

Submission by Sqn.Ldr. (Retd) Brian Higgins MBE to the Cabinet – 14 July 2011

As the Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of the Personnel and Finance sub committee of Culverhay School I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this late.

Up until the initial consultation process began, the Governors had come to the conclusion that, in order for Culverhay to progress to become outstanding, a transformation was needed to attract boys to our school – this view was actually shared by Councillor Watt. We investigated the Academy route and, even though some Governors were concerned with this concept as it was a new concept, we unanimously agreed that this was the way forward and made a bid for this to happen. With the closure threat this was not feasible.

With this Council's determination to reverse the decision to close our school we have again reviewed our position and are even more firmly convinced that this is the only logical and practical way forward. This is also based on a financial review by a consultant brought in by the LA and the views of the National Challenge "Super Head", Dr. Fish, who has been supporting and guiding the school for the past 18 months. His view, which is recorded, says that we should grasp this opportunity with both hands and that, in his opinion, we will be successful. This by a Head Teacher who has taken a school very similar to Culverhay and turned it into an outstanding school. He also states clearly that our school has come on leaps and bounds in the past 18 months and that we are on the right path to success.

I should point out that the LA finance officer and the consultant have both recognized that our potential deficit is not of our making and that our finances to date have been of the highest standard – the threatened closure has had a dramatic effect on student entrants at year 7. We already have a well developed plan to address this impact and we will continue to deliver a high quality, distinctive offer, which will be delivered in partnership with sponsors and educational partners to ensure the children in the school now and in the future, girls as well as boys, have the widest range of educational opportunities.

So, I ask you tonight, to give us the chance to transform Culverhay to not only meet the needs of our local community but to give us that chance for which we have always been denied – a Coeducational school. We see that children from all over Bath and from outside of Bath will want to come to our school as we will make it unique and desirable in order to give children the chance for a wide based academic and vocational education.

I implore you to do your utmost to meet the demands of the parents and community to let us take girls in 2012 – it is our earnest wish as Governors to progress to a sponsored coeducational academy.