

Little Owls Nurseries Review - Appendix 2

Little Owls Nurseries Review – Comments/Queries into Little Owls Review Mailbox

Setting	Summary
Chapel Allerton	<p>The following questions and concerns were raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did the council not reach out to families during the decision-making process? 2. Why has the council not reached out and guaranteed a place to children affected by the closure? 3. What criteria is used to conclude there are sufficient places in the area (Little Owls Chapel Allerton)? (feels it is unclear how Chapel Allerton falls into that category) 4. Does 'sufficient places in the area' refer to Little Owls places specifically, and if not, what other providers have been considered in this decision? 5. What definition of 'in the area' is used? (What distance for families to travel, and whether
Chapel Allerton	The father stated there would be leaflets distributed outside Chapel Allerton and outside Bramley on Monday 25th March
Hunslet Rylestone	Not happy with timescale and possible increased cost in care.
N/A (Restructure & withdrawal queries)	<p>The following questions and concerns were raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean to explore whether there are any alternative providers? Are you basically proposing to privatise the nursery? 2. Who agrees/ disagrees with this proposal and what happens if the proposal is disagreed with? 3. How can you ensure that my child is able to 'access good quality learning experiences through MSC? 4. How will you ensure that any future provision will be equally affordable and equally good quality (if ran privately)? How does this relate to the council's commitment to provide good quality childcare? 5. For the nurseries that are closing down, what happens to the staff working there? Will they be placed in other Little Owls? 6. How does closing down nurseries and potentially privatising others 'help address the financial and recruitment challenges that the Council is facing' and how it will 'ensure a more consistent and sustainable service for families'? Also, specifically, how does closing and restructuring nurseries give a more consistent and sustainable service to families? <p>Further questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A question asking about the availability of places in Leeds set against the national context and how this review would affect that 2. A question around concerns of the impact upon staff and children's quality of life and access to education 3. A question primarily concerned about the financial overspend and overall financial picture of the Little owls including asking for a number of definitions of terms.

Chapel Allerton	Asked the question of whether there was an option to keep nursery open until end of August for better transition and less disruption for children? (Chapel Allerton)
Chapel Allerton	<p>First email contained the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will closing a nursery yet keeping staff and building and having only some move to other Little Owls make savings? 2. How will closing nurseries ensure best start for children? (aimed at labour messages, so not sure we need to respond... is closely linked to our Best City ambitions though) 3. Is it right to be closing 1/exploring 1 in Chapel Allerton - bottom third of most deprived wards? 4. Can the profit of £230,000 from the sale of the property on Norman Road be used to keep Little Owls open? <p>Second email 20/05/2024 contained the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A length summation of a number of concerns grouped into the following categories: 2. Concerns about the availability of information beyond the engagement period; 3. queries regarding staff being made redundant as a result of the proposals; 4. several queries relating to the financial savings/impact of the proposal for Chapel Allerton and the wider proposals; 5. Concerns and queries around the data analysis methods; 6. Concerns and queries around the sufficiency data and planning documentation; 7. concerns about the legal aspect of the proposals as per the accessibility and equality act 2010; 8. a query around the future for the children's centre at Blake Street; 9. Queries around staff recruitment and retention; 10. a final question around the personal feelings of staff involved in the review. This email ended with a short paragraph praising Little Owls' service. <p>Third email 23/05/2024 containing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An appeal to Tom Riordan specifically around the Little Owls review, summarising many of the concerns of the second email which was attached. contained significant praise for Little Owls and asked questions regarding the imminent General Election, and Tracey Brabin's recent re-election as Mayor for West Yorkshire.
Meanwood	What option do children and parents have if 'explore' goes ahead? (Mentions long waiting list for other LO provision, having to stick with new provider – increased cost/lower service)
Gipton North	Wants a call to discuss child care provision now that Gipton North is set to close
Rylestone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why and how would the council close an 'Outstanding' nursery where the location and facilities outshine other nurseries? 2. we have no other means of child care available, what are we supposed to do?
Ryleston	Do I need to look for another daycare for my child? (Ryleston)

Hunslet Rylestone	No clear question
Shepherd's Lane	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At what stage consultation with affected parents will be carried out and how this will be done? (Shepherd's Lane) 2. Please could you share findings of consultation earlier this year? (mentions that she provided comments for a consultation earlier in the year) 3. How was the average market rate of provision calculated for Leeds (£45-£58) - says that she has enquired and it ranges between £62-£80 <p>Sent a follow-up email on 23/05/2024 asking further specific questions around Harehills, Shepherd's Lane and the level of information in the public domain. Also raised a specific EDCI concern.</p>
all	<p>the following questions were asked</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wants details for Democratic Services 2. Wants Leeds City Council guidance on how petitions are addressed, e.g. number of signatures required for debate at Scrutiny or Full Council. Given the timeline for closure it would seem impossible to take a petition to Full Council. The letter informing parents was dated 20 March 2024 (the date of Full Council). The next meeting is the Annual Council Meeting which takes place on 23 May 2024 with 3 nurseries marked for closure the next day! 3. How to use LCC e petition service - links that I click on say access is blocked 4. Detail on the plans for consultation with affected parents - specifically for those parents who have received 8 weeks' notice for closure of their nurseries 5. Any information on the review of the nurseries at all beyond the financial challenges for the service as a whole and not for individual nurseries. How can parents be assured of the rigour of the review? I am concerned that looking at December's Executive Board report, it indicates that the average market day rate (for nursery provision) in Leeds is between £45 and £58 per day. I was not able to find any providers apart from Little Owls charging within that price range. Private providers that I visited in 2023 were between £62 and £80 and prices are continuing to rise. 6. How 'sufficiency' has been assessed in affected areas, and how SEND, deprivation, EAL, affordability etc. are taken into account?
Hawksworth Wood	<p>The following questions were asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What timeframe will the closure happen in? (Hunslet Rylestone) 2. In case of closure are staff guaranteed a role elsewhere? 3. Why shut an 'outstanding' nursery?
Hunslet Rylestone	No clear question. Suggests there could be other ways to save money within Leeds City council without depriving the area of this great service.
Hunslet Rylestone	There was a question asked around what part of the council is making these decisions and is this something local MPS can have an input in?

Hawksworth Wood	No clear question but several concerns raised
Chapel Allerton	Questioning the rationale behind timing of closure and impacting children who would be leaving at end of school year.
Hunslet Rylestone	No questions but several concerns raised
Hunslet Rylestone	No questions but mentions impacting economically disadvantaged people and women more
Meanwood	No questions
Swarcliffe	Asking if Swarcliffe will be closed or definitively stay open.
Gipton North	Concerned about the May closure date
Gipton North	Not enough time, concerned about transparency
Hawksworth Wood	Letter Addressed to Kirkstall ward Cllrs, concerned about its potential merger as it is local to them and within a reasonable distance.
Hunslet Rylestone	No questions. Email with MP, Cllrs and Tom Riordan copied in. primarily concerned about changes to Hunslet Rylestone, felt other providers would inevitably be of lower-quality. Asks for a response. Has since responded asking further questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are the Little Owls Nurseries no longer financially viable? - When was this issue first realised? - what has been done to bring them in-line before now? - Why are we not able to make them profitable? - Can we inform of the further consultation we are doing?
Rothwell	Concerned Rothwell will be closed, Asks if cuts can be made elsewhere to retain it etc.
Unknown/not stated	No questions. Raises a concern about nurseries being closed, mentions positive experience with local one (but doesn't name it)
Chapel Allerton	No clear questions. States clear concerns about Chapel Allerton.
Chapel Allerton	Asks if there are other avenues/changes that could be made i.e. raising fees.
Hawksworth Wood	A response to Cllr Venner who had replied to an original query relating to Hawksworth Wood. Follow-up questions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a commitment from the council to place all the documents and research generated through the review so far into the public domain? Including, but not limited to: detailing how the review conclusion have been reached, detailing how the council can be assured that the children at the 3 nurseries set to close will be accommodated elsewhere, detailing how the exploration of potential other providers is planned to go ahead- and how the council will ensure that providers will offer services of equitable quality. • It has not been made clear in either of the letters sent to parents that, if an alternative provider cannot be found, the nurseries in the 'explore' group will continue to be run by the council. Can you confirm if this is the case and, if so, commit to communicate this to parents more clearly? • When the decision to confirm, or not, the findings of the review will be made. We have been told that it will be in the 'early summer period'. I am sure you will agree that this is not sufficient detail.

Burley Park	Very concerned about Burley park, worries about it being closed. Concerned about accessibility of the consultation/lack thereof. Asks for a reply to a question on the wider financial impact. Emailed later, which was picked up as part of #0035
City and Holbeck	concerned City and Holbeck is closing, speaks about need for SEND provision.
Hunslet Rylestone	Concerned Hunslet Rylestone is closing
Burley Park	Concerned about a wide range of topics but primarily that there has been a lack of consultation for Burley Park and that any consultation needs to be inclusive. She then provided a later email with a series of questions similar to the ones re Chapel Allerton A further email 21/05/2024 contained the following: A number of questions regarding the potential increase in fees should an alternative provider take on Burley Park, and the knock-on impact this would have on their family specifically, asked if it could be included as a case study.
Bramley	Concerned about closures and privatisation of Bramley
Rothwell	Concerned about the closure or privatisation of Rothwell
Meanwood	Concerned about not being invited to Meanwood engagement event, is on waiting list
Bramley	Concerned about Bramley, the time is difficult for them to attend
Chapel Allerton	Concerned about Chapel Allerton, outlines impact on their family
City and Holbeck	Concerned about City and Holbeck proposals, feel it should be kept open
Bramley	Concerned about the possible closure of Bramley
Hawksworth Wood	Concerned about privatisation or closure of Hawksworth Wood
Hawksworth Wood	Concerned about privatisation or closure of Hawksworth Wood, concerned that the consultation isn't enough and has been improperly organised, that views will be missed and asked for a prompt response from Cllr Venner who was copied in.
Chapel Allerton	Concerned about the closure of Chapel Allerton, feels the consultation hasn't been enough and believes it is a mistake to close Chapel Allerton which they feel should make a profit for the service. Asks for the review evidence and information to be shared.
Chapel Allerton	Sad to see Chael Allerton up for closure, expressed sentiment that it's a mistake
No specific setting	Expressed similar sentiment to many others, sad to see the proposals, feels it's a mistake, gave anecdote of it being beneficial.
Chapel Allerton	Spoke about how positive Chapel Allerton had been for their family, and how disappointing it was their newborn would not be able to attend Chapel Allerton should it close.
Hawksworth Wood	Stated they had missed the information around Hawksworth Wood's engagement session, and wants the information to be shared wider and more transparently, including the results of consultation. Further added they were very concerned about privatisation reducing the quality of provision and driving up cost.

City and Holbeck	Gave a really thorough and positive run down of how City and Holbeck has been a brilliant provision for their daughter, expressed concern that we may be looking to close or explore other options.
No specific setting	Spoke positively of Little Owls but didn't give much detail
Quarry Mount	Spoke very positively of Quarry mount, criticised the engagement - felt it was at a difficult time to make so couldn't attend.
No specific setting	Spoke positively of their child's experience
City and Holbeck	Spoke positively of City and Holbeck and expressed concern about it 'going'
Beeston and Holbeck settings	Concerned about privatisation of Little Owls Nurseries
Chapel Allerton	<p>Raised issues with communication, lack of local provision, asked about exploring other options such as raising fees, asked for LCC to put pressure on parliament around the insufficiency of their FEEE changes. Also expressed concern about accessibility/travel available to other nearby settings. Finally, expressed concern of the 'knock-on' impact economically.</p> <p>Emailed a second time unhappy about the website FAQ and the consultation.</p>
No specific setting	Expressed concern the Little Owls near them is at risk of closure, cited several disadvantages for them but didn't name specifically the nursery. mentioned other nurseries nearby are expensive.
Hunslet Rylestone	Expressed frustration at the engagement session being at a poor time, that LO nurseries are the best in the city, the convenience of using LO for her family, EDCI concern if st Mary's/Rylstone closes or is altered, wants more info on local area nurseries, asked about national government policy and stated waiting list parents should have been consulted.
No specific setting	Asked several sufficiency-based questions, concerned that private is too expensive, stated a concern around vulnerable children
Chapel Allerton	Concerned that there is no other alternatives to Chapel Allerton without paying 50% more or travelling significantly. Expressed Chapel Allerton was a very good setting and that the consultation had been inadequate and inaccessible.
Harehills	They expressed a number of concerns mostly around the knock-on impact the changes may have; the lack of consultation with parents on waiting lists (citing children's act 2006) and the consultation in general. Expressed that they felt the Council should be campaigning for saving the nurseries and lobbying ntl. government. Concerned at reserves and savings figures, and that a general election may change the picture and therefore the proposals are a mistake.
City and Holbeck	Very positive about City and Holbeck and expressed concern that it may change
No specific setting	Contained a link to a Change.org petition in opposition of the proposals which can be found here: https://www.change.org/p/save-little-owls-nurseries .

Chapel Allerton	Opposed to the closure of Chapel Allerton with questions for further information around the guarantee of a place at another nearby Little Owls. Raised concerns with the consultation, praised the staff at the nursery.
Chapel Allerton	Very similar to the above, opposed to the closure and asking questions around the guarantee, wanting further information. Critical of the consultation.
No specific setting	Raised several concerns and asked a number of specific questions around the data analysis, questioning the use of data and the resulting indicators that support the proposals. Stated they believed the data had been manipulated to suit a predetermined agenda.
No specific setting	Raised 6 distinct concerns related to the proposals. They felt the consultation had been inadequate; that the proposals had created uncertainty for themselves and others; raised a concern around the prioritisation of the service in deprived areas being flawed as deprivation is widespread and hardships are faced by parents in many areas; felt there was not enough information about how the subsequent decisions to the MSE would entail, asked for more information regarding the transition process to alternative providers; Stated a belief the council is dropping from 24 to 6 nurseries and this was too severe/too far to fix the staffing issues; stated that the wages for nursery staff are too low and should be raised to make it more attractive for staff
Meanwood	Parent stated a number of positives of their personal experience with Little Owls Meanwood, then asked a number of questions primarily around the MSE and stating there was significant uncertainty still remaining. Expressed dissatisfaction with the consultation process to date.
No specific setting	Whilst they have emailed previously this email contained scans of paper signatures to a petition in opposition of the proposals
Chapel Allerton	Expressed disappointment at the proposals for Chapel Allerton's closure, stating the alternatives were significantly more expensive and this would have a negative knock-on impact.
No specific setting	this email contained scans of paper signatures to a petition in opposition of the proposals
Meanwood	This email expressed a number of concerns around the provision at Meanwood, primarily focused around a concern of it being sold-off. There was also a concern raised around the consultation and an EDCI concern about the accessibility of information and the engagement sessions. Stating a suggestion round reducing agency staff, although criticised the lack of information parents have been given in order to suggest alternatives. mentioned the general election and asked if LCC could campaign for further government funding for Early Years provision
No specific setting	Whilst they have emailed previously this email contained a report resulting from a survey of parents, with 45-50 respondents. The issues raised in the report are wide ranging but cover the following: The survey results; the strategic context; the political context; conclusions. It also contained the data expressed in various tables and as raw inputs.

Chapel Allerton	Expressed opposition to the closure of the Chapel Allerton Little Owls setting. Expressed concerns around the alternative provision in the area being unsuitable, and asked if fee increases had been considered. Requested the Council lobby the national government for further early years resource and change in the FEEE policy, requested more information in the reports around the impact upon public sector workers with children at Little Owls, and also requested more information regarding any analysis conducted regarding transport links and how they may cross-reference with the proposals.
Chapel Allerton	Stated a number of concerns with how data had been used to inform the proposals, specifically those for Chapel Allerton to be a closure
No specific setting	Stated a number of concerns with the proposals including: sufficiency and how data has been used; damage to social mobility as a result of the proposed changes; misalignment with central government policy; concerns about the market sounding exercise not delivering sufficient alternative providers; concern around the options appraisal, fearing there has not been enough consideration of other options; concerns that vacancies issue will not be addressed by the proposals. Made suggestions that either Meanwood or Chapel Allerton be kept open and fees be increased, and future consultation be improved.
Gipton North	Praised the service at Gipton north and raised a concern that now there was an imminent General Election, that the proposals should be shelved or otherwise not taken forward. Raised significant concerns that alternative providers were both more expensive and less safe/lower quality and that these are the options their and other families would have if the proposals are accepted.