

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference

E2303

Determination of the Statutory Notice to Revoke the Notice to Close Culverhay School

Date of Meeting	12-Oct-11
The Issue	<i>The Council has published a legal notice proposing to be relieved of its duty to implement the proposal to close Culverhay School and a decision is required to determine the proposal</i>
The decision	(1) To REVOKE the decision to close Culverhay School, to enable the school to stay open
Rationale for decision	<p>Revoking the decision to close Culverhay School to enable the school to remain open is the best way to deliver the Council's main priorities for Culverhay School, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure excellent educational provision for all children in the area; • To allow girls to attend the school; • To address the school budget deficit. • To encourage the school to collaborate with other schools to enhance educational standards and to narrow the attainment gap between those pupils who are achieving good results and those who do not currently reach the same level, by improving outcomes for lower achieving pupils. <p>Keeping the school open will allow the Governing Body to pursue Academy status and to become co-educational at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p>Keeping the school open on this site will aid accessibility for local pupils, particularly those living in south west Bath who may otherwise have had to travel further to attend another school.</p> <p>Additional funding has been made available to make modifications to the school buildings, to support the school in addressing overstaffing and restructuring and to allow the school to pursue the option of becoming an academy and then becoming co-educational. An externally commissioned study has shown that a relatively small school with a pupil centred curriculum can be viable. The additional flexibilities and benefits of becoming an academy in partnership with a strong sponsor experienced in raising pupil attainment and achievement support the ambitions of the school and therefore closure of the school is now inappropriate.</p> <p>The representations received during the statutory notice representation period have been taken into consideration in making the recommendation to revoke the notice to close Culverhay School.</p>
Other options considered	<p><u>To close the school:</u> This option was rejected as the school and the local community wish to keep the school open and for it to become co-educational in order to provide more co-educational secondary school places in this area of the city. Closing the school would serve to increase home to school travel distances for some pupils. There could be higher redundancy costs if Culverhay was closed and a negative impact on community cohesion if a</p>

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school was not provided in the local community. Closure would result in less places being available to facilitate parental choice and in preparation for anticipated increased future demand. The Governing Body wish the school to become an academy and keeping the school open will allow the Governing Body to pursue this option with the Secretary of State.

For the school to remain open as a boys school:

It is not a realistic option for the school to remain single-sex as there is insufficient demand for single sex places for boys to support two boys only schools in the city. Also this would create a permanent imbalance of boys single sex places to girls single sex places in Bath. It is accepted that there will be a temporary imbalance of boys and girls single sex places until the school becomes co-educational. It is intended that the school will become co-educational at the earliest opportunity, leaving one single sex school for girls and one single sex school for boys in Bath.

For the school to remain open as a Local Authority Community or Foundation school:

Since the school has already applied for Academy status, there is no realistic option for the school to remain in the Local Authority as a Community or Foundation school. There are financial benefits to the school becoming an Academy as it would have access to funds from central government that would not be available to the school if it was to remain as a maintained Community or Foundation school. If Culverhay School was an Academy it would also be able to benefit educationally via the involvement of a high performing Academy sponsor.

As the new Department for Education (DfE) requirement is for all secondary schools to ensure that at least 50% of pupils achieve a minimum of 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths, it should be noted that as Culverhay School does not meet this requirement, the DfE would have pressed the Authority and the school Governing Body to become a sponsored academy had they not already expressed an interest in doing so.

The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision