 Protected Playing Pitch in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review. In order to maximise the regeneration benefits of the neighbourhood and create a comprehensive development, it is proposed that some loss of playing pitch land will need to be considered. Its configuration, topography and lack of drainage makes most of it unusable for formal pitch use with at least 0.4ha of the N6 playing pitch land is considered incapable of forming a pitch because of levels and tree coverage. Of the remaining 1.1ha of N6 playing pitch land, 0.6ha could be retained and enhanced to create an informal kick about area. The MUGA that currently exists on site should either be retained in situ and refurbished, or a new facility provided within the retained playing pitch land. As a guide, a separation distance of 20m from a MUGA to the nearest property boundary will be required.



View of former Miles Hill Primary School site

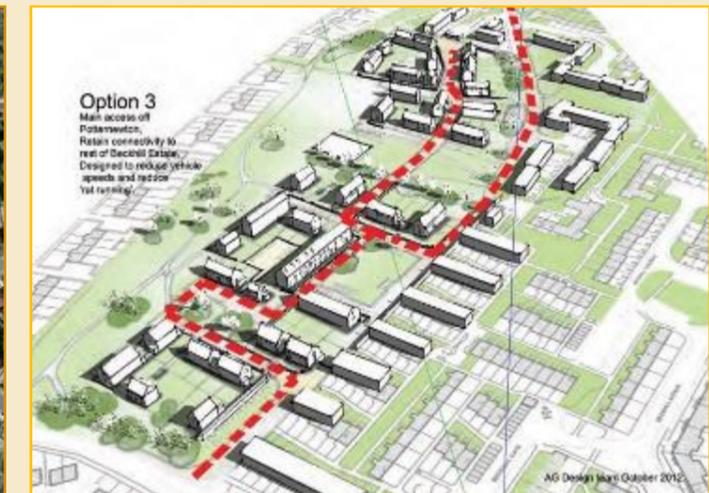
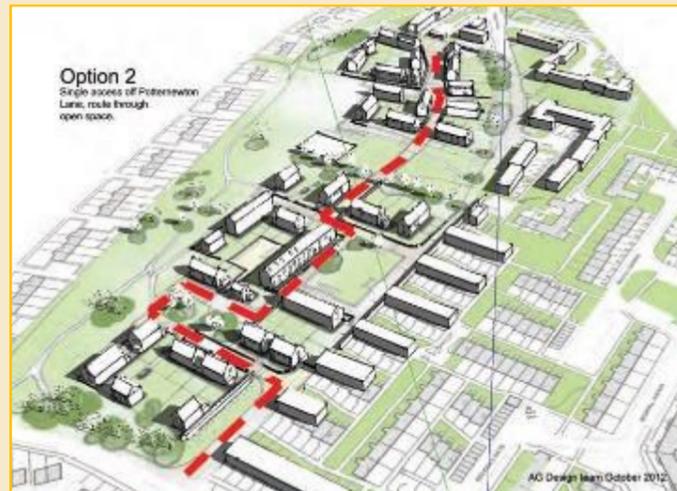
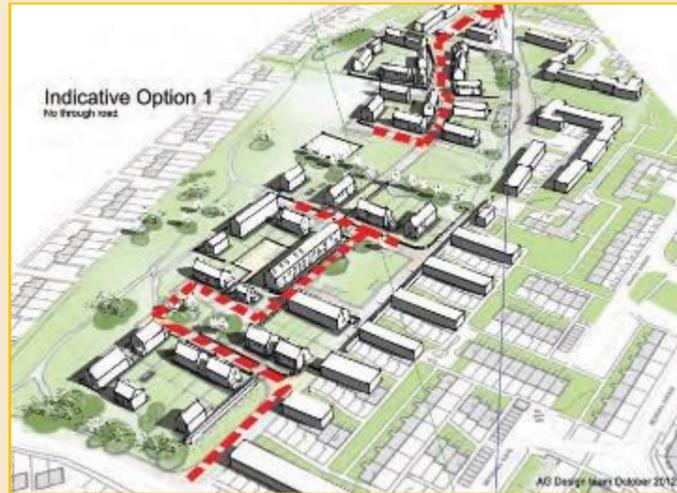
A new play area will also be incorporated into the scheme, as a replacement to the existing facility located on Miles Hill along with a trim trail. These facilities could be located close to the MUGA and will help to ensure a diverse range of recreation equipment. The residual 0.5ha of playing pitch land will need to be reprovided at an alternative location within the same community area and the Council is exploring opportunities in the locality. The greenspace area which abuts the western boundary of the site is allocated as N1 Greenspace in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review and serves as an important strategic greenspace corridor in terms of its recreation, biodiversity and visual amenity value. The redevelopment of the site offers an opportunity to not only rationalise this greenspace boundary to achieve a more rational development boundary without resulting in a net loss of greenspace overall, but to enhance the greenspace corridor.

Trees

Trees which feature throughout the site should be considered for retention where possible. There are mature trees along the boundary with Potternewton Lane which forms an attractive screen as well as along part of the Beckhill Approach boundary which are subject of a Tree Preservation Order due to their contribution to the local amenity value of the area and creation of sense of place. There are semi-formal groups and individual trees around the cleared housing area. In addition a belt of trees runs in a north /south direction between the cleared housing site and the former school site. Individual trees are also located within the open space corridor in the north-west part of the site.



Development Opportunities

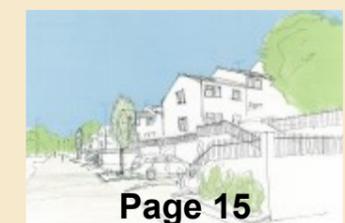


Access

To improve accessibility to the Beckhill Approach housing site, there is scope to create a new vehicular access into the site from Potternewton Lane. Residents however have expressed concern that this may lead to 'rat running'. The options above illustrate possible ways in which a new access could be created whilst minimising the risk of 'rat running'. Vehicle speeds could be limited through the layout design and with a design speed of 20mph or less. Shared surface elements or shared surface speed tables will further reduce vehicle speeds and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Surveillance

The three indicative layouts shown identify the core principles which are primarily concerned with creating natural surveillance of open space and landscaping areas to the west of the development area. It is essential that development overlooks this important section of green infrastructure, which acts as a vital pedestrian link away from the main highway through this part of the neighbourhood. Equally, the new development must relate well with the existing housing on Beckhill Approach with active frontages required along all pedestrian and vehicular routes within and immediately outside of the site.



Development Opportunities

Beckhill Grove — Former Hill Top Public House

Site Description

The site measures approximately 0.4ha and is the site of the former Hill Top Public house and associated car parking. The site is located in an elevated gateway position to the east of the summit of Miles Hill and takes in distant views to the City Centre, Woodhouse Ridge and Headingley. The site is bounded to the north by Beckhill Grove, with rear elevations of semi-detached houses bounding the east and southern boundaries of the site. Access is taken from Beckhill Grove which in turn connects to Miles Hill Road and Potternewton Lane. There are currently two footpaths which link the site to Potternewton Lane and Miles Hill Road. The Council is currently in the process of formally closing these routes. While the area of the former building footprint is relatively level, the site slopes from east to west.

Open Space

The southern part of the site is allocated as protected N1 Greenspace in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review. The play area and open space to the east of the site are unattractive and not well used, and have historically attracted anti-social behaviour. As set out in the Environmental Improvement section of this Framework, it is proposed to relocate the play area to the Beckhill Approach site. This will allow developers an opportunity to consider sensitive encroachment of development into the surrounding open space including Miles Hill. However, this land presents its own challenges in terms of its topography and if it is to be developed a carefully designed solution will need to be identified.

Trees

The site has little in the way of good quality landscape features. However, there are a number of mature trees within the gardens of surrounding properties. Any new development will need to be mindful of root systems and canopies. There is a single tree on the entrance to the site adjacent to Beckhill Grove. Whilst not protected, schemes should where possible seek to incorporate this tree.



View of former Hill Top Public House site



Development Opportunities

Opportunities

Whilst the former pub site could be developed in isolation, there is scope for developers to explore the way in which some of the adjoining open space could be included within a redevelopment scheme given that the play area is to be relocated onto the Beckhill Approach development site. Any solution will need to consider how the distant views from individual properties are maximised, whilst allowing pedestrian permeability through any new development to ensure that it does not sever or divide the area in the same way that the 'Banana Block' currently does. Any development encroachment into the open space will be compensated by other greenspace improvements in the immediate area.

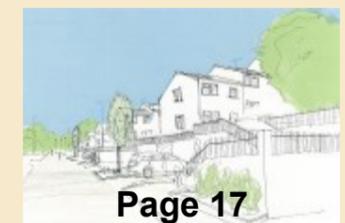
The indicative layout plan identifies one possible solution which sees development of the former pub site with some encroachment into the adjoining open space. The steep topography in this area presents an exciting opportunity for a unique solution to be identified.



Aerial of former Hill Top Public House site with solid red boundary, showing scope to increase developable area as shown by the dashed red boundary. It is proposed that the dilapidated play area is relocated to Beckhill Approach close to the MUGA.



Suggested layout for the former Hill Top Public House site only



Development Opportunities

Design Principles, Objectives and statutory guidelines

Development proposals for both the Beckhill Approach and Beckhill Grove sites will be expected to incorporate the following design principles, objectives, and statutory guidelines.

New Development Objectives

New development should:

- encourage diversification of tenure by promoting private market housing which incorporates the standard element of affordable housing;
- give consideration for elderly persons accommodation;
- be of a high quality and sustainable design that positively integrates with the rest of the area;
- raise the profile of the area and serve as a catalyst to promote the wider regeneration of the neighbourhood;
- exploit the topography and landscape features of the area as opportunities for creating a development of quality that reflects local character;
- retain the best of the existing planting and complement this with new planting to enhance the local character and add to the biodiversity value of the neighbourhood;
- where possible improve and/or create pedestrian linkages to the green corridor;
- take into account the views across the area from the higher ground of the Beckhill neighbourhood and from the lower ground of Stainbeck Road; and
- take opportunities to create and/ or improve greenspaces for local food production and recreation that are safe, well overlooked and respect residents' amenity.

Design Principles for New Development

The design of new development should:

- ensure Landscape elements are retained as assets for development;
- create well overlooked streets and spaces that function well and provide safe places for people;
- tame traffic speed through well designed layouts that naturally slow traffic speed;
- utilise shared surface principles where possible;
- ensure new buildings use high quality materials that have a relationship to the distinctiveness of Leeds;
- be appropriate with regard to heights, massing, density and layout;
- include building elevations that have an appropriate sense of scale and wall/window relationship; and
- ensure high quality/area distinctive materials are used that are consistent throughout;
- Ensure defensible space to fronts and secure private rear gardens that abide by secured by design/ passive surveillance principles.

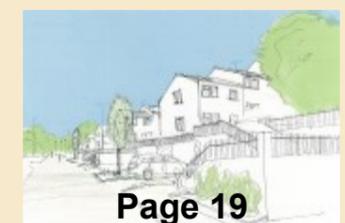
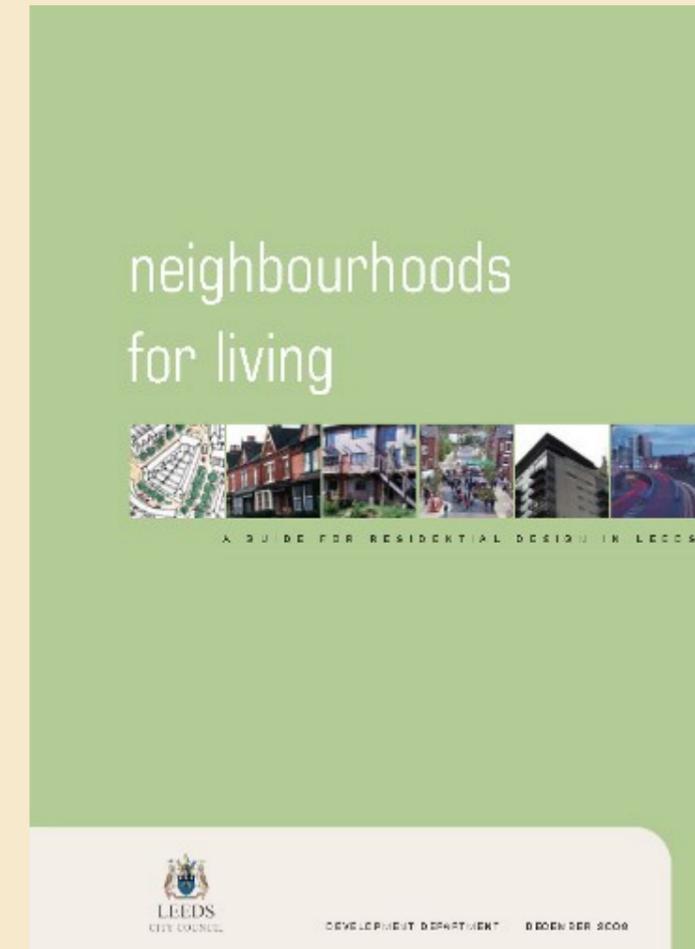


Development Opportunities

Statutory Guidelines for New Development

New development should:

- Take account of the City Council's draft Core Strategy policies on housing density and mix. Policy H3 expects development sites within the urban area to achieve a density of 40 dwellings per hectare;
- Comprise a mix of houses types and sizes in line with Policy H4;
- Give a strong regard for part of the site to be considered for build for rent and elderly persons accommodation as a demand has been identified within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
- Have regard to the design considerations outlined in the Council's 'Neighbourhoods for Living – A Guide for Residential Development In Leeds'(2003) and 'Secure by Design' (2007). It should noted that privacy and aspect distances between dwellings would need to take in to account the level differences across the site;
- Where feasible, use materials from sustainable sources, and alongside the requirement for highly energy efficient buildings, use sustainable construction methods as outlined in the City Council's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document;
- Incorporate a layout which complies with the City Council's guidelines in respect of distances from development to trees in relation to both on-site and off-site trees.



Neighbourhood Improvements

Through consultation with residents and work with stakeholders, particular areas of concern have been identified. These have focused on:

- The 'Banana Block' on Beckhill Avenue;
- The condition and usability of the play area on Miles Hill and open space more generally;
- Improved sport and recreation facilities for young people;
- Public realm and environmental issues around the Beckhill Approach area;
- Pedestrian connectivity around the estate;
- Street Lighting and safety;
- Litter, rubbish and waste collection.

This section of the Neighbourhood Framework sets out the proposed neighbourhood improvements drawing on suggestions made by residents and stakeholders. The intention is that these will be funded through planning contributions and capital investment by the Council.



Neighbourhood Improvements

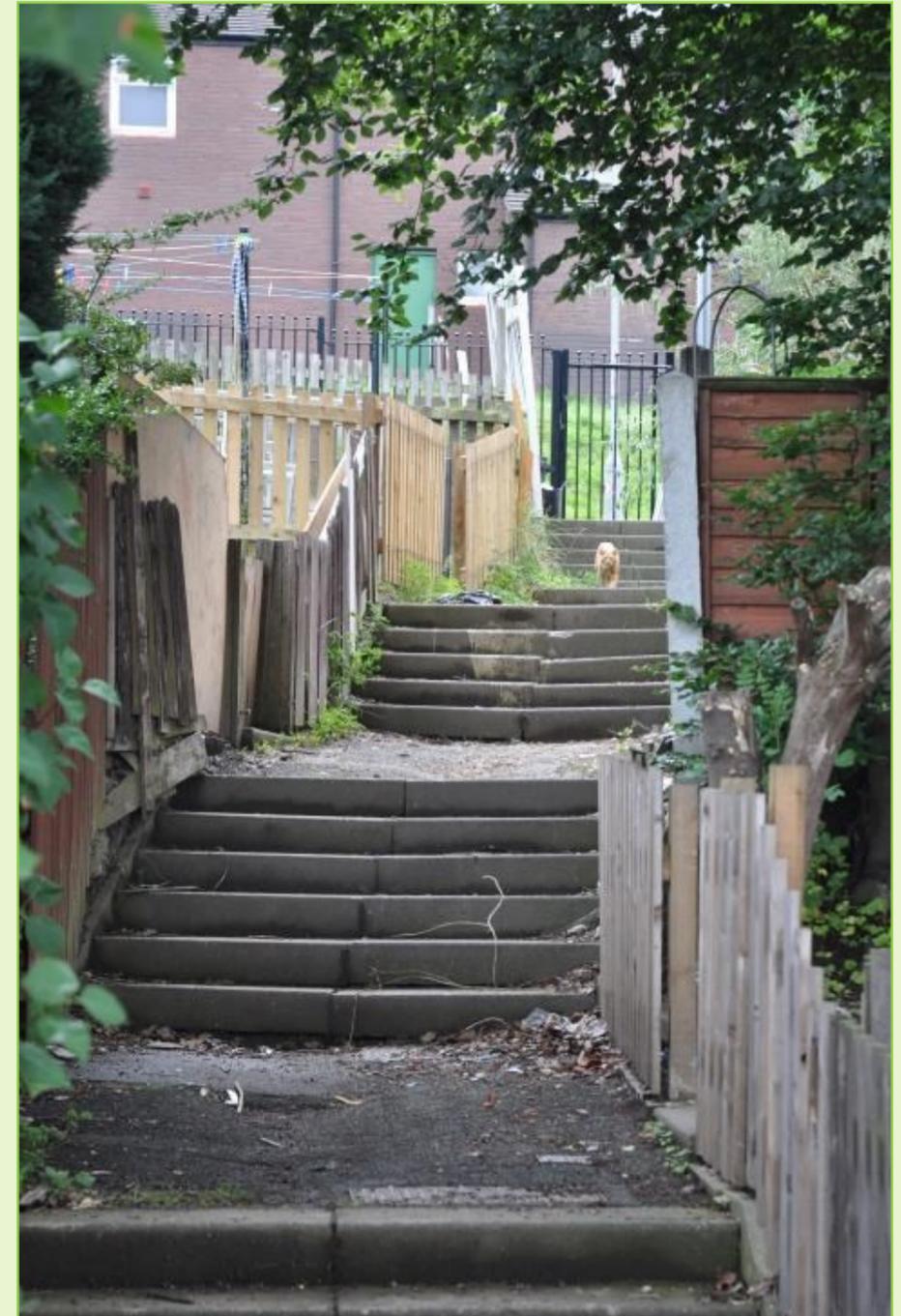
Beckhill Approach

The Beckhill Approach area is the most challenging part of the estate due to its steep topography and density of housing which is built above a reinforced concrete retaining wall. There are a variety of improvements identified for this area:

- Changes to the retaining wall — the retaining wall creates a real barrier and negative impression of the area. Whilst it is not possible to fundamentally change the wall without large-scale housing clearance, the wall can be reduced in height and architectural steel railings installed. This will provide a more open and less oppressive environment, whilst also increasing safety. The wall could also be rendered or painted to make further improvements to the public realm.
- Garden boundary treatments — Many gardens in the area are properly fenced, but are let down by poor quality or inappropriate treatments elsewhere. A targeted approach will be taken to deliver more consistent boundary treatment, making the area more attractive.
- Footpaths and steps — There are a large number of steps in this area and many are showing signs of wear or have been damaged. The steps will be refurbished so that they meet current standards delivering both a visual and safety improvement.



The retaining wall on Beckhill Approach is currently unattractive and creates a negative impression of the area. The wall will be reduced in height with new fencing installed on the top, making it less oppressive and increasing natural surveillance



Footpath, steps and boundary improvements will make the Beckhill Approach area more attractive.



Neighbourhood Improvements

Greenspace and Recreation

Miles Hill Play area

The play area located on the peak of Miles Hill was once a modern facility, but the play equipment is now looking tired having being vandalised and damaged. The play area is not well overlooked by nearby properties and is poorly connected to other parts of the site both visually due to the visual barrier of the 'Banana Block' and poor footpath connectivity from the lower parts of the neighbourhood.

The play area is to be relocated onto the Beckhill Approach development site to ensure that it is more accessible and well overlooked. Further engagement will take place with young people when designing the facility to ensure that there is community ownership of the new facility and that it meets the needs of local people.

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

The existing MUGA on the former Miles Hill Primary School site is in a poor condition and is currently inaccessible following closure of the school. As set out on page 12, the MUGA will need to be refurbished or re-provided as part of any new development on this site. Placed adjacent to the new play area, a new outdoor leisure hub for young people will be created with new development providing overlooking of the facilities but at a distance that any noise will not cause a nuisance.



Existing play area — The facility will be relocated from its current location to sit alongside the MUGA and trim trail on the development site at Beckhill Approach



Existing MUGA is unusable. The facility will be either refurbished or re-provided as part of a development scheme for the former school site and land on Beckhill Approach



Neighbourhood Improvements



Trim Trail—Trim trail could be provided alongside new play area on MUGSA on Beckhill Approach development site

Trim Trail/ Outdoor Gym

Through the consultation, young people in particular expressed a wish to see a trim trail or outdoor gym located in the open space close to the new play area and MUGA. The exact nature of any such facility will be the subject of further engagement, but will add to the range of facilities for residents and young people in particular who live in the Beckhills and surrounding areas.

Footpath Improvements and Pedestrian Connectivity

Almost every footpath throughout the Beckhill housing area incorporates steps to aid pedestrian movement throughout the steeply sloping area. However, the quality of steps varies widely with some showing signs of wear. The problem is most obvious along Beckhill Approach where the narrow paths are particularly steep. These will be renewed which will improve the public realm, whilst also making them safer for pedestrians and residents. Improving the pedestrian legibility of the area is also important and can be achieved through simple signage which denotes the main thoroughfares, differentiating them from those footpaths which are more domestic in nature and primarily provide access to residential properties. Equally, signage and access to nearby areas of natural greenspace will be improved to promote recreational opportunities to residents in the Beckhills.

The Beckhill area is well connected to nearby areas of green space via the green corridor which runs along the western boundary of the Beckhill Approach site. This provides a connection to Carr Manor Recreation Ground, Ridge Plantation and through the former Meanwood Hospital site to link into the Meanwood Valley green corridor to the north. The route also extends south along Stain Beck to Woodhouse Ridge and Batty's Wood. Good footpaths already exist, but connectivity from the Beckhill area could be improved through new signage and interpretation boards.

Other open space improvements

As part of any new development on Beckhill Approach and Beckhill Grove, improvements to the surrounding open space will be sought to improve its quality and usability. There are also a number of incidental areas of open space in the Beckhills which provide relief in what is a densely designed housing area. However, much of the open space provides little function or value, but is so important given the urban design form. Through small scale improvements, such as the introduction of seating, these areas will become better used and provide good resting points for pedestrians using the steep paths through the neighbourhood. Some areas of open space also lend themselves to more community led improvements in the form of community gardens. This will help local residents to take more ownership of the area and could include small scale food growing or more formal planting.



Neighbourhood Improvements

Other Improvements

'Banana Block—Beckhill Avenue'

The 'Banana Block' has proved increasingly unpopular for residents for some years as increasing numbers of the flats become unoccupied. The Council's intention is to demolish the building given the condition of accommodation it provides and the severing and oppressive impact that the building has upon the area caused by the large concrete retaining wall that the 3 storey building sits on. It is hoped that the building and retaining wall structures can be demolished down to ground level and the remaining site graded out. The demolition specification can only be confirmed once the building is vacant and further survey work can be undertaken, however, works will aim to open up Miles Hill from the lower reaches of the estate whilst also creating a better public realm on Beckhill Avenue itself.



Banana Block on Beckhill Avenue



Neighbourhood Improvements

Street Lighting and Safety

Many residents and stakeholders have raised concerns about street lighting on the estate, despite new lighting being provided as part of the City Councils street lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The street lighting provision has been reviewed and the 'dark spots' identified. These will be dealt with as part of the PFI contract and will include changes and additional lighting columns in some areas and brighter bulbs being installed in others. Any trees or vegetation which are causing shadows have also been identified and where they are the responsibility of the Council are being cut back to further improve lighting.

Former Garage sites

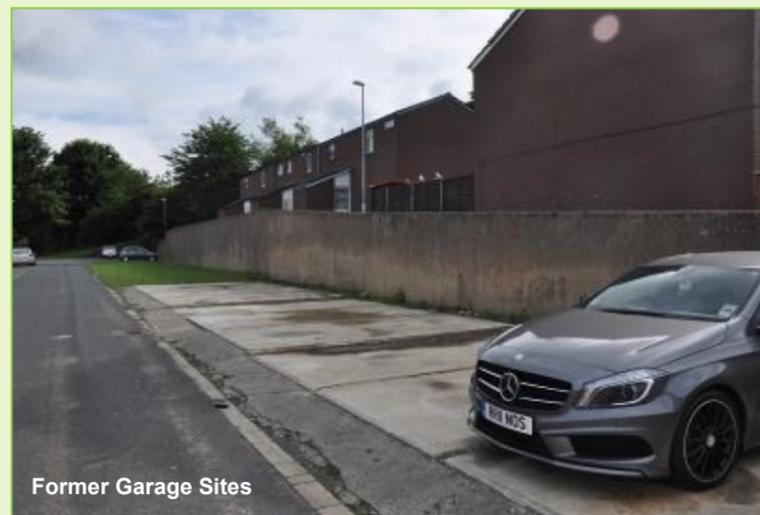
There are examples across the area where garages have been demolished due to their condition and low demand. These sites are unattractive and can easily improved through low level planting.

Integrated Waste Management Strategy

The approach to waste collection in the area is inconsistent with many residents using black bags and a small number of properties having wheeled bins. This is primarily due to many properties being accessed via steps which prevents the widespread use of wheeled bins. In addition, the use of the recycling points varies with some attracting items which should be taken to the Councils main recycling centres. The Council will prepare an Integrated Waste Management Strategy for the area which will identify a more joined up approach to waste management which will aim to reduce the quantity of litter and provides residents with a more consistent waste collection service.



Street Lighting 'dark spots'



Former Garage Sites



Integrated Waste Management Strategy

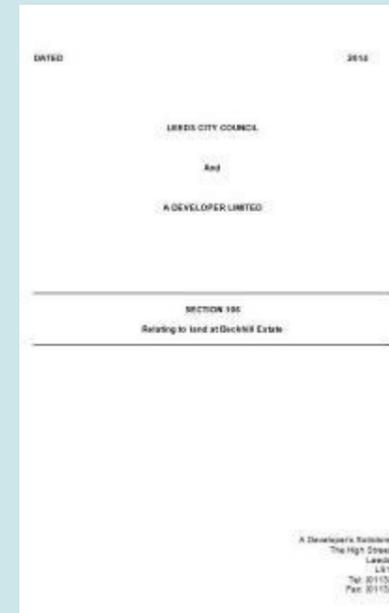


Delivery and Implementation



Step 1 - Planning approval for new development

Step 2 - Financial contributions agreed as part of a planning approval through S106



Step 3 - Construction on site utilising local labour where possible



Step 4 - S106 contributions used to deliver improvements that will benefit the residents of Beckhill e.g. trim trail



Delivery and Implementation



New Development

The development sites set out in this framework are owned by Leeds City Council. The City Council will market the sites in a planned way to make sure that development and its impact is phased across the area and that it delivers the type of investment which is required at the time.

Other Investment and changes

The Council is committed to improving and investing in the Beckhill area and will use its capital resources to help to deliver the variety of improvements set out in this framework. In addition, developers are required to pay planning contributions as part of any new development, to cover the cost of works without which the development would be problematic or its full benefits might not be realised. At present these contributions are called S106 obligations but in the future some will be made under the Community Infrastructure Levy. Contributions can be for open space and public realm improvements, the creation or enhancements to new footpaths, play areas or other local facilities, changes or improvements to public transport services, schools and finally to ensure the delivery of the right number of affordable houses. Equally, S106 agreements can also be used to ensure that jobs and training opportunities are made available to local people in the first instance.



Community Action

Local residents can become more involved in directly improving their neighbourhood. There are a number of small-scale open space improvements identified which local groups could take forward to create community gardens or allotments. Some organisations such as Groundwork offer small pots of grant funding to support this type of work which community groups may be able to bid for if they develop proposals that meet the funding criteria.



