

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 3RD JULY, 2006

PRESENT: Councillor G Driver in the Chair
Councillors B Anderson, J Bale,
P Grahame, B Lancaster and T Leadley
Apologies Councillors B Cleasby and R Pryke

20 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Bale was advised that he did not have to declare an interest in this item in his capacity as Chair of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services).

The Chair reminded Members that if any of them were also members of the School Organisation Committee (SOC), which made the ultimate decision in respect of school closures, then they must decide whether to hear the case today and absent themselves when the case came before SOC, or vice-versa. He stated that he intended to Chair this meeting today, and absent himself when the matter came before SOC.

No other declarations of interest were made at the this juncture (see also Minute No.23).

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cleasby and Pryke

22 Call-in of a Decision - Briefing Paper

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report regarding the procedural aspects of the Call-In process.

The options available to OSC in respect of the called-in decision of the Executive Board were explained. Due to the nature of the decision, the options available to OSC at today's meeting were:

Option 1 – Release the decision for implementation. Having reviewed the Executive Board decision, OSC could simply decide to release it for implementation. If this option was chosen, the decision would be released immediately for implementation and the decision could not be called-in again.

Option 2 – Recommend that the decision be reconsidered. Having reviewed the Executive Board decision, OSC could recommend the Executive Board to reconsider its decision. A report would then be submitted to the Executive Board outlining the views of OSC, and the Executive Board would reconsider

its decision. The Executive Board's reconsidered decision could not be called-in again, regardless of the nature of that decision.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the procedures outlined in the report be adopted for this meeting.

23 Review of Called-In Decision - Closure of Miles Hill Primary and Potternewton Primary Schools and Creation of a new Primary School on the Potternewton Site

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:

- 1 That this decision has been taken without due regard to the implications of closing this school on the local community
- 2 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 Primary School, a member of the NE Inner Area Committee and Chair of a relevant inter-agency group operating in the area)

24 Outcome of Call-In

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 –

- (a) That Option1 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.

(NB: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.5, Councillor Grahame wished it to be recorded that she voted against Resolution (a) above, and Councillor Bale wished it to be recorded that he voted in favour of Resolution (a)).