



Report of the North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 1st September 2008

Subject: Access to Services in Beckhill - Feasibility Study

Electoral Wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton

Ward members consulted
(referred to in this report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report delivers the feasibility study into the proposal for a new build, multi-agency service centre on the Beckhill estate endorsed by the Area Committee in February 2008.

In addition, this report provides an update on the position regarding the future of the caretaker's bungalow on the site of the former Miles Hill Primary School. The bungalow was refurbished to accommodate family and childrens services, paid for by Sure Start and the Area Committee. The report recommends a request is submitted to ring-fence any future capital receipt from the sale of the site to the value of the capital invested by Sure Start/Area Committee in order to fund relocation of the services on the Beckhill estate. The request will be subject to the development of a robust business plan and agreement from the Council's Asset Management Group to the terms of any relocation to non-Council facilities.

The report asks the Area Committee to consider the outcomes of the study, address the issues that have emerged and to decide on any further action.

Purpose of this report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to deliver the feasibility study into a proposed Joint Service Centre for Beckhill estate to the Area Committee and present the preferred option for development into a viable proposal. It outlines events relevant to these proposals that have occurred following the commissioning of the feasibility study. In particular, this report provides an update on the position regarding the future of the caretaker's bungalow on the site of the former Miles Hill Primary School. It includes background information that sets the context for the current situation. A copy of the full feasibility report is available by contacting the Area Management Office (tel. 0113-2145868).

Background

- 2 A previous report to the Area Committee in December 2007 set out potential options for multi-agency use of the Miles Hill school site. Nine options for the re-use of the site were considered, three of which were worthy of more detailed consideration. All three promoted new build solutions of various sizes on the site.
- 3 Significant consultation was undertaken to identify the need for this project. A Community Impact Assessment was carried out in 2006 as part of the consultation around Miles Hill School. It concluded that there were gaps in provision and particular problems with access to service provision in Beckhill. Partners, including Leeds PCT, West Yorkshire Police, Education Leeds and Extended Services were also consulted and identified a need to be based in the immediate locality. At that time there were no suitable buildings identified on the Beckhill estate that could provide accommodation for service requirements.
- 4 Asset Management Group, (AMG) agreed to support further exploration of the three favoured options, particularly to address the financial issues that exist both in terms of revenue and capital funding. In addition, AMG asked that an assessment of whether alternative Council or third party sites in the local area might present an opportunity for the facility proposed.

Financial issues and the Capital Receipts Programme

- 5 In the case of each option a shortfall in both the capital and revenue costs required for construction and the approximate running costs was identified. A £1m capital receipt is expected from the disposal of the Miles Hill School site. Due to the pressures on the citywide Capital Programme the Executive Board agreed a policy in August 2007 which has implications for this proposal.

“No new injections to the capital programme will be made without identifying new resources or taking an existing scheme out. Capital receipts from sites on the existing disposal programme cannot be diverted to other projects and initiatives.”

- 6 Therefore the North East (Inner) Area Committee were asked to consider existing schemes in their area and indicate if they wished to identify a scheme in the area, currently in the Capital Programme, which could be withdrawn to meet the capital costs involved.

- 7 The Area Committee considered this at its meeting on December 3rd. They resolved that there is currently nothing in the Capital Programme that they feel could be taken out on the basis community expectations have already been raised for the Council to deliver the schemes in the programme.
- 8 Since the commissioning of the feasibility study officers have been looking to identify sites in the 3 wards covered by the Area Committee that are currently in the ownership of the Council, but not identified in the Capital Programme, that could be disposed of to cover the capital costs of the scheme. This principle has been successfully applied in the case of Otley Civic Centre. The Area Management Team has undertaken a review of Inner North East and no suitable property was identified for disposal.
- 9 The implication of these financial issues outlined above is that funding is not available to deliver the full scope of the proposed Joint Service Centre Scheme as outlined in the feasibility report. However, events relevant to these proposals have subsequently occurred that impact on current and future provision of services in Beckhill and provide opportunity for the Area Committee to ensure a gap in provision can be filled, complementary to recent service developments. These are outlined below.

Former Caretaker's Bungalow

- 10 In 2004 the Government announced the integration of Sure Start local programmes into the Children's Centre programme as part of the 10 year Strategy. Lack of local facilities has long been identified as a major barrier to service delivery in the MilesHill/Beckhill and Scott Hall areas. In addition, poor transport links mean that local people find it extremely difficult to access services elsewhere. Sure Start proposed to tackle this through minor capital improvements to the Scott Hall Early Year's Centre and by the substantial redevelopment of the redundant caretaker's bungalow in the grounds of Miles Hill School. It was proposed that the latter would act as the main hub for Sure Start programme in the MilesHill/Beckhill/ScottHall areas. The total refurbishment costs were £60,000. In October 2004 the Area Committee allocated £20,000 of well-being funds from its capital budget. Sure Start provided the balance of £40,000.
- 11 In 2007 the Sure Start programmes in Leeds reconfigured themselves into 5 Seven Day Response Teams providing more specialist services for families with escalating needs in those most disadvantaged localities. The lead agencies for those teams remained the same as the lead partners for the Sure Start Local Programmes and in Beckhill services were co-ordinated by the Children's Society.
- 12 Since the demolition of Miles Hill School the bungalow there has been subject to ongoing vandalism resulting in frequent disruption to services delivered to local families from the bungalow. In mid-June, following an attempted burglary, the Children's Society were advised to remove all confidential files to the Little London Children's Centre. At the end of June, due to further vandalism and to ensure the safety and security of their staff, The Children's Society was unable to continue delivering services from the building. Consequently Early Years Service declared the bungalow surplus to its operational requirements.

- 13 The services delivered from the bungalow have been temporarily relocated to the Little London Children's Centre and a reduced service in the Beckhill area is being delivered from Stainbeck Church.

Sure Start Local Programme Funding

- 14 The use of Sure Start capital funding is subject to a Partnership Contract which secures the use of the asset for 25 years for the benefit of families with children aged 0 to 5. The conditions of that contract will transfer with the property. Sale of the asset or change of use will result in clawback of that capital funding unless the agreed market value of the asset is reinvested in premises within a reasonable proximity of the property or reinvested for the benefit of the Sure Start community of families with children under the age of 5.
- 15 The Area Management Team have met with Asset Management officers to discuss the outcome of the feasibility study and the use of capital to secure the provision of future services in Beckhill. Colleagues support, in principle, the ring fencing of a portion of the capital receipt gained from the open market disposal of the former caretaker's bungalow for the re-provision of services previously delivered from the bungalow to another venue(s) in Beckhill.
- 16 It should be noted though that the current economic climate may delay the disposal of the site and this may lead to cash-flow issues to resolve should the timescales become incompatible.

Stainbeck Church

- 17 Stainbeck Church is located on a substantial plot at the junction of Stainbeck Lane and Stainbeck Road. It is in the far north east corner of the Beckhill estate and currently provides a base for a number of activities accessed by the local community including a community café, youth club and older people's club. The church and grounds are owned by the Yorkshire/Leeds Congregational Council.
- 18 The church minister is a member of the Beckhill Implementation Group and is well known and respected in the local community. As a consequence, Beckhill residents already access the church facilities and recognise it as a focal point of the community.
- 19 The Church's Community Outreach and Development Enterprise (CODE) aims to provide opportunities for local people to use the building in a way that will foster a sense of community. They have recently spent £10,000 enlarging the car park, and considerably more on making the building compliant with legislation relating to access for disabled. With the help of the Community Buildings Capital Grant Scheme, they have created an attractive and welcoming entrance facing the Beckhill estate and car park. Last year, with support from the Area Committee, well-being funds were allocated to install a stair lift to bring people from the car park level to the community café on the upper level. Further well-being funds have been allocated to open up the large space, currently only used on a Sunday, for community use.
- 20 Recently, the area has been used for First Aid for Children Courses run by Early Years, and activities organised by Learning Partnerships. The Hall downstairs is

used every day by groups and there is now a thriving club for 7-12 year olds and a Karate Group run by a local Police Officer. All these activities however, including more recently the Seven Day Response Team, increase the demand for space.

Carr Manor Children's Centre

- 21 Carr Manor Children's Centre opened on the main school site on 3rd July 2008. Both the high school and primary school serve the Beckhill/Mileshill communities. Local Authorities were given strategic responsibility for the delivery of children's centres. The centres take into account the needs of local communities and have been developed in consultation with private, voluntary and independent sectors, the PCT, Job Centre Plus and other key partners to deliver a range of services.
- 22 Discussions have taken place with the Carr Manor Children's Centre manager to locate those services identified through consultation on the Joint Service Centre proposals. Agreement has been given that space can be provided for child and family services, including health, specialist services and links to local Jobcentre Plus and training. This removes the need for a new build, multi- agency service centre on the Beckhill Estate.

Proposed way forward

- 23 An assessment of the Stainbeck Church site for the proposed joint service centre was undertaken as part of the feasibility study at the request of Asset Management. Although for the purposes of the study this was to consider the feasibility of a new build, stand alone facility, it concluded that this location would be a positive location due to its existing links to the community, the Beckhill Implementation Group (BIG) and Area Committee.
- 24 As previously mentioned in this report, The Seven Day Response team are delivering a reduced service from the church since the closure of the bungalow. It is the view of Chapel Allerton ward members and the Beckhill Implementation Group (BIG) that Stainbeck Church is the preferred location for the future delivery of these services. In addition, preliminary discussions with the church minister indicate that the church would be interested in facilitating the proposed service within their grounds. They would like to free up more space and refurbish facilities to make them more conducive to these services and extend the benefits to more families - bringing an integrated approach to service delivery to areas where it is most needed.
- 25 The Area Management Team met with the Children's Services Locality Enabler, Councillor Dowson and Early Years Service to discuss the long term provision of services in Beckhill and their location. It is proposed that the capital ringfenced from the disposal of the bungalow is reinvested towards refurbishment of the church premises to deliver family support services in Beckhill. It is proposed that these proposals are integrated around the Children's Plan and link with the Meanwood Children Services Cluster.
- 26 Asset Management Group has indicated their support for these proposals to be investigated and has advised the following as a process.
- Establish a project team led by BIG and the Integrated Services Leader.

- Develop a business plan/project plan to determine the physical aspects of the scheme, refurbishment required and costs – with clarity on any proposed agreement between LCC and the church which would set down the relationship between the parties from an operational and property perspective - and which demonstrates how services will be re-provided.

- 27 Asset Management Group has requested that subject to Area Committee approval, an update report is submitted to their September meeting.
- 28 It should be noted that the cost to the Area Committee of the feasibility study is being questioned, as the content would not appear to provide the detail that had been expected nor represent value for money.

Recommendations

- 29 The Inner North East Area Committee are requested to:
- a. Support a request to Asset Management Group to ring-fence the capital invested in the caretaker's bungalow by Sure Start and the Area Committee to facilitate the re-provision of services previously provided at the bungalow to Stainbeck Church – subject to a process, robust business plan and clear agreement with the Church on how services will be re-provided and hosted as outlined in section 26.

Background Papers

1. Feasibility Report – Joint Services Centre in Beckhill, Meanwood, Leeds