

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CABINET**

Thursday, 14th July, 2011

The decisions contained within these minutes may not be implemented until the expiry of the 5 working day call-in period which will run from 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Jul. These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

#### **Present:**

Councillor Paul Crossley  
Councillor Nathan Hartley

Leader of the Council  
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth  
Cabinet Member for Community Resources  
Cabinet Member for Wellbeing  
Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning  
Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development  
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods  
Cabinet Member for Transport

Councillor David Bellotti  
Councillor Simon Allen  
Councillor Tim Ball  
Councillor Cherry Beath  
Councillor David Dixon  
Councillor Roger Symonds

#### **23 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair was taken by Councillor Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council.  
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **24 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

#### **25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There were none.

#### **27 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was none.

#### **28 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were none.

#### **29 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

The list of registered speakers [*a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1 and is available on the Council's website*] was distributed in the public gallery in advance of the meeting.

Brian Higgins (Governor, Culverhay School) made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2 and is available on the Council's website*] in which he emphasised the need to keep the school open for its local community. He referred to the independent analysis which had been conducted recently which supported the need for Culverhay to convert to co-educational status.

Richard Thompson (Head Teacher, Culverhay School) made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 3 and is available on the Council's website*] in which he appealed to Cabinet to listen to the voice of the local community and to allow Culverhay School the opportunity to transform itself into a successful co-educational school.

Bob Wilkins made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 4 and is available on the Council's website*] reminding Cabinet that Culverhay School had been seeking co-educational status for a number of years but had been prevented from doing so by the LEA. He asked the Cabinet to assist in a consultation with local people to determine whether Academy status, Free School status or some other option should be pursued in order to keep the school open on a co-educational basis.

### **30 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

There were none

### **31 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

The Chair announced that the Council meeting considering the Call-in of the Culverhay School Closure Notice had upheld the Call-in and had referred the decision back to Cabinet to reconsider the decision.

### **32 DETERMINATION OF THE STATUTORY NOTICE TO CLOSE CULVERHAY SCHOOL**

The Chair referred to the document which had been placed in the public gallery prior to the meeting, which related to the recommendations made by the Council meeting held earlier in the day to consider the Call-in of the decision taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> February to Determine the Notice to Close Culverhay School. He observed that Council had asked Cabinet to reconsider the original decision, in the light of the representations made at the Call-in meetings. He asked Cabinet members to confirm that they had read the representations from Council.

Councillor Tony Clarke made an *ad hoc* statement in which he emphasised that there were still issues arising out of the failure so far to address the excess school spaces.

Councillor Steve Hedges made an *ad hoc* statement reminding Cabinet that Culverhay School had been asking for a number of years to be allowed to become co-educational. It was unfortunate that the consultation process in the last year had been badly handled and appealed to the Cabinet to make the right decision.

Councillor Dine Romero made an *ad hoc* statement reminding the Cabinet that a majority of Council members felt strongly that closure had been a bad decision, which is why she had organised Call-ins at every stage of the process. She looked forward to allowing Culverhay an opportunity to prove itself.

Councillor Gerry Curran made an *ad hoc* statement appealing to Cabinet to revoke the previous decision and instead to support Culverhay School in its aims to move forward.

Sarah Moore made an *ad hoc* statement reminding Cabinet that the community had fought for 20 years to have a co-educational school at Culverhay. The community had proved its determination during the events of the last year and she hoped that Cabinet had been convinced by their arguments.

Councillor Nathan Hartley thanked the Council for the decision it had taken earlier that day to uphold the Call-in. He explained the history of the process so far and said that the part played by the community had been pivotal. He felt that the Cabinet had an opportunity to recognise the strength of community feeling and to deliver the right decision.

He felt that since February (when the original decision was made), two significant events had occurred: there had been a change of policy by the incoming Cabinet; and new funds had been identified to support the school in its aspiration to become co-educational.

He therefore moved the resolution below.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the motion. He thanked education officers who had worked so hard to find a way of enabling the Cabinet's new policy position. He expressed warm thanks to those in the local community, friends of Culverhay, staff and Governors all of whom had joined together to make the community's strength of feeling evident. Councillor Crossley made particular mention of the Head Boy of Culverhay School, James Eynon, who had spoken to clearly and convincingly in favour of the school.

On a motion from Councillor Nathan Hartley, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) That it wishes to REVERSE the earlier decision and to decide instead **not** to close Culverhay School;

(2) To INSTRUCT the Strategic Director, Children's Services, to instigate the statutory revocation procedure and to report back to a future Cabinet meeting on any representations received in respect thereof

### **33 CULVERHAY: NEXT STEPS**

Councillor Nathan Hartley introduced the item by responding to criticism of the new plans being considered by Cabinet. He said that the previous decision had been predicated on 1500 empty school places, when in fact 750 of these were filled by children from outside the authority. He said that the remaining empty places provided parental choice, which was a good thing. He reminded the Cabinet that the school's vision was for a co-educational school – which it had been prevented from pursuing for 15 years – and for the provision of education up to 19 years old, plus vocational and educational courses, all of which would allow the school to move confidently towards becoming viable again after the damage done by the threat of closure. He said that the move to co-education would be funded by the Council to

the amount of £300K, and the essential staff restructuring would be funded up to £400K. He pointed out that it had been very unwise for the previous administration to promise the capital proceeds of the sale of Culverhay to other schools in advance of closure. He also observed that Culverhay had the highest number of walkers and cyclists to school in the whole authority and this would now be encouraged even more if the school stayed open to serve its community.

Councillor Hartley reminded the Cabinet that whatever option they chose for Culverhay's future, it must meet the four priorities:

- To ensure excellent educational provision for all children in the area;
- To allow girls to attend the school;
- To address the deficit which the school acknowledges will be a challenge;
- To encourage the school to collaborate with other schools to enhance educational standards.

He announced that this year's admissions booklet, which was unable to offer the co-educational option for Culverhay, would contain a promise to parents that, should Culverhay achieve co-educational status in time, then all parents would receive a letter offering them an opportunity to reconsider whether they wished to change their option.

He moved the resolution below and said that if Cabinet agreed, then it would allow Culverhay School to make a fresh start and to prove itself to parents, students, sponsors and the whole community.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal. He was confident that parents, school and LEA could work together to deliver the co-educational Academy bid to government.

On a motion from Councillor Nathan Hartley, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

- (1) To AGREE that its preferred option for Culverhay School would be for the school to become co-educational, either as an Academy or as a Free School;
- (2) To INSTRUCT officers to work with the school's Governing Body to deliver the preferred option at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting ended at 10.40 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Democratic Services