

## **THE FUTURE OF CULVERHAY SCHOOL**

### **OUTLINE**

This document summarises the history and context of the proposal to close Culverhay School. It indicates the duties and responsibilities of the Local Authority (LA) and its strategy for educational provision for the city of Bath which includes the reduction of surplus school places.

The underpinning issue is that Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) has carried surplus places over a long period of time and a declining secondary pupil population from 2003. Future forecasts over the next 10 years indicate that a significant increase is unlikely. The medium term pattern over the same period for the secondary school age population is expected to be similar to that of today.

A solution to this problem of over-supply of secondary school places has been difficult to find. Changes in education legislation make it increasingly difficult for the Local Authority (LA) to undertake future school place planning. As schools take up academy status they acquire powers to expand and make changes to their character without having to follow the traditional school organisation process (Statutory Proposals).

The ongoing debate, which can be traced back to 1984, produced a proposal to close Culverhay School in 2010. This paper gives a summary of the steps that led to the Statutory Proposal and the risks associated with the possible closure of Culverhay School together with the risks of retaining Culverhay School and seven secondary schools in Bath.



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**ANNEX II** - Report from Independent Review of Culverhay School Budget, June 2011

# **1. BACKGROUND TO SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES**

## **1.1 Responsibilities**

Local Authorities have a key responsibility to keep pupil places and school planning under review and to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet local need.

Where it is not possible to agree Statutory Proposals locally they must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator (SA) as established by the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998.

## **1.2 Surplus Places**

From 2001, due to increasing government concerns about the efficient use of education funding, pressure to remove empty school places increased. The Audit Commission has stated that when an individual school has more than 25% surplus capacity, urgent action should be taken to reduce the number of surplus places.

The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the level of unfilled places through the annual School Places Return in which Local Authorities are required to state what action they are taking or plan to take to remove excess surplus places over 25% at individual schools.

All authorities work towards reducing excess surplus places, defined as approximately 5% -10% unused school places. However, exceptions are made. For example, in rural areas children may have to travel unreasonable distances if they cannot go to a local school and some schools may be kept open despite high numbers of surplus places. There is also a presumption against closure of some rural primary schools. In urban areas with more schools and shorter travelling distances, there are usually lower levels of surplus places at around 5%.

## **1.3 Changing role of the Local Authority and Academies/ Foundation Schools**

As Academies are independent of the Local Authorities there is less scope for the Local Authority to set Planned Admission Numbers (PANs). Academies can make changes such as adding more places with relative ease and speed and popular schools are now encouraged to expand.

Foundation schools also have autonomy in setting PANs and the Local Authority cannot increase or reduce a PAN without the agreement of the governors. All secondary schools in the Greater Bath Consortium (GBC) except Culverhay School are Foundation schools or Academies. The Local Authority however remains legally responsible for overall place-planning ensuring there are sufficient places to meet demand.

## 1.4 Pupil Place Planning Methodology

It is essential for the Local Authority to understand the need for places and future demands. Forecasts of pupil numbers in Secondary school are prepared using information on birth rates, resident population data, estimates of pupil numbers to be generated from housing developments, past transfer rates of pupils moving from Year 6 into Year 7, cohort survival rates and current Numbers on Roll data.

## 1.5 Optimum Size of Secondary Schools

There is no statutory minimum or maximum size for a Secondary school. However there is a body of national research and advice about the optimum size of schools and sixth forms. There are also commonly accepted guidelines related to the efficient use of resources and the “critical mass” of pupil numbers needed to deliver a good curriculum and appropriate educational opportunities.

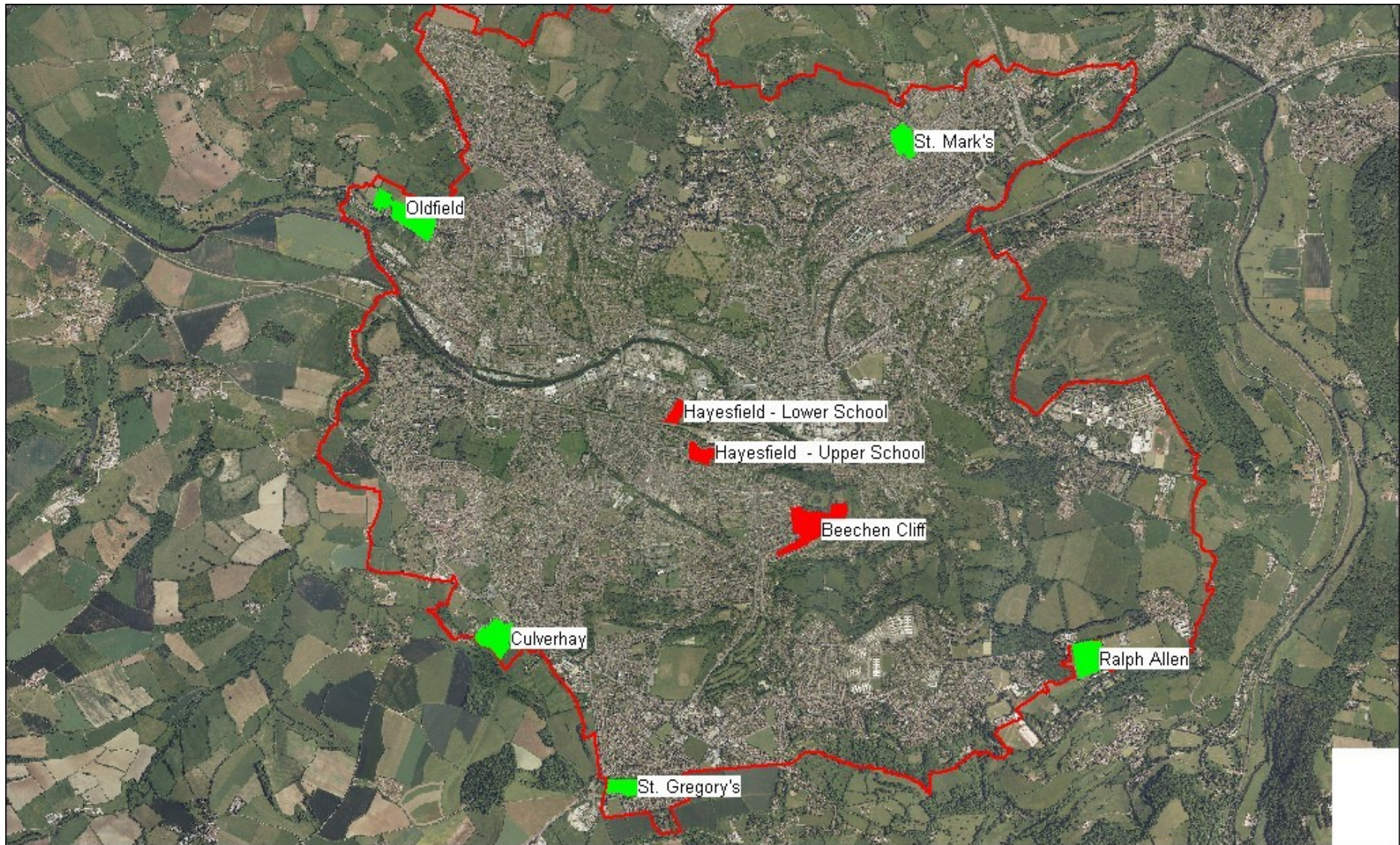
For example the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)(2002) found that the best education results were achieved in a secondary school which had a yearly intake of 180 - 200 children (thus producing around 900-1000 pupils aged 11-16). The lower educational results were obtained in very small or very large schools.

## 1.6 Current Size of Secondary Schools in Bath

The sizes of schools in the GBC (which is the area affected by the reorganisation proposals) in 2010 is given in the next table. It shows that no school in the GBC area is a large school. In fact, only one school (Hayesfield) is within the desirable range of 900-1200 pupils.

| School                      | PAN | Places 11-16 | NOR 11-16 | Surplus Places |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Hayesfield                  | 180 | 900          | 920       | 0              |
| Culverhay                   | 102 | 510          | 252       | 258            |
| Ralph Allen                 | 180 | 900          | 892       | 8              |
| St. Mark's                  | 102 | 510          | 256       | 254            |
| St. Gregory's               | 160 | 800          | 812       | 0              |
| Beechen Cliff               | 162 | 810          | 830       | 0              |
| Oldfield                    | 192 | 960          | 745       | 215            |
| <b>Total Surplus Places</b> |     |              |           | <b>735</b>     |

*Footnote: number of places 11-16 is based on the most up to date PAN for each school x 5 for year groups 7 to 11. Number on roll as at the October 2010 school census.*





## **2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND PLANNING SCHOOL PLACES**

Bath and North East Somerset has an ageing population and its need for secondary school places in the Greater Bath Consortium (GBC) has been reducing since 2003.

### **2.1 The School Organisation Plan 2003-2008**

The starting point for the secondary reorganisation in Bath was the 2003 School Organisation Plan (SOP). At that point secondary school numbers were 5% higher than six years previously and it forecast a steady increase until 2003 before secondary pupil numbers would start falling.

This forecast was based on the decline in primary numbers which had already dropped by 4% since 1999. The same pattern in the secondary sector was expected to follow with the loss of around 555 pupils by 2008 (down to 10,500 secondary aged pupils in Bath and North East Somerset). This forecast has proved to be accurate.

### **2.2 Housing Developments and Pupil Numbers**

Current known housing developments in the GBC area (those that are under construction or either have planning permission or are fairly advanced in the planning process) are calculated to generate approximately 7 secondary age pupils per year group in total spread over the next few years. In addition to this the Bath Western Riverside development is calculated to generate approximately 8.5 pupils per year group in total once all of the dwellings are built and occupied. The first phase of building has started and is expected to take five years to complete. Approximately 800 of the 1,900 dwellings are in Phase 1. Therefore approximately 2.5 pupils per year group are calculated to be generated in Phase 1 and the remaining six in Phase 2.

The majority of any further future new housing planned for Bath is expected to centre primarily on the three Ministry of Defence (MoD) sites in Bath at Foxhill, Ensleigh and Warminster Road. These sites are expected to deliver in the order of 1,000 new dwellings which could generate approximately 150 secondary age pupils in total, 30 per year group. Developer contributions can be sought in order to expand the existing schools in the city if projections indicate that all existing capacity will be taken up and that there will be no room for the pupils generated by the developments. If projections indicate that sufficient capacity exists in the secondary schools in the GBC then no developer contributions will be sought.

### **2.3 School Sizes and Surplus Places**

The next table shows the size of Secondary Schools in Bath, number of places taken up and surplus places in January 2003.

| <b>GBC</b>    | <b>Status</b>           | <b>Net Capacity</b> | <b>PAN</b>  | <b>Actual 11 - 16 Jan 2003</b> | <b>Actual 6th Form Jan 2003</b> | <b>Actual Total Jan 2003</b> | <b>Surplus Places Jan 2003</b> | <b>% Surplus Places Jan 2003</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Beechen Cliff | Foundation (Boys)       | 1035                | 155         | 780                            | 178                             | 958                          | 77                             | 7.44%                            |
| Culverhay     | Community (Boys)        | 837                 | 154         | 487                            | 61                              | 548                          | 289                            | 34.53%                           |
| Hayesfield    | Foundation (Girls)      | 1165                | 210         | 970                            | 169                             | 1139                         | 26                             | 2.23%                            |
| Oldfield      | Foundation (Girls)      | 983                 | 150         | 801                            | 123                             | 924                          | 59                             | 6.00%                            |
| Ralph Allen   | Community (Co-ed)       | 1034                | 165         | 848                            | 150                             | 998                          | 36                             | 3.48%                            |
| St Gregory's  | Voluntary Aided (Co-ed) | 733                 | 124         | 809                            | 0                               | 809                          | 0                              | 0%                               |
| St Marks      | Voluntary Aided (Co-ed) | 540                 | 128         | 324                            | 0                               | 324                          | 216                            | 40.00%                           |
|               |                         | <b>6327</b>         | <b>1086</b> | <b>5019</b>                    | <b>681</b>                      | <b>5700</b>                  | <b>703</b>                     | <b>11.11%</b>                    |

In 2003 the difference between supply and demand of secondary places amounted to the equivalent of a whole school. In addition around 800 pupils travelled in to Bath from outside the Local Authority each day.

By October 2010 the situation had changed as shown below.

| <b>GBC</b>    | <b>Status</b>           | <b>Net Capacity</b> | <b>PAN</b>  | <b>Actual 11 - 16 Oct 2010</b> | <b>Actual 6th Form Oct 2010</b> | <b>Actual Total Oct 2010</b> | <b>Surplus Places Oct 2010</b> | <b>% Surplus Places Oct 2010</b> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Beechen Cliff | Academy (Boys)          | 1077                | 162         | 830                            | 289                             | 1119                         | 0                              | 0%                               |
| Culverhay     | Community (Boys)        | 622                 | 102         | 252                            | 65                              | 317                          | 305                            | 49.03%                           |
| Hayesfield    | Foundation (Girls)      | 1184                | 210         | 920                            | 259                             | 1179                         | 5                              | 0.42%                            |
| Oldfield      | Academy (Co-ed)         | 1015                | 192         | 745                            | 77                              | 822                          | 193                            | 19.01%                           |
| Ralph Allen   | Foundation (Co-ed)      | 1079                | 175         | 892                            | 214                             | 1106                         | 0                              | 0%                               |
| St Gregory's  | Voluntary Aided (co-ed) | 800                 | 160         | 812                            | 0                               | 812                          | 0                              | 0%                               |
| St Marks      | Voluntary Aided (Co-ed) | 513                 | 102         | 256                            | 0                               | 256                          | 257                            | 50.09%                           |
|               |                         | <b>6290</b>         | <b>1103</b> | <b>4707</b>                    | <b>904</b>                      | <b>5611</b>                  | <b>760</b>                     | <b>12.08%</b>                    |

Surplus places had increased from 11.11% to 12.8% overall but there were marked variations between schools. Whilst four schools remained full, Culverhay School's surplus places had increased to 49% and St. Mark's had increased to 50%.

## 2.4 Projection based on known numbers of children aged 0-11

Predicted pupil numbers in Bath Secondary Schools over the next 10 years.

|                         | 2011       | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       | 2020       | 2021       |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Culverhay School</b> | 29         | 13         | 23         | 24         | 25         | 27         | 28         | 48         | 51         | 33         | 35         |
| <b>Oldfield</b>         | 53         | 70         | 80         | 80         | 81         | 90         | 91         | 125        | 128        | 101        | 104        |
| <b>Hayesfield</b>       | 172        | 168        | 168        | 167        | 167        | 171        | 171        | 180        | 180        | 178        | 179        |
| <b>Beechen Cliff</b>    | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        | 162        |
| <b>Ralph Allen</b>      | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        | 180        |
| <b>St. Gregory's</b>    | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        | 160        |
| <b>St. Mark's</b>       | 40         | 40         | 42         | 42         | 43         | 47         | 47         | 65         | 67         | 55         | 57         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>796</b> | <b>793</b> | <b>815</b> | <b>815</b> | <b>818</b> | <b>837</b> | <b>839</b> | <b>920</b> | <b>928</b> | <b>869</b> | <b>877</b> |

Key dates:

2011 – Culverhay School still boys only

2012 - First year that Oldfield can admit boys and Culverhay School still boys only

2013 - First year that Culverhay School can admit girls

The following factors and assumptions have been taken into consideration in preparing the table above showing possible pupil numbers in Bath schools over the next 10 years.

- 2.4.1. These figures are based on the assumption that Culverhay School will still be a boys only school for admissions in 2012. Also that it will become co-ed and able to admit girls from 2013.
- 2.4.2. In 2012 Oldfield will be co-ed and therefore an increase in applications is anticipated.
- 2.4.3. From 2012 Oldfield can admit boys so parents will have an additional choice alongside the traditionally popular Beechen Cliff, Ralph Allen and St. Gregory's and St. Mark's. Girls will have a choice between Oldfield and the traditionally popular Hayesfield, Ralph Allen and St. Gregory's and St. Mark's.

- 2.4.4. If Culverhay School was to become co-ed in 2013 it will be competing for pupils with the other six schools in the city at the same time as other organisational changes significantly alter the past pattern of provision in the city and present a new set of options for parents that were not available to them previously.
- 2.4.5. As Oldfield will be able to admit boys in 2012 it is anticipated that places will become available at Beechen Cliff where previously this school was oversubscribed. It is anticipated that these places will not stay empty however as pupils who may not have been able to obtain a place at this school in the past will be able to.
- 2.4.6. As a result of the federation of St. Mark's with St. Gregory's it is anticipated that places will become available at Ralph Allen where previously this school was oversubscribed. It is anticipated that these places will not stay empty however as pupils who may not have been able to obtain a place at this school in the past will be able to.
- 2.4.7. As a result of the above two factors, Beechen Cliff, Ralph Allen and St. Gregory's are expected to remain full.
- 2.4.8. Numbers at St. Mark's are expected to rise gradually due to the positive effect of the Federation with St. Gregory's.
- 2.4.9. The 2018 - 2021 figures take into account the increased number of pupils expected in reception in GBC primary schools in September 2011. In 2009 the transfer rate of GBC resident pupils leaving Y6 and going into Y7 was 89.6% and in 2010 it was 85.5%. A mid point has been used in the projection.
- 2.4.10. The total number of pupils that come in to GBC schools from outside the GBC for who the LA is obliged to provide a place due to the admission arrangements of the schools (all St. Gregory's non-GBC pupils, 10% at Hayesfield (18) and 10% at Beechen Cliff (16)) was 106 in 2009 and 97 in 2010. A mid point has been used in the projection.
- 2.4.11. These figures relate to pupils resident in the GBC and other pupils from outside the GBC for whom the LA is required to provide a place (e.g. pupils at St. Gregory's). The figures quoted could be higher at some schools – mainly at Oldfield but also possibly at other schools - due to other out of authority pupils applying for a place at the school.
- 2.4.12. The projection assumes that the higher transfer rate of births going into reception in 2011 (98%) will be continued in 2012, 2013 and 2014. However this higher rate may not continue. (It was 93% in 2008, 93.5% in 2009 and 93% in 2010). Also, if more parents than usual have chosen a place at a maintained primary school this year

due to economic factors and the economy improves, it is possible that in seven years time a higher percentage may transfer to a non-maintained secondary school at Y7.

- 2.4.13. There is a possibility that applications for places at Culverhay School from girls may take a while to build up once the school becomes co-educational as girls may be uncertain about going into a school where the majority of pupils are boys. The same might apply to applications from boys for a place at Oldfield.
- 2.4.14. Pupil numbers are projected to remain low for a number of years up to admissions in 2017. For admissions in 2018 and 2019, numbers are expected to increase for a two year period and then reduce again for admissions in 2020 and 2021.
- 2.4.15. Any pupils generated from new housing developments have not been included in the projection (see Housing Developments and Pupil Numbers above).

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS LEADING TO THE DECISION TO PROPOSE THE CLOSURE OF CULVERHAY SCHOOL**

The problem of surplus places in the City of Bath goes back more than 25 years. In 1984 there were proposals to reduce the number of schools in the city from seven to six providing a total PAN of 908. The following history is summarised below and a flow chart to illustrate the current process of decision making in 2010 is provided in **ANNEX I**

#### **3.1 School Organisation Plan Set out Key Principles for Reorganisation (2003)**

The key principals for secondary school re-organisation were established by the Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) School Organisation Committee (SOC) and set out in the approved School Organisation Plan (SOP) in 2003:

- Minimum intake to a secondary school should be four forms of entry.
- No secondary school without a sixth form should have fewer than 600 pupils.
- Ideally the maximum intake should be 240 pupils per year for an 11-16 school.
- No secondary school should ideally have more than 1200 students in Years 7-11.
- School 6th forms should be within a range of 80-500 students.
- No journey to school should take a primary aged child more than 45 minutes or exceed six miles. Journeys for secondary aged pupils should not exceed one hour 15 minutes or 10 miles.
- Surplus places should be removed.
- Increases in school places will be considered in the light of local need, not merely parental demand.

- The broad balance of denominational and non-denominational places should be maintained.

### **3.2 Survey of parental views on the future of secondary schools in Bath ( September 2004)**

A survey from a private research company was commissioned to find out more about parents' views of secondary education in the area and their preferences for the future. The main findings were:

- A clear majority preferred mixed schools (60%), about a quarter (26%) preferred single sex schools.
- 33% said they would prefer a non-denominational school, 32% would prefer Church of England (CE) and 9% Catholic.
- 84% saying they preferred an 11-18 school.
- Only 55% rated the choice of secondary schools in Bath as good which indicated that there was still room for improvement.
- The most important factors in determining parents choice of school, was its reputation (74%). Academic results were the second most important factor (55%). Single sex schooling came in ninth place, polling only (11%).

### **3.3 Review of Secondary School provision in Bath by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (September 2005-January 2007)**

A review of secondary provision by Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel was undertaken at the request of the Council Executive and the School Organisation Committee. Its report was considered on 8 January 2007 with the intention of informing Council policy and decisions on the future shape of secondary education across the area.

The Panel concluded that the seven secondary schools in Bath still had too many surplus places and only six schools were needed. Also there were too many single sex places. Its vision for the long term was:

- To promote high educational standards, improved attendance and standards of behaviour.
- To promote the effective use of resources.
- To seek to provide high quality facilities for young people, staff and communities.
- To make the choice of a local school the natural and easy choice for parents/carers whilst recognising the wider area served by Church schools.
- To ensure that a school is within reasonable walking or cycling distance of home and/or reasonably accessed by public transport.

The Panel also specified priorities for decision-making:

- All children should have a local, easily accessible, high-performing school.
- Pupils should be able to walk/cycle or easily use public transport to attend their school/college as far as possible.
- To retain sufficient denominational places for pupils who wish it.
- To respond to unmet demand for co-educational places within the Greater Bath Consortium (as identified in the 1999 and 2004 survey of parents), whilst retaining some single sex schools.

### **3.4 Strategy for Change agreed by Cabinet and Council 2008**

Much discussion and debate by stakeholders followed. This resulted in the overall Strategy for Change. This was agreed unanimously by full Council in March 2008 and the Cabinet then approved specific proposals for Bath in May 2008. These included the proposed closure of Culverhay School but with the school being replaced by a co-educational school or academy on the existing site (south of the city). It was also proposed that both Oldfield and St Mark's schools should close to be replaced by a new co-educational school on one of the existing sites (north of the city).

### **3.5 Statutory Consultation on Closing Three Schools and Opening Two New Schools (March to May 2010)**

The statutory consultation was launched on 31 March 2010 with 13,000 copies of the document being sent out to parents, staff and other stakeholders. It included forecasts for the next ten years which indicated that the GBC would require a maximum of 958 school places per year in six not seven schools (this figure included places for pupils from outside Bath and enough surplus capacity for any short-term variations). This would release around £1.5 million per year from 1500 empty places and increase co-educational places.

The consultation process closed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010. 72% of the respondents were in favour of reducing seven schools to six. However, some new developments occurred that were to have an impact and limit the scope for further options. Using new school legislation, Oldfield School had declared an interest in becoming an academy, which would remove it from local authority control. St. Mark's Church of England School and St. Gregory's Catholic College announced plans to federate and form shared post-16 provision (co-educational).

### **3.6 Cabinet Decision to Consult on Closure of Culverhay School (18<sup>th</sup> August 2010)**

The Cabinet of the Council resolved to:

1. Support the Oldfield School to become a co-educational academy. This would increase co-educational provision and retain a school that had achieved an outstanding rating from OFSTED.
2. Support the federation of St. Gregory's Catholic College with St. Mark's School and create a joint sixth form. This would encourage higher educational standards and pupils retain access to co-educational faith provision.
3. Consult on the closure of Culverhay School without replacing it. This would remove a substantial amount of the surplus places and balance out the boys' places at Oldfield School.

### **3.7 Statutory Consultation on the closure of Culverhay School (24<sup>th</sup> September to 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010)**

The proposal to close Culverhay School with no replacement school on the site was the specific subject of the formal consultation during this time. Respondents were also invited to put forward alternative options to closing Culverhay School.

Meanwhile, implementation of the Oldfield, St. Gregory's and St. Mark's decisions proceeded.

Of those people who responded to the consultation, 47% supported and 53% opposed the Council's broad approach to addressing the challenges in Bath, which included reducing the numbers of schools from seven to six. However, the majority of respondents were opposed to the particular proposal for closing Culverhay School (74%). Only 26% were in favour of Culverhay School closing.

### **3.8 Cabinet Decision to Close Culverhay School (25<sup>th</sup> November 2010)**

Two other options emerged from the consultation process. One came from a parent group which proposed the retention of all seven schools in Bath but with each taking fewer pupils. This was not thought to be realistic since it did not meet the criteria of the secondary strategy and it could affect the ability of the other six schools to remain viable. It would also require the co-operation of their governing bodies to reduce their PANs as the LA was not the admissions authority for any of them.

The other came from Culverhay School which proposed that the school be converted into an all-through school for children aged 3-19 years old. Insufficient substance was provided for this option and it was not clear how



a two-form intake to the secondary phase could be viable. This proposal did not meet the strategy criteria and there was no evidence of endorsement from the relevant primary schools.

The Cabinet concluded that the only option that could address the key challenges was the closure of Culverhay School. It was agreed that a Public Notice of Closure should be issued and the responsible Cabinet member for Children's Services could determine the Notice after the six week representation period that was to follow.

### **3.9 Public Notice to Close Culverhay School (December 2010)**

A public notice to close Culverhay School was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010. It included the specific steps that would be taken to close Culverhay School in a staged and managed way over three years including arrangements for alternative schools for pupils and smooth transfers. The Representation period finished on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and the Cabinet Member considered all the representations on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011.

### **3.10 Single Member Determines Notice to Close Culverhay School (25<sup>th</sup> February 2011)**

On 25<sup>th</sup> February the Cabinet Member decided to implement the Public Notice. The decision was then challenged and called-in for examination by the O&S Panel. The panel met on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and agreed that the full Council should examine the decision instead. It was decided that it would not be appropriate for the full Council to meet to consider the call in during the pre election period..

### **3.11 Local Election (May 2011)**

As a result of the local elections there has been a change in the political administration of the Council. The new Leader of the Council pledged to start work on reversing the plan to close Culverhay School.

### **3.12 Council Meeting (14<sup>th</sup> July 2011)**

The first Council meeting after the local elections has been set for 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011. It will examine the Call-In of the decision to close Culverhay School. The Council may dismiss the call in or refer the decision back to the decision maker for reconsideration.. Following the full Council meeting, the Cabinet will meet to consider the future of Culverhay School. The next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

## **4. CULVERHAY SCHOOL - THE BACKGROUND**

Culverhay School has a history of uneven educational progress and a continuous decline in pupil numbers and popularity.

#### **4.1 1994 OfSTED Report**

The inspection of 1994 concluded that Culverhay School was a satisfactory school. The inspection identified assessment as a key issue for action together with the need to address over-staffing and non-specialist teaching. This issue is also highlighted in the Independent Review of Culverhay School Budget which is Annex 2 to this report.

#### **4.2 1999 OfSTED Report**

By 1999 the school had made significant improvement and OfSTED concluded that Culverhay School provided a good standard of education for its pupils in terms of both attainment and rates of progress.

#### **4.3 2006 OfSTED Report**

In 2006 OfSTED judged Culverhay School to be satisfactory. The effectiveness of the school was judged to be good for the main school (11-16) but inadequate for the sixth form. The Report identified the improvement of assessing pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning, especially in the sixth form, as issues for action.

#### **4.4 2008 Culverhay School became a National Challenge School**

In 2008 the DfE introduced the National Challenge programme to support schools where less than 30% of pupils achieved the floor target of 5 or more GCSE's grades A\*-C including English and Maths. Consequently, Culverhay School was designated a National Challenge School on the basis of its 2007 results. Additional funds were available to the school and a National Challenge Adviser was appointed to work with Culverhay School to develop and implement its Raising Achievement Plan (RAP). The school rose above the floor targets in 2008 and 2009 and, whilst it remained above 30% in 2010, the threshold was raised to 35%. In addition, schools are expected to meet the national average figure for 3 levels of progress in both English and Maths, so the school remains at risk.

National Challenge ceased in March 2011 but floor targets continue to rise. In 2012, it will rise to 40% and by the end of the Parliament it will rise to 50%. The current average across the system will become the new floor.

#### 4.5 2009 - Latest full OfSTED inspection

A few months later in May 2009 OfSTED found that Culverhay School provided a good standard of education. It noted also that standards of education in the sixth form had risen significantly and were now good.

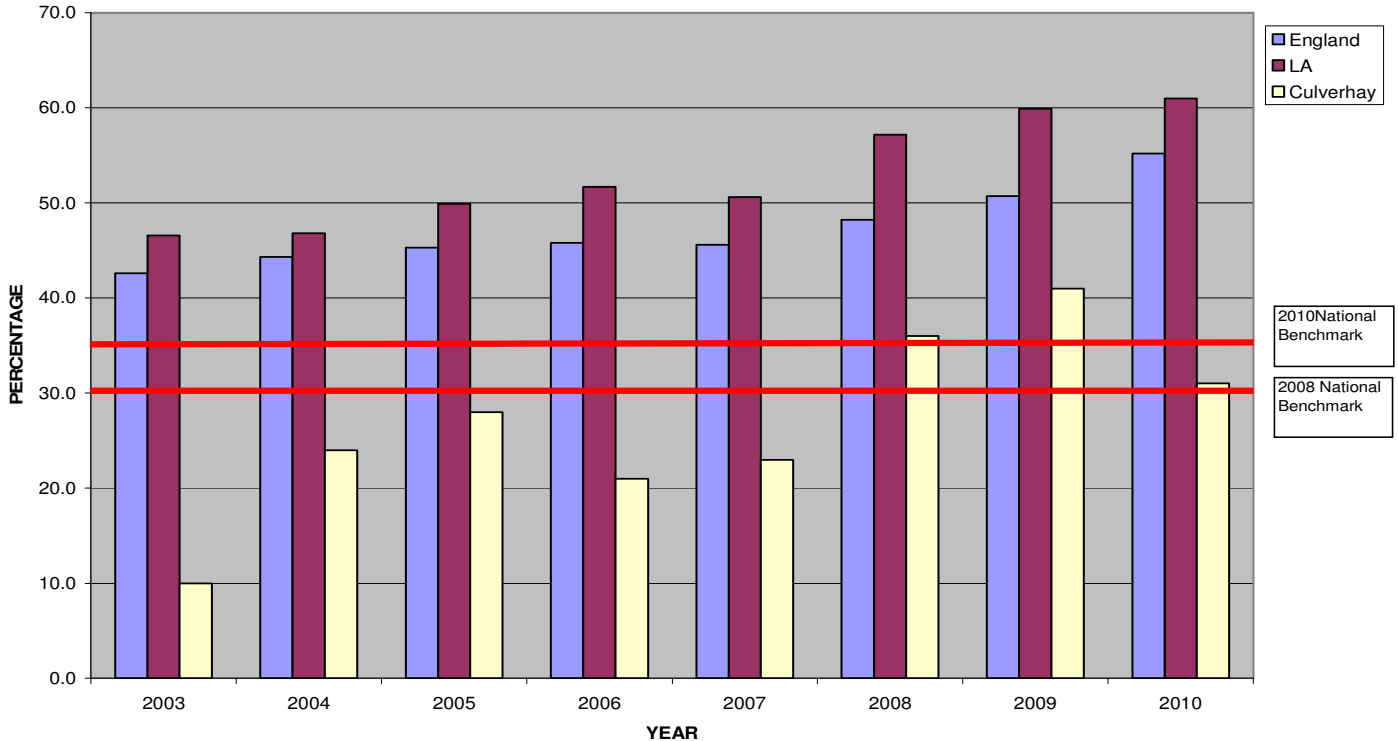
#### 4.6 Standards of attainment on entry to Culverhay School

Standards achieved by pupils entering Culverhay School at 11 years old, are consistently below the national and LA average. The pupils attending the school include a higher proportion of pupils with Special Educational needs than in other Bath schools. In 2010 just over 30% of pupils at Culverhay School had Special Educational Needs compared to 21.7% nationally.

#### 4.7 Standards of attainment at Culverhay School for pupils aged 16

Standards of attainment for Year 11 students (GCSE results) have been well below national and Local Authority averages throughout the last 10 years. This is shown in the graph below.

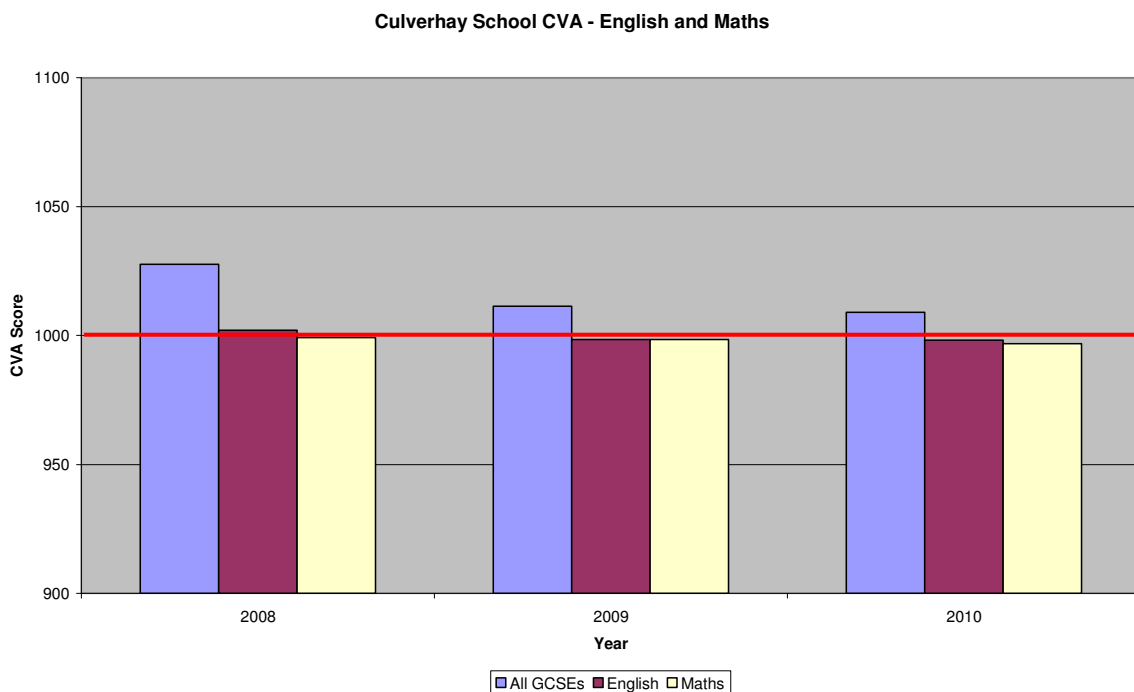
PERCENTAGE 5+ GCSE'S A\*-C (including English and Maths)



## 4.8 Levels of Achievement

Overall pupils' standards are low when they enter Culverhay School. By the time they reach the age of 16 and take their GCSE's standards are satisfactory. Therefore they make good progress during their time at the school.

The graph below shows the national average for pupils progress from age 11 to age 16 for all GCSEs, for English and for Maths when each pupils background is taken into account. For example those pupils who have free school meals or move schools make less progress than other pupils and this is taken into account in this graph. Scores above 1000 points mean that pupils do better than average and below 1000 worse than average.

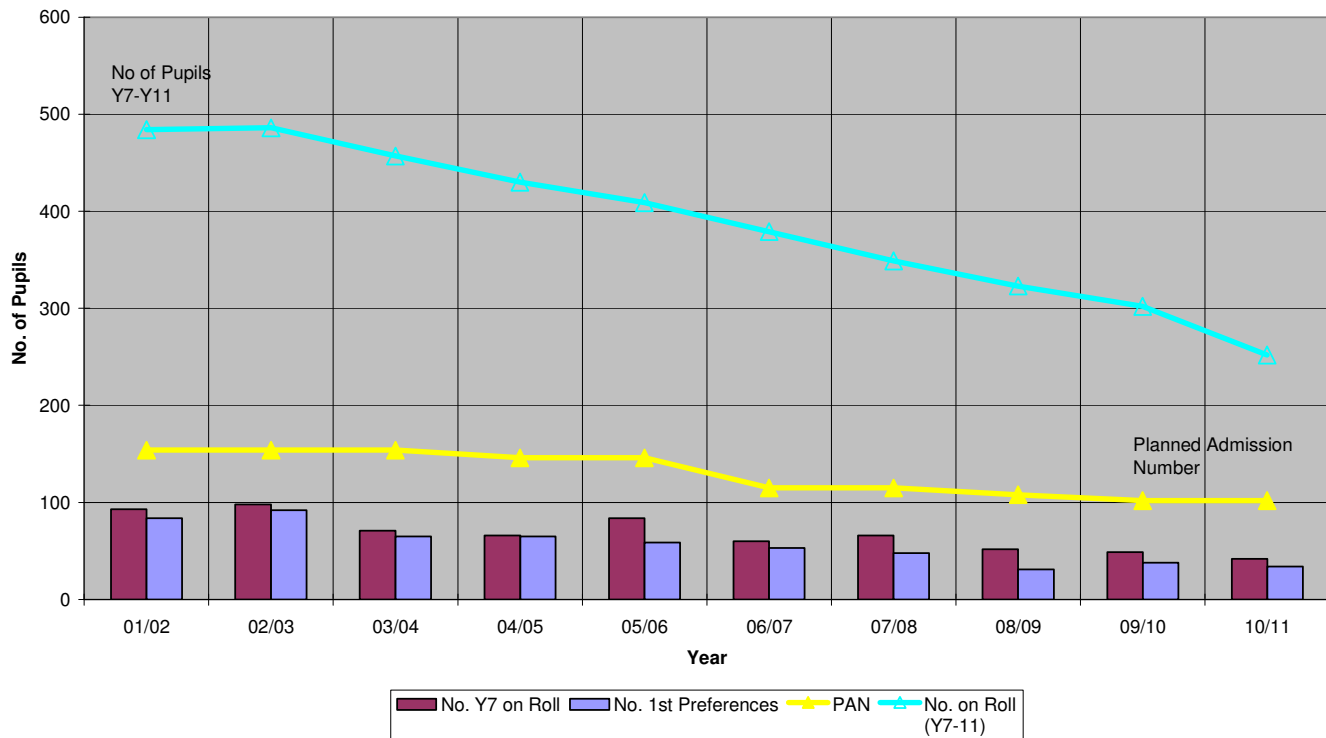


## 4.9 Parental Choice and First Preferences

Culverhay School has in recent years been a small school. In 2002 it had only 484 pupils in Years 7 to 11. Since then the number of pupils has gradually decreased as the next graph shows and this mirrors the decline in pupil numbers in the GBC. By 2011 there were only 252 on roll in years 7 to 11.

The number of parents' first preferences has also reduced over time indicating a decline in popularity.

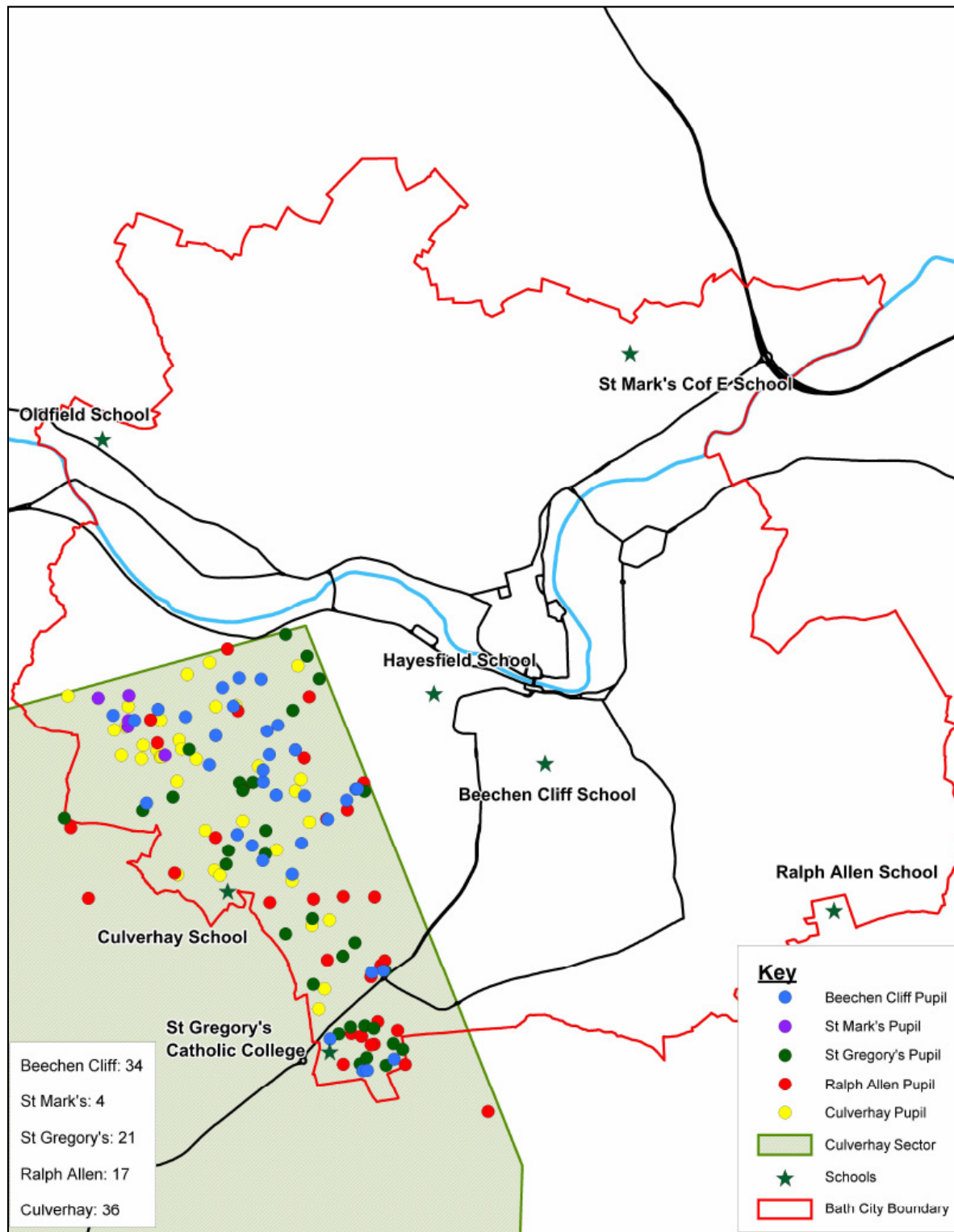
### School Roll and 1st Preferences 2001 to 2011



Pupil admission data shows that many parents prefer to send their boys to schools further away. The map opposite provides a snapshot of September 2009 where boys who lived closer to Culverhay School than any other boy's school went to school.

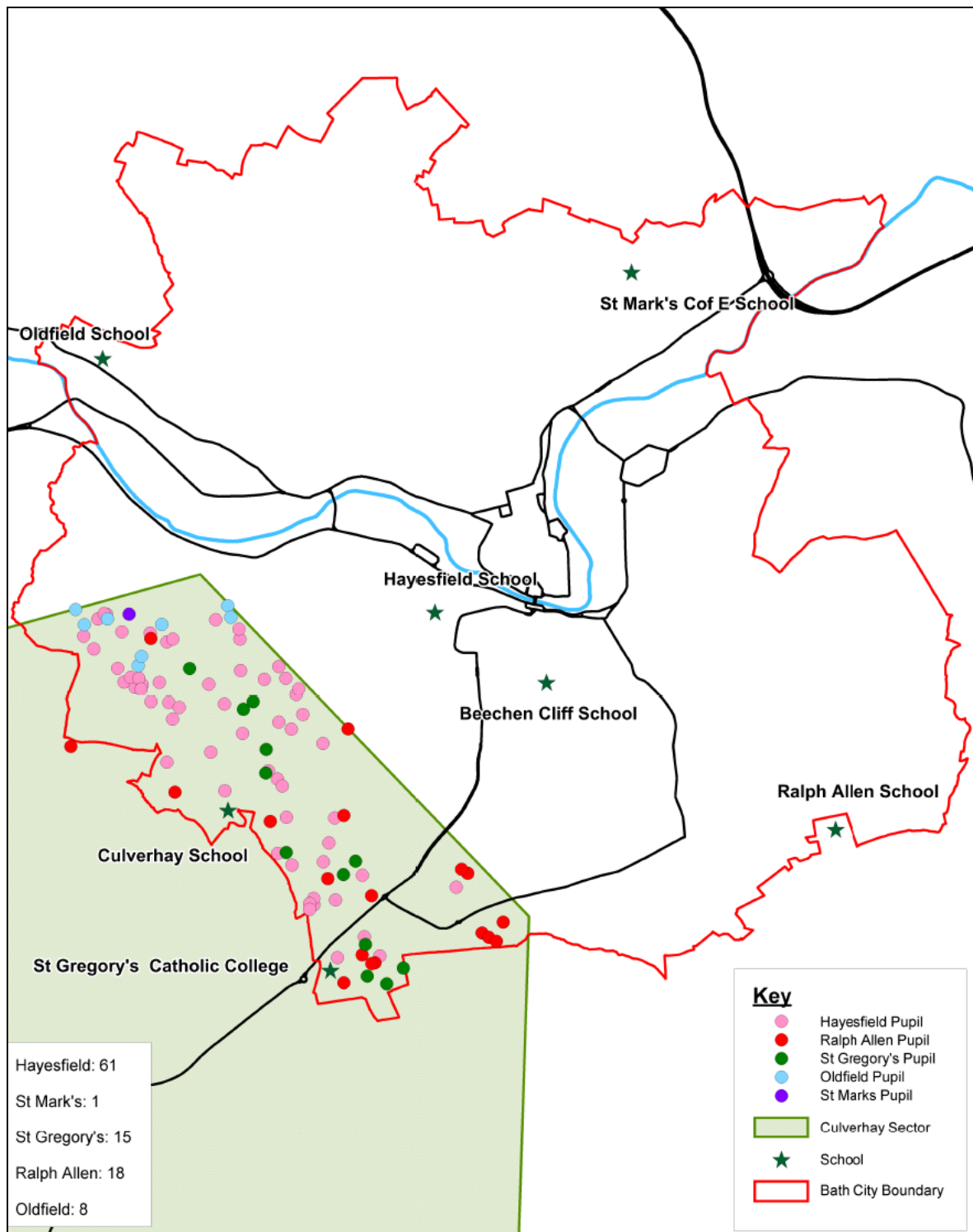
The map on the following page shows where girls who lived closer to Culverhay School than any other girl's school went to school.

## Y7 - Male Pupils closer to Culverhay School 2009



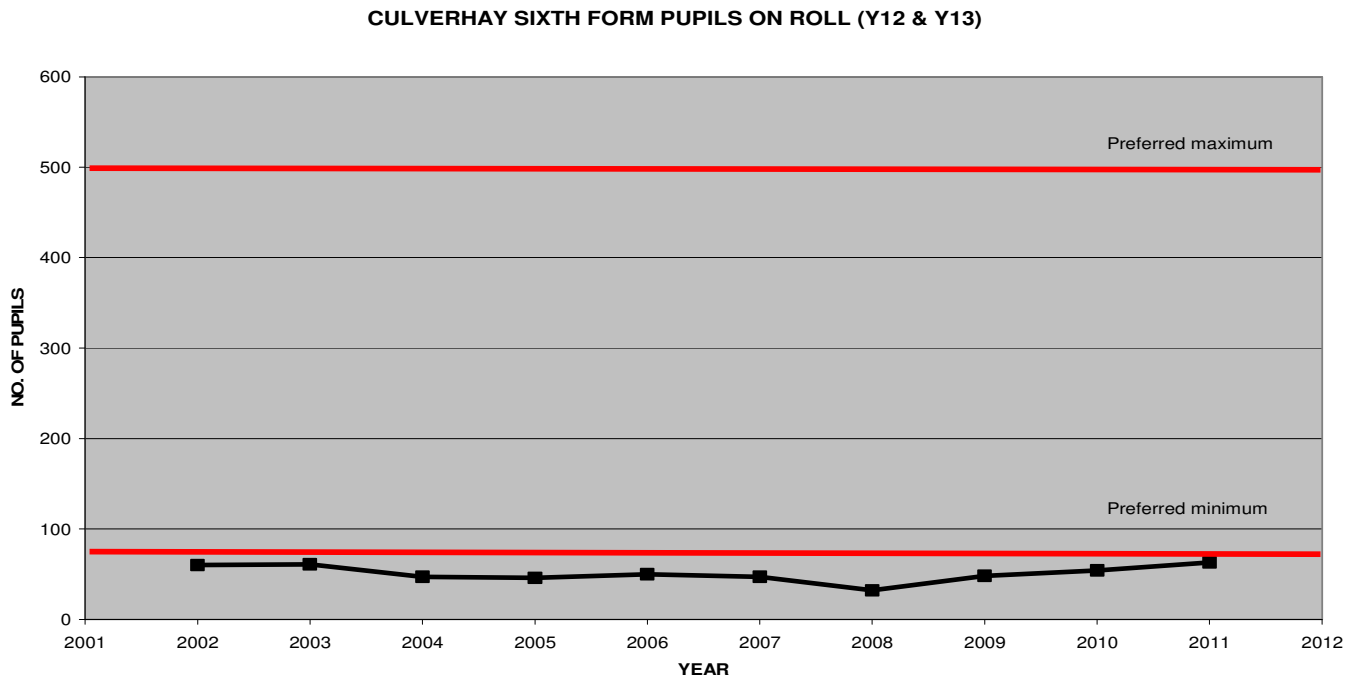
As can be seen, of the 112 boys in the Culverhay School catchment many chose to go further away to attend other schools, 34 attended Beechen Cliff (boys' school); 17 Ralph Allen (mixed school) and only 36 Culverhay School.

# Y7 - Female Pupils closer to Culverhay School 2009



## 4.10 Post 16 Numbers

In 2006 OfSTED concluded that post 16 provision was inadequate but since then standards have improved significantly. However, Culverhay School's post 16 student numbers have remained very small over the last 10 years, as can be seen from the graph below. The small size of the Sixth Form limits the number of courses Culverhay School can offer, giving less choice for students than in other schools.



## 4.11 Budget and Staffing

A school's budget is allocated mainly on the number of pupils who attend the school. As Culverhay School's pupil numbers have declined so has this element of the LA budget. Low pupil numbers has triggered the small schools support element of the formula which has become a significant proportion of the school's income as the next table shows. In addition to the LA budget, the school has received additional funds such as grants and funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs.



| <b>Culverhay School Budget, Spend &amp; Balance for last 11 years</b> |   |                     |                    |                            |
|---|---|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
|   | <b>Small School Support LA Budget element</b> | <b>Total Budget</b> | <b>Total Spend</b> | <b>Grand Total Balance</b> |
| 2000/2001   | £37,340                                       | £1,747,309          | £1,704,529         | <b>£42,780</b>             |
| 2001/2002   | £35,657                                       | £1,791,316          | £1,765,025         | <b>£26,291</b>             |
| 2002/2003   | £41,026                                       | £1,903,515          | £1,909,804         | <b>(-£6,289)</b>           |
| 2003/2004   | £52,113                                       | £2,040,041          | £2,013,169         | <b>£26,872</b>             |
| 2004/2005   | £87,684                                       | £2,026,044          | £2,047,612         | <b>(-£21,568)</b>          |
| 2005/2006   | £125,621                                      | £2,129,317          | £2,160,767         | <b>(-£31,450)</b>          |
| 2006/2007   | £131,426                                      | £2,250,572          | £2,111,201         | <b>£139,371</b>            |
| 2007/2008   | £166,416                                      | £2,304,924          | £2,188,942         | <b>£115,982</b>            |
| 2008/2009   | £207,960                                      | £2,355,501          | £2,285,919         | <b>£69,582</b>             |
| 2009/2010   | £233,660                                      | £2,368,603          | £2,290,364         | <b>£78,239</b>             |
| 2010/2011   | £255,977                                      | £2,536,455          | £2,367,474         | <b>£168,981</b>            |

## **5. THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IF CULVERHAY SCHOOL WERE TO BE CLOSED**

### **5.1 Community Identity and Cohesion**

Some areas of the south-west part of the city of Bath are acknowledged to have higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. As such, the local school can be a valuable source of opportunities or a means to supporting vulnerable people who have relatively higher challenges in terms of education and employability.

In closing the school, some people will be unable or unwilling to travel further for facilities and opportunities for interested parties to work with the community could be reduced. In particular, the continued access to the sports hall and the swimming pool may be restricted or removed if the school is no longer responsible for the maintenance of the facilities.

On the other hand, the Culverhay School premises and site could be transferred to another party and continue to be used for the delivery of services. For example, an alternative purchaser of the site may also be a service provider and they may choose to continue running the leisure and

sports facilities and offer other types of activity that match the needs of the locality. Alternatively, the council could choose to develop an alternative type of educational organisation that can be sustained by the local community. A closure of the Culverhay School in 2014 would make such a transition easier in procedural terms.

## 5.2 Travel to school

Boys in the locality who would have attended Culverhay School would be obliged to travel further to school. For those preferring single sex, boys' provision, the only option would be Beechen Cliff School. It is possible that not all boys in the Culverhay School locality would obtain places there due to admission rules related to distance.

However, the numbers are likely to be low as many pupils living close to Culverhay School already choose to travel further to attend other schools. The new Oldfield Academy is near and it will offer co-educational provision from September 2012. Boys would be able to travel there without difficulty. A co-ed Culverhay School may also attract boys who would have attended Ralph Allen and Beechen Cliff which will release more spaces for those seeking boys' only education from the Culverhay area.

Girls living nearer to Culverhay School than any other school have been unable to attend Culverhay School due to its single sex status. The closure of Culverhay School would not affect their travel to school journeys.

## 5.3 Parental Preferences and Diversity

The 2004 parents' survey revealed a need for more co-educational provision. The conversion of Oldfield School to a co-educational Academy increases choice and diversity for parents. If Culverhay School, were to close there would be less choice of secondary in the city.

| School        | Net capacity | PAN 2012                     |            |            |
|---------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Hayesfield    | 1184         | 180                          | Girls      | Foundation |
| Ralph Allen   | 1079         | 180                          | Co-ed      | Foundation |
| St. Mark's    | 513          | 102                          | Co-ed      | Faith VA   |
| St. Gregory's | 800          | 160                          | Co-ed      | Faith VA   |
| Beechen Cliff | 1077         | 162                          | Boys       | Academy    |
| Oldfield      | 1015         | 192                          | Co-ed      | Academy    |
|               |              | 976<br><i>per year group</i> | 5% Surplus |            |

## 5.4 Availability of school places

There is expected to be a slight increase in secondary pupil numbers in Bath from 2011 to 2017 with a small and short "bulge" in 2018 and 2019 needing a total of 976 places (928 plus 5% surplus) that would be available

without Culverhay School. Closure of Culverhay School would reduce the total number of schools from seven to six schools in Bath and reduce surplus places to around 5% (50 places) which is within the desirable range for urban areas.

## **5.5 Financial Risks and Possible High Cost of Redundancies**

If Culverhay School were to be closed there would potentially be high redundancy costs in the region of £1 million. However, as all schools would benefit financially from the closure of Culverhay School it was agreed by the School's Forum that the estimated cost of £950,000 for any redundancies and early retirements arising from the closure programme, would be met by the Direct Schools Grant. This could be spread over more than one year.

The process of closing a school would create disruption for pupils and the maintenance of a viable curriculum would be difficult as pupil numbers fall. However, since the school has been under notice of closure since December 2010, a three year financial plan has been developed. The plan is financially and educationally viable due to the proposed phased transfer of pupil cohorts and a related reduction in staffing over three years. It is possible for the school to close in August 2014 with a modest surplus.

## **5.6 Staffing**

If Culverhay School were to close this would potentially result in the loss of experienced teachers from the system. However, staff would be made redundant in phases and would be fully supported through the closure period. Every effort would be made to redeploy staff with the co-operation of the remaining secondary schools in the Authority although opportunities may be limited.

## **5.7 Educational Standards and Pupil Entitlement**

With a known closure of the school, some teachers would leave and the numbers of pupils may reduce more rapidly than expected. As a result, there is a risk that educational standards may fall and the ethos of the school could be affected. It would be increasingly difficult to manage the school in these circumstances.

On the other hand, the school may not be able to reach the rising government floor targets. If the school were to be closed by the LA it would remove the threat of closure by the Secretary of State and mitigate the unfortunate consequences such a closure would involve for the pupils and the local community.

## **5.8 Premises and Capital Spending**

With the closure of Culverhay School, savings would be made through reduced maintenance costs of the premises. It would also provide the LA

with access to additional resources. The vacant Culverhay School site could potentially provide a capital receipt in the region of £6-8 million. This could be used to improve the rest of the school estate over a period of years and would be helpful during a period when capital income is restricted.

## **6. THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF CULVERHAY SCHOOL REMAINING OPEN**

### **6.1 Community Identity and Cohesion**

The continued existence of Culverhay School at its present site would be welcome to many. However, there is a risk that should the local community be unable to generate sufficient pupil numbers, it may not survive as a viable boys' school or as a co-educational school.

If the school remains open it would require investment in maintenance and repair of the building, particularly in relation to the facilities that are jointly used by the school and the community. At the time of writing, immediate remedial works for the joint-use facilities (swimming pool and the leisure centre) are needed, costing around £500,000. The future of the facilities depends on the overall strategic plan for leisure in the City which is regularly reviewed and subject to a contract with an external provider. It is not guaranteed that the facilities would be required in the long-term if improved facilities can be developed elsewhere in the city.

### **6.2 Parental Preference and Diversity**

Culverhay School would initially remain open as a boys' school and any change to a co-educational school would be subject to a statutory process. It is probable that such a change would not be possible until September 2013.

The opportunity for Culverhay School to change its status to a co-educational school would increase diversity and could open the way for Culverhay School becoming a larger, viable school. However, since school rolls would be unlikely to increase until girls were admitted, it could take at least five years for the higher pupil numbers to work through the school and for the school to recover.

The school most likely to be at risk of losing some pupils if Culverhay School become a mixed school would be Hayesfield School as 60% of the girls who live closer to Culverhay School than any other school attend Hayesfield.

### **6.3 Availability of School Places**

If Culverhay School were to stay open the current level of surplus places would remain the same. Even if the school roll increases over time, it is not expected that (given the other popular schools in Bath) Culverhay School would attract more than two forms of entry and it would therefore continue to have surplus places in excess of 25%.

### **6.4 Financial Risks**

The projected number of pupils attending the school will determine its income and scope for employing staff. As predicting future pupil numbers is based on a large number of factors without certainty.

Two scenarios have been developed with the school to provide a picture of what the next five years might look like in terms of income and costs.

The first scenario is based on LA estimates of maximum pupil numbers. The second scenario uses Culverhay School's estimated intake. Both scenarios take into account the following factors:

- The school being co-educational from 1 September 2013
- All estimated formula and YPLA calculations have been based on 2011/12 figures.
- Staffing reductions in 2011/12 and in future years
- No redundancy costs included.
- No interest charges included in relation to cash allocations to cover the deficit balance.

The two scenarios are given in the following two tables.

Scenario 1. Estimated budget for Culverhay School from 2011/2 to 2015/6 based on the Local Authority estimates of maximum pupil numbers.

| <b>SCENARIO 1<br/>LA ESTIMATE OF<br/>PUPILNUMBERS</b>                     | <b>2011/12</b>    | <b>2012/13</b>    | <b>2013/14</b>    | <b>2014/15</b>    | <b>2015/16</b>    |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Est. September intake numbers</b>                                      | 29                | 30                | 50                | 60                | 60                |
| <b>Est. Pupils exc. 6th form</b>  | 252               | 224               | 199               | 199               | 211               |
| <b>Estimated Formula Allocation estimated pupil numbers exc. 6th form</b> | 1,598,670         | 1,525,883         | 1,450,640         | 1,406,667         | 1,481,565         |
| <b>Estimated 6th form</b>   | 63                | 44                | 43                | 40                | 37                |
| <b>Estimated YPLA</b>   | 339,613           | 222,995           | 211,389           | 190,742           | 171,143           |
| <b>Total Estimated Income (Formula &amp; YPLA)</b>                        | <b>1,938,283</b>  | <b>1,748,878</b>  | <b>1,662,029</b>  | <b>1,597,409</b>  | <b>1,652,708</b>  |
| <b>Costs</b>  | <b>2011/12</b>    | <b>2012/13</b>    | <b>2013/14</b>    | <b>2014/15</b>    | <b>2015/16</b>    |
| <b>Total estimated Income inc above</b>                                   | 2,356,602         | 2,132,956         | 2,036,477         | 1,971,917         | 2,028,526         |
| <b>Est. Staffing Costs</b>  | 1,994,115         | 1,831,095         | 1,771,923         | 1,763,984         | 1,769,416         |
| <b>Est. Non- Staffing Costs</b>   | 581,145           | 491,087           | 467,282           | 467,282           | 467,282           |
| <b>In Year surplus/(Deficit)</b>  | <b>(-218,658)</b> | <b>(-189,226)</b> | <b>(-202,728)</b> | <b>(-259,349)</b> | <b>(-208,172)</b> |
| <b>Surplus/ (Deficit) Brought Forward</b>                                 | 168,981           | (-49,677)         | (-238,903)        | (-441,631)        | (-700,980)        |
| <b>Outturn: Cumulative Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>                             | <b>(-49,677)</b>  | <b>(-238,903)</b> | <b>(-441,631)</b> | <b>(-700,980)</b> | <b>(-909,152)</b> |

Scenario 1 shows an in-year deficit for all financial years resulting in a cumulative deficit at the end of 2015/16 of £909,000 and an ongoing deficit of £208,000 per annum.

Scenario 2. Estimated budget for Culverhay School from 2011/2 to 2015/6 based on the School estimates of pupil numbers.

| <b>SCENARIO 2<br/>SCHOOL ESTIMATE OF<br/>PUPIL NUMBERS</b>                       | <b>2011/12</b>    | <b>2012/13</b>    | <b>2013/14</b>    | <b>2014/15</b>    | <b>2015/16</b>    |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Est. September intake numbers</b>   | 27                | 50                | 80                | 80                | 80                |
| <b>Est. Pupils exc. 6th form - School</b>  | 252               | 222               | 217               | 247               | 279               |
| <b>Estimated Formula Allocation School estimated pupil numbers exc. 6th form</b> | 1,598,670         | 1,525,128         | 1,468,096         | 1,638,774         | 1,826,001         |
| <b>Estimated 6th form - School</b>   | 63                | 44                | 43                | 40                | 37                |
| <b>Estimated YPLA - School</b>   | 339,613           | 222,995           | 211,389           | 190,742           | 171,143           |
| <b>Income:<br/>Total Estimated Formula &amp; YPLA</b>                            | <b>1,938,283</b>  | <b>1,748,123</b>  | <b>1,679,485</b>  | <b>1,829,516</b>  | <b>1,997,144</b>  |
| <b>Costs</b>   | <b>2011/12</b>    | <b>2012/13</b>    | <b>2013/14</b>    | <b>2014/15</b>    | <b>2015/16</b>    |
| <b>Total estimated Income inc above</b>  | 2,356,602         | 2,136,271         | 2,062,203         | 2,215,734         | 2,386,802         |
| <b>Est. Staffing Costs</b>   | 1,994,115         | 1,835,095         | 1,825,555         | 1,870,911         | 1,891,637         |
| <b>Est. Non- Staffing Costs</b>  | 581,145           | 521,054           | 518,304           | 518,304           | 518,304           |
| <b>In Year surplus/(Deficit)</b>   | <b>(-218,658)</b> | <b>(-219,878)</b> | <b>(-281,656)</b> | <b>(-173,481)</b> | <b>(-23,139)</b>  |
| <b>Surplus/ (Deficit) Brought Forward</b>  | 168,981           | (-49,677)         | (-269,555)        | (-551,211)        | (-724,692)        |
| <b>Outturn:<br/>Cumulative Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>                                | <b>(-49,677)</b>  | <b>(-269,555)</b> | <b>(-551,211)</b> | <b>(-724,692)</b> | <b>(-747,831)</b> |

Scenario 2 shows the school manages an in-year deficit of £23,000 in 2015/16 but is anticipated to have a cumulative deficit of £748,000 at the end of 2015/16. This could take the school a further 15 years to clear the deficit if they repaid this at an estimate of £50,000 per year. It is likely the school would be on a deficit budget plan for approx 20 years in order to clear the deficit as long as pupil numbers are achievable and sustainable.

An independent review has been commissioned to support the school in determining a viable and cost effective timetable and curriculum. This review has been carried out by an officer of the Association of School and College Lecturers (ASCL) who is an experienced ex head teacher. The initial findings of this review are given as ANNEX II. The initial findings indicate that:

- The school has benefited from generous funding to date and this is unlikely to be sustained in the future.

- The school in its present organisational format is unsustainable.
- The school could potentially run with 50-60 students per year as long as high staffing levels, the management structures and the style of curriculum delivery are addressed.

Therefore, if the school stays open, there would have to be redundancies and these will have to be funded by the LA. These costs could be in the region of £500,000. New estimates are required in the light of any decisions the Governing Body may make following the independent report on the sustainability of Culverhay School.

In 2010/11 Culverhay School received £256,000 via the small school support element of the LA formula budget. However, there is a risk that this element would not be sustained when a national funding formula is introduced.

## **6.5 Staffing**

Teaching and support staff would continue to be employed by the school. However, the staffing requirements would need to be managed in accordance with the budget and school curriculum. The independent report estimates that in September 2011 the school would be over-staffed by more than six teachers (20%). There is an immediate need to reduce staffing and to increase teacher contact time with pupils.

It is anticipated that early consultation would need to take place to reduce the numbers of staff in order to manage the budget deficit. Remaining staff would be required to work flexibly and develop/acquire new skills to ensure the school meets its operational requirements. Teaching staff would need to develop a broader range of subject specialisms to support the curriculum. Additional training would be provided to facilitate the change to job roles.

## **6.6 Educational Standards and Pupil Entitlement**

There is a risk that the school would be unable to reduce staffing and change its curriculum delivery and raise educational standards. The 2011 Year 7 entry is likely to be less than 30 students and may require teaching as a single class for much of the time. This would present a significant challenge to meet the needs of a wide range of abilities.

## **6.7 Premises and Capital Spending**

If the school remains open, the costs for maintenance and refurbishment over 10 years are estimated to be £700k with a total of £250k required in the next three years to address the most pressing problems. It would also be necessary to undertake adaptations to accommodate girls such as the provision of toilets and shower facilities. These have been estimated at £200,000.



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- Single Member Report for Decision on or after 19<sup>th</sup> February 2011  
“Determination of the Statutory Notice to Close Culverhay School”.
- Equalities Impact Assessment Updated, April 2011.
- Risk Assessment.
- B&NES LEA Data Annexes, SQW Consulting, May 2010.
- OFSTED reports

Section 10 Inspection, 6-9<sup>th</sup> December 1999, Inspection No. 185593

Section 5 Inspection, 17-18 May 2006, Inspection No. 278175

Section 5 Inspection, 13-14 May 2009, Inspection No. 324941

## **GLOSSARY**

### **ACADEMY**

Academies are publicly funded independent schools, free from local authority and national government control. Freedoms include setting their own pay and conditions for staff, freedoms concerning the delivery of the curriculum, and the ability to change the length of their terms and school days.

### **CAPITAL FUNDING**

Money for buildings and specific time-limited purposes.

### **CO-EDUCATIONAL**

A school that has both boy and girl pupils.

### **CVA**

A measure of pupils progress taking into account a number of factors such as whether they have free school meals or move schools. Average progress is measured as 1000. The coalition government has decided not to continue using this measure on the grounds that taking account of the fact that for example free school meals pupils do less well than other pupils is likely to lower expectations of what those pupils are capable of.

### **DSG**

Dedicated Schools Grant - this is the overall sum of money which can only be distributed to schools according to an agreed local formula. The formula is developed and agreed with the local Schools' Forum.

### **DfE**

Department for Education - the government department responsible for education and children's services.

### **FOUNDATION SCHOOL**

A foundation school is a state-funded school in which the governing body has greater freedom in the running of the school than in community schools. Foundation schools were set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to replace grant-maintained schools, which were funded directly by central government. Grant-maintained schools that had previously been voluntary controlled usually became foundation schools. The governing body employs the staff and has responsibility for admissions to the school, subject to rules imposed by central government. Pupils follow the National Curriculum. Some foundation schools, also called trust schools, have a foundation or trust that owns the land and buildings. Otherwise the land and buildings are owned by the governing body.

### **GBC**

Greater Bath Consortium

### **KEY STAGE**

A Key Stage is a stage of the state education system in England, Wales, Northern Ireland which was introduced by the Education reform act in 1988. The knowledge

and skills expected of students at various ages is defined in each stage and targets for achieving them are set by government. The stages are as follows:

- Key Stage 1: Years 1 to 2 (5–7 years old) – KS1.
- Key Stage 2: Years 3 to 6 (7–11 years old) – KS2.
- Key Stage 3: Years 7 to 9 (11–14 years old) – KS3.
- Key Stage 4: Years 10 to 11 (14–16 years old) – KS4.
- Key Stage 5 (more commonly referred to as Sixth Form): Years 12 to 13 (16–18 years old) – KS5. .

## **LA**

Local Authority.

## **OfSTED**

Office for Standards in Education. Body responsible for inspecting schools.

## **STATUTORY PROPOSAL**

When a local authority is contemplating a change to the character of an individual school or a group of schools it has to follow a process which is laid out in law and includes publishing the intended reorganisation and consulting with the public about it. This process is referred to as a Statutory Proposal.

## **REVENUE FUNDING**

Funding which is continuous and used for ongoing costs such as salaries.

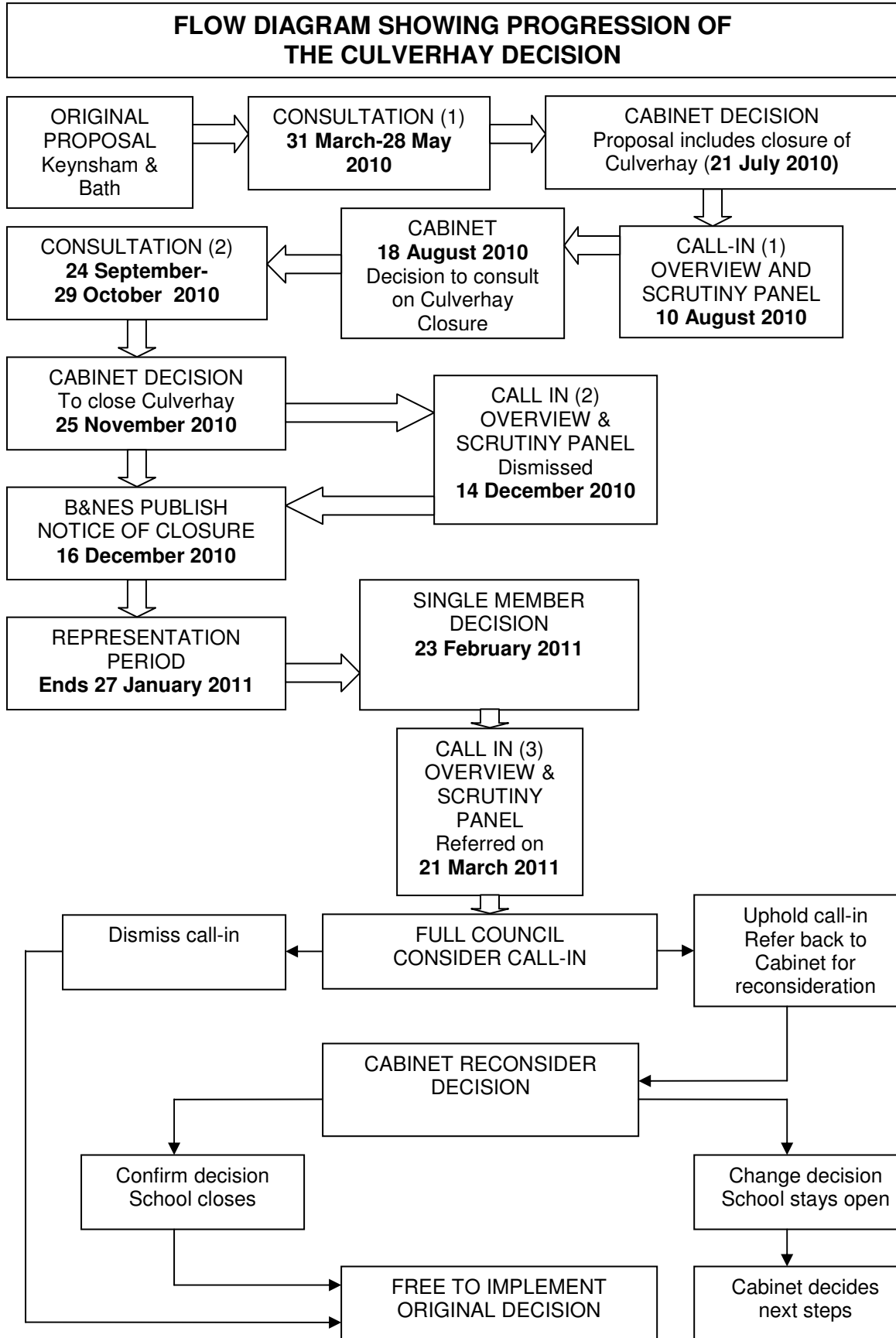
## **SURPLUS PLACES**

Each school has a published admission number (PAN) for each year group. This number is based on the size of the premises, the numbers of pupils in the area and the different types of schools in the area. The objective for any authority is to provide sufficient places for the number of pupils who live there. When there are more than 10% spare places in schools, the vacancies are referred to as surplus places. It is considered to be an inefficient use of public money to run too many surplus places in schools.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)**

This is a specific term with an associated set of definitions that indicate where specific pupils should receive additional help and resources. The 1981 Education Act opened up this range of entitlements and ways of working. Since then, its provisions have been supported by the 1995 Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) and the 2002 Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SENDDA).

# ANNEX I



## ANNEX II

# Interim Independent report on the Sustainability for Culverhay School in respect of strategic Financial, Staffing and Curriculum matters.

### 1 Introduction:

This report was commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset LA in conjunction with the Head and Governors of Culverhay School to gain an independent view on the future sustainability of Culverhay school in terms of finance, staffing and curriculum following the “Call-in” of the decision to close Culverhay school. This commissioned service has been provided by the Management and Professional Services branch of the Association of School and College Leaders, the leading professional association for secondary school and college leaders. The work has been carried out by David Snashall, an experienced but recently retired secondary headteacher and now part-time officer of the Association.

### 2 Scope

This is a preliminary report, using data gathered on a one-day visit to the school. Interviews were held with senior leaders and governors. Data was also made available from the officers of the Local Authority. The data provided included a LA and a School estimate of future pupil numbers which are non-evidences and may be both at the higher end of expectations.

### 3 Model of sustainability

Recent work by ASCL has developed some simple parameters to aid school leaders to take strategic decisions about planning their spending, staffing and curriculum. It is emphasis that these parameters should be a starting point for taking strategic decisions in the local school, but they have the benefit of providing a model at a time of financial uncertainty. These parameters have been shown to work in nearly every situation and provide the linkage from available funds, through staffing, to the type of curriculum that can be offered. The underlying parameters of this model relevant to Culverhay’s strategic direction are:

- a) The 60/20/20 guide: This indicates that spending for sustainable future should be in proportion of: 60% teaching staff; 20% support staff; 20% other costs
- b) The 0.8 deployment guide. This indicates that the overall teaching staff deployment contact ratio should be 0.8. This is the proportion of the available teacher time that is spent teaching in the classroom. Teachers are entitled to 0.1 planning, preparation and assessment time, and leaders entitled to management time. Together, in sustainable schools, the total of non-teaching activity should not exceed 0.2 of the time available

Once these parameters point to the staffing affordability, the framework for the curriculum offer then becomes clear.

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### 4 Historic situation

#### 4.1 The 60/20/20 guide

A quick analysis of spending over the past couple of years show that the school is not vastly variant from the 60/20/20 guide. Support staff spending is slightly high. This indicates that having been given the budget the governors have done a good job in managing the proportions and have managed the decreasing numbers of students well. However, the funds available to the school have been very generous:

- the school has benefited disproportionately from grants
- the school has had National Challenge funding
- the school has had as had a very generous allowance for being a “small school” (about £1800 per student per year compared with the BANES average)
- the school has benefited from the falling roles situation and BANES funding policy. For example if the roll has fallen by 30 between academic years, the school has benefited from full funding for a financial year for those 30 students but their expenditure has only been for 5/12 of the year. Because the governors have managed staffing well, this has added typically £100,000 per annum over what the school “should” have.

All of these additions are unsustainable, and the future model for funding the school regardless of the governance arrangements, need to be based on sustainable pupil-formula based spending. Staffing is unnecessarily high because of these unsustainable funds.

#### 4.2 The 0.8 deployment guide

This seems never to have guided the deployment of staff and the current level of 0.68 will be amongst the lowest in the country. The difference indicates the volume of professional teaching staff time not used for teaching. There are usually two sources of this – an overgenerous management structure, and teachers not using all the time they are employed for in the professional activity of teaching. In Culverhay’s case both these elements are present. Simply having too many teachers also affects this ratio, and whilst this is now the case, it seems not to have been historically so.

#### 4.3 The Curriculum

The curriculum has provided all that is required by the National Curriculum. The Key Stage three curriculum has gone further and offered (for example) two languages. The core nature of the curriculum in KS3 generally means it is independent of student intake, provided that the student cohort arrives in viable sized groups (for example 25, 50 etc). The KS3 curriculum offer, or its structure in groups, has not been changed as student numbers have dropped leading to some very small groups, and over-generous staffing. At Key Stage 4, it is possible for students to follow the English Baccalaureate subjects, and other combinations required by statute, but there is minimal choice compared with most secondary provision. The school has been working in partnerships with the FE College and other schools to try and address this, but the number of students taking up these offers is small. Curriculum delivery in both these key stages is traditional and class based.

Post 16 the school offers some very successful OCR Nationals, which are taught imaginatively with a strong emphasis on independent learning. Such a model often provides a stimulus and then requires students to explore the material in groups and/or with coaching. The A level offer is poor, not

## ANNEX II

viable and even though steps have been taken to work with other schools to create a better offer, such working is minimal. It is not a good environment for successful A level learning because choice is so limited.

### 5 Current Situation

#### 5.1 The 60/20/20 guide

Teacher staffing for this financial year is approximately 60% of income, non-teaching staff at 25% and other spending at 25%. The overall spend is 109% of income – ie a planned deficit.

However, the budget share is enhanced substantially by a small school's grant, and other grants that would not be sustainable. A conservative estimate suggests that £350,000 falls into this category, which then makes the income base closer to £2.0m, and then teacher costs become 71% of income, non-teachers 30% and other costs 29%, making an overall spend of 130%. This is totally unsustainable. The matter is worse, because this year's income is based on 315 student, where the September 2011 roll is likely to be 272.

Further analysis is needed to identify exactly how the "school small" funding has been spent by the school and whether this represents value-for-money in respect of staffing levels, curriculum or contribution to the fixed costs associated with the over-sized building

#### 5.2 The 0.8 deployment guide.

For September, the school currently has 27.2 teachers. With the timetable cycle in use this gives an availability of 1360 Teacher periods for the timetable. With the current curriculum planned, which is generous in its allocations and has mainly small group sizes, the requirement is for 820 teacher periods. This gives a deployment ratio of 0.60. This will make the school one of the most generously deployed in the country.

The current management structure gives a non-contact total 393 teacher periods – this is very generous. For a staff of 27.2 with 0.8 deployment one would expect this figure to be 272 periods. To get 820 Teacher Periods, with 0.8 deployment, 1025 teacher periods need to be available. This means that there is currently (1360-1025) 335 teacher periods in excess, or 6.7 teaching staff. Removing these staff would lead to a staffing establishment of 21.5. This is still an overall pupil-teacher ratio of 13:1 which is well below typical figure of 17: 1 The disparity between these figures indicates the very generous nature of the present curriculum structure. Any reduction of current staff needs to take into account the needed skill set and specialist knowledge for the future curriculum and teaching & learning styles.

The staff deployment to post 16 courses is in higher proportion than funds generated.

The large leadership group for the size of schools also takes up significant non-teaching time (as well as a number of high salaries): it would normally be smaller in a 272 pupil school.

#### 5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum proposed for the coming year is identical to the Historic situation. There is no immediate impact of the very small year group in Year 7 because this will be treated as one, mixed ability group throughout.

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### 6 Future situation

#### 6.1 The 60/20/20 guide

There is a major risk that the fixed nature of the “other” costs can put the school at risk. The teaching costs can be scaled to the 60% and with the right skill set of staff and approach to the curriculum provide sufficient staffing for exciting and challenging learning opportunities. Likewise the 20% for support staff can easily be scaled from the present situation and provide an appropriate support for the school business function and the support of learning. However, with both these areas, decisions need to be taken urgently to reduce from the present situation to match the current student population – this population should be at a low point in September 2011 and should maintain and then rise over the next few years with the threat of closure now removed. The small year group in the 2011 entry will continue to make the school have increased risks to its viability and sustainability for the next 7 years.

The overall income is likely to fall because of reduction of grants and the current fiscal climate. There are significantly increased costs for employers in the pipeline. A national funding formula could remove the local variations for supporting small schools. All of these put the school at financial risk, not because of the ability to scale the school to student numbers, but because of fixed costs.

In making plans the school needs to ensure that it fully understands that funding which comes by virtue of “entitlement” and that which is there to ensure support for its size (or other specified activity) and account for this additional funding clearly. This equally applies to post-16 funding.

#### 6.2 The 0.8 deployment guide

Once the leadership, management and general staffing structure has been revised, this guide point can be worked towards with little risk to the current or future curriculum. It is unlikely that whilst a small school the 0.8 will ever be sustained, but the school could easily be able to operate in excess of a 0.75 deployment. Effective use of part-time staff could be used to provide specialism within minority areas for the curriculum, and all teacher appointments need to provide for multi-subject teaching. The curriculum is likely to need a different skill set for its teachers than currently in place and there will need to be active work towards both training existing staff and making good appropriately skilled staff appointments (as the school hopefully expands).

#### 6.3 Curriculum

The current curriculum is unsuitable for the future needs of the school. The key issues are breadth of choice and learning approaches, emphasising practical approaches and independent learning. There is some good practice in Post-16 in the OCR courses which can be built upon for an effective curriculum structure and delivery methods in the rest of the school.

Matters for this full curriculum review should include:

- Expanding the breadth of choice at Key stage 4 and post 16 by allowing students easier access to other schools and colleges in collaborative arrangements.
- Using widely the “stimulus and coaching” methods of curriculum delivery to allow multiple courses to be followed under the supervision of the same member of staff
- Limiting more traditional class teaching to only being used only where there are sufficient numbers to make it a worthwhile experience



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- Making greater use of both independent learning and per-to-peer collaborative working
- Focussing on courses that young people do well in – ie practical learning
- Creating a curriculum specialism building on what the school does well. The lack of a practical based STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and mathematics) provision in the area may make an obvious choice
- Creating a Key Stage 3 curriculum in which the skills needed for the different type of learning needed at Key Stage 4 are taught and nurtured
- Implementing changes to a more individual KS 4 curriculum by 2014 at the latest when the very small year group enter the key stage, when mixed-age learning will be essential to allow for breadth of choice
- Revising post 16 A-level studies to give greater choice, or to concentrate on the OCR Nationals (or similar) which students benefit from greatly.

### 7 Student numbers and sustainable structures

Even with going co-educational there is little hard evidence that the school will rise above 2 form entry from its local community alone. A school of this size in the current financial parameter is viable so long as it manages its cost extremely carefully. With the declared government aim of introducing a national funding formula, coupled with current fiscal constraints, sustainability is put at risk. There are actions the school can undertake to reduce the risks of becoming unsustainable, which include:

- Creating an “all through” school in conjunction with local primary provision – this can reduce the type of leadership & management costs and premises costs that are needed in a small school. (It does not affect teaching costs or provision but reduces the risk of the teaching part of the budget being “raided” to provide fixed costs.)
- Creating a “Unique Selling Point” that will attract students from outside the immediate community to benefit from a particular approach to learning that suits their needs. The curriculum suggested in the above section, focussed on practical learning, a “stimulus and coaching” approach and the STEM subjects would fulfil such uniqueness
- Complete rebranding of a “new” Culverhay school, looking in particular at corporate image, the public face of the school, and the use of the rooms and resources

All of these matters are rightly for the Governing body, but without tackling them and remaining with current approaches makes the risk to the school’s sustainability unacceptably high.

### 8 Conclusions

1. **The school in its present format is unsustainable, and is in deficit despite very generous funding.**
2. The school has demonstrated in the past that it is capable of matching available funds to affordable staffing levels, and then to a curriculum that uses those staffing levels.

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3. The school does not seem to have separated “entitlement funding” (the same for each school) from bonus funding in the form of small school allowance and potentially unsustainable grants. It must do so as a move towards sustainability against the background of an impending national funding formula and know exactly what it can afford from the basic level of funding. Without a full analysis of premises and other fixed costs related to income streams it is impossible to analyse whether this can fit within the sustainable 20%. This needs to be done urgently.\*
4. **Assuming fixed costs do not create too big a proportion, there is no reason a school running at 50 to 60 students per year should not be sustainable providing the funding and staffing allocation guidelines formulae are followed. However, it would be virtually impossible to do this with a conventional staffing and curriculum structure, or traditional curriculum delivery.\***
5. There is some “cross funding” from pre-16 (LA) to post 16 (LSC/YPLA). A first analysis suggests that this may be a significant drain on costs.\*
6. **The staffing levels are significantly high**, and for September 2011 the school is overstaffed by over 6 teachers (20%), even accepting the current generous timetable structure. Non-teaching staffing is also significantly overstaffed. This is an immediate need, and further reductions may be needed for sustainability.\*
7. **The leadership structure is significantly inappropriate to the size of the school.** This must be reduced for future sustainability. Low student numbers often mean that necessary leadership and management costs are disproportionately high: greater student numbers, or having a singly led and structured “all through” school usually enables sustainability.
8. **The teacher management structure is vastly over capacity.** There are currently only three teachers who do not hold a management post and hence teach a “full” timetable. This breaks the requirements of the national Teachers’ Pay and Conditions requirements for Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) posts. This creates both excess spending and a reduction of teacher periods available for deployment. The school should re-structure its management layer immediately, and use some of the residual small-school funding to carry the costs of protection for teachers who lose their TLR responsibility.\*
9. The curriculum structure has been appropriate for the size of school, but is not flexible to current changes in student numbers and it is very expensive. It has not been “sized” as numbers fall and it does not allow sufficient student choice. \*
10. There has been some move towards partnership learning both at Key Stage 4 and Post 16. Partnership working to expand student choice needs to be expanded substantially and there is a role for the LA in to use its influence to enable effective partnership working.
11. Pre-16 curriculum delivery seems to be traditional and teacher dominated. This approach is not sustainable if there is to be an increase in student choice which is essential. Staff skills will need to be enhanced to enable individual student approaches, and most staff will need to be capable of enabling multiple subjects. \*
12. The Post 16 curriculum delivery uses good approaches for mixed age teaching, and a “stimulus and coaching” model requiring student to work both in teams and independently. Such approaches are the key to making Key Stage 4 viable. There is an implication for the delivery of Key Stage 3 to ensure that students are skilled to work independently.\*
13. The school as well as moving co-educational should develop a unique character (Unique Selling Point) to attract and provide an appropriate challenging educational experience for students

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outside its immediate community area as well as those living locally. The expertise of the school in applied courses suggests that a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) specialism linked to vocational /practical learning would be most appropriate.

- 14. Action on each of these points does not necessarily mean that the school will remain viable with a sustainable future when a national funding formula is introduced – however, it should move the school towards having sufficient student numbers and spending patterns have a significant chance of being sustainable.**

\* indicates areas that need more work to get a full data-based view

David A Snashall

June 2011

Version 2