

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2233

Determination of the Statutory Notice to Close Culverhay School

Decision maker/s	Cllr Chris Watt, Cabinet Member for Children's Service
The Issue	The six week representation period for the statutory notice published on 16th December 2010 proposing the closure of Culverhay School ended on 27th January 2011 and a decision is now required to determine the proposal.
Decision Date	23/02/2011
The decision	The Cabinet Member agrees that: Culverhay School shall close on 31 st August 2014 and there shall be no admissions to Year 7 in September 2012 and beyond.
Rationale for decision	<p>Closing Culverhay as part of the overall plan for Bath is considered to be the best way to address the key challenges identified through the course of the review process. In particular it would:</p> <p>Reduce the total number of schools from seven to six, removing surplus places and making better use of resources and reflecting the current and future need in Bath.</p> <p>Reduce the number of single sex places by closing a school that is not in demand from parents.</p> <p>Facilitate the creation of schools which are of a more viable size to be educationally and financially secure.</p> <p>Result in the retention of one single sex girls school and one single sex boys school to provide choice for parents and ensure diversity.</p> <p>Provide a wider range of opportunities at larger schools for pupils who would have attended Culverhay with the potential to achieve higher standards in these schools.</p> <p>In selecting Culverhay as the school proposed for closure, it should be noted that:</p> <p>It has the lowest level of attainment in Bath secondary schools.</p> <p>It is a National Challenge School with a relatively low percentage of students gaining 5 A*-C with English and Maths.</p> <p>It has a large number of surplus places – 49% based on the October 2010 School Census data. Department for Education (DfE) School Organisation guidance states that where a school has at least 30 and 25% or more unfilled places and where standards are low compared to the rest of the Local Authority, closure proposals in order to remove</p>

	<p>surplus places should normally be approved.</p> <p>Two out of three boys who live closer to Culverhay than any other school already choose schools further away.</p> <p>The community is relatively close to alternative schools.</p> <p>The cost of educating each pupil is high.</p> <p>All representations received during the representation period have been taken into consideration in reaching this decision and have contributed to the overall decision making process. The 41 objections to the proposal received during the representation period covered the same key issues that emerged in the statutory consultation and call in and did not raise any substantive new issues.</p> <p>In consideration of this proposal regard has been had to DfE statutory requirements. The sufficiency and quality of the statutory consultation has been taken into consideration as part of the overall determination of the proposal and the Decision Maker is satisfied that the consultation meets the DfE statutory requirements.</p> <p>The concerns raised in the objections to the proposal do not outweigh the benefits that can be achieved by closing the school in order to address the important key challenges and issues as outlined above. Concerns expressed about any potentially negative effects of the proposal will be addressed carefully and thoroughly via the transition process.</p>
<p>Financial and budget implications</p>	<p>Revenue</p> <p>The current Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation per pupil (2010-11) is £4,203 per pupil. Funding allocations to schools average approximately £3,890 leaving £313 per pupil used on services supporting schools as determined by the Schools Forum.</p> <p>All schools are funded through the Local Management of Schools (LMS) formula which dictates how resources are provided for each school. The main principle is that resources follow the pupil. If Culverhay is closed, approximately £968,000 of funding would follow the Culverhay pupils to the schools to which they transfer. Culverhay currently is allocated £1.498m per annum which would leave approximately £530,000 to be re-distributed by the Schools Forum on schools' priorities across Bath and North East Somerset.</p> <p>The school currently has tenants for some areas of the site. The income from these rentals supports the school on top of the LMS formula allocation.</p> <p>There are currently 10 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) at the school. None of these pupils currently receive assistance with travel as a result of their SEN statement but may receive assistance under other school transport policies.</p> <p>The average cost of a taxi route with guide escort is £7,500. Route planning can enable a shared route to support pupils in need of transport. The closure of Culverhay, together with other planned</p>

	<p>changes to Bath secondary schools, is not expected to result in a significant change in costs associated with transport.</p> <p>The cost of uniforms can be expensive and pupils moving schools could need a significant change in uniform requirements. The national average for secondary boys uniform is estimated at £191 per annum. If a child is in receipt of free school meals schools often provide support to the parents or carers to purchase uniforms. The movement of whole year groups between schools will create a significant financial burden and therefore DSG budget resources will be used to support the supply of uniforms for all pupils in those year groups, which are expected to be in the region of a maximum of 80 pupils in total.</p> <p>The closure of Culverhay would result in additional costs associated with the closure. The main costs would be potential redundancy costs of staff at Culverhay. It is anticipated that some of the staff will transfer to other schools at various points during a managed transition process. However there would be likely to be a number of staff who would not be able or willing to transfer to other schools and on the closure of the school would be entitled to redundancy payments. The Local Authority would endeavour to use its redeployment processes to limit the numbers affected by redundancy.</p> <p>Calculations using current financial year data suggest the maximum cost of redundancy and early retirements would be in the order of £950,000 although we would expect to be able to mitigate this by at least 50% through the transfer and redeployment processes described above. The costs would be spread over more than one year.</p> <p>Capital</p> <p>The closure of Culverhay would reduce the ongoing maintenance costs of the schools estate as a whole. It is estimated that the cost of addressing maintenance items over the next ten years would be £700,000 with a total of £250,000 required in the next three years to address the most pressing items. The sale of the site would provide a capital receipt to invest in other schools. It is estimated that the Culverhay school site could release approximately £6m-£8m.</p> <p>In order to accommodate displaced pupils at another school as part of the transition, additional accommodation would be required. It is anticipated that some additional accommodation would be needed at Beechen Cliff School and £200,000 has been allocated to the school for this purpose. This capital would be allocated from the 2011-12 Children's Service capital programme.</p>
<p>Issues considered</p>	<p>Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations.</p>
<p>Consultation undertaken</p>	<p>Ward Councillors; Cabinet members; other B&NES Councillors, Parish Council; Trades Unions; Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Chair); Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Community Interest Groups; Youth Council; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer.</p>

<p>How consultation was carried out</p>	<p>An extensive public consultation exercise was undertaken between September and October 2010 including the distribution of approximately 13,000 copies of a consultation document outlining the proposal issued to parents of all pupils at Bath schools and other stakeholders including neighbouring local authorities and the Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses. Public consultation meetings were held at the school on Thursday 14th October and at the Guildhall on Wednesday 20th October 2010. Meetings were also held with the school staff and the school Governing Body.</p> <p>The consultation document was also made available electronically on the Council website and an electronic consultation response system was set up to allow stakeholders to read the document on line and submit a response via this method if they wished. This electronic response facility was mentioned in the paper consultation document as another way in which comments could be submitted. Stakeholders could also submit their comments via letter or email.</p> <p>The statutory notice was published in The Bath Chronicle and posted outside all of the school entrances and placed in the window of the Co-operative supermarket in the Mount Road shopping area nearby. A copy of the complete proposal and statutory notice was given to the Culverhay Governing Body and to the Headteacher, the local Anglican Diocese, the local Roman Catholic Diocese, other neighbouring Local Authorities, the Young People’s Learning Agency and the Secretary of State. The notice and the complete proposal were also placed on the Council website and the web address was printed in the statutory notice.</p> <p>The notice stated that comments or objections needed to be submitted within six weeks of the publication date and that they should be sent to the Local Authority. Representations could also be submitted by email.</p>
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>Two other options were proposed, one from a parent group and the other from Culverhay itself.</p> <p>Option 1: Retain seven schools and achieve a reduction in surplus places by reducing the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) at all Bath secondary schools to 160 except Culverhay and St Mark’s which would remain at 102. Culverhay and Oldfield would be co-educational schools.</p> <p>Option 2: Retain Culverhay as a co-educational academy in partnership with Bath Spa University with the possibility of an all through school for age range 2-19.</p> <p>Neither of these options would address the key challenges identified through the course of the review process and following consideration and evaluation against key criteria, neither option proved achievable.</p>
<p>Signatures of Decision Makers</p>	
<p>Date of Signature</p>	

Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision