

Statement from Richard Thomson

'I am proud and privileged to be the Headteacher of Culverhay School. In the 22 months I have been in post, I have come to recognise the importance of the school to its local community and what is at stake, if the school should be lost to that community forever.

I believe that the Councillors have an opportunity tonight to make a decision which will have profoundly beneficial consequences for not only the communities closest to Culverhay, but for the city as a whole.

I am delighted to report that at a meeting on Monday 11th July, the Governing Body of Culverhay School voted to seek the authorisation of the Secretary of State for Education to become a sponsored academy. This was a restatement of the position we adopted in June 2010, when we mandated the Chair of Governors to approach a local sponsor on our behalf, to seek their support in transforming the standards of the school. Sadly, this opportunity for transformation was then lost, because of the subsequent decision to close the school, but the Governors remain absolutely committed to the objective of transforming Culverhay into the outstanding co-educational school we know it can become, with the right support and investment.

I therefore urge Councillors to seize the chance to leave a wonderful legacy for the local community and the city as a whole. We have a range of potential sponsors lined up, all keen to work with the school to effect a profound transformation. These sponsors all have a powerful track record of driving up standards and improving the life chances of children. We have many loyal and committed partners supporting the school, detailed in our counter proposals to the closure consultation, all ready to help shape the future direction of the school, as it progresses towards securing co-educational status as an academy. I believe we have a real window here, where the right investment and support can create a vibrant, sustainable, high performing and very distinctive school, serving its community and the wider educational community of Bath with distinction. This school will remain committed to the principle of building cohesion and remaining closely accountable to its community, as well as offering real choice and diversity to the parents of Bath. We also remain committed to working in partnership with other local primary and secondary schools and the Local Authority, to secure the best outcomes for all of our children.

I urge the Council to be visionary and grasp this opportunity. Please support the call in motion and recommend to the Cabinet that it overturn the proposed closure of a school, which is at the heart of its community.'