

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

Thursday, 25th November, 2010

The decisions contained within these minutes may not be implemented until the expiry of the 5 working day call-in period which will run from 26th Nov to 2nd Dec. These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Present:

Councillor Francine Haeberling	Leader of the Council
Councillor Malcolm Hanney	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor David Hawkins	Cabinet Member for The Council as Corporate Trustee
Councillor Vic Pritchard	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Housing
Councillor Chris Watt	Cabinet Member for Children's Services

125 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

126 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Charles Gerrish and Terry Gazzard.

128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Councillor Chris Watt declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in item 11 as a member of the Board of Governors of Bath Spa University.

129 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

130 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There was 1 question, from Malcolm Dodds (Chair, CycleBath). *[Copies of the question and response have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

131 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

There were 23 notices to make a statement to Cabinet. All related to item 11 on the Agenda, Consultation on the Proposal to Close Culverhay School.

132 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haeberling, seconded by Councillor Vic Pritchard, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3rd November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

133 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

134 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

135 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE CULVERHAY SCHOOL

Cllr Dine Romero made a statement appealing to the Cabinet not to close Culverhay School but to support its proposals to become co-educational. She reminded Cabinet that, once it could take both boys and girls, it would no longer need the small schools grant. It already had the best playing fields site of any school in the city.

Cllr John Bull made a statement in which he stressed the academic improvement achieved by Culverhay School, the caring staff and excellent sporting facilities. He felt that Cabinet had abruptly changed course when confronted with the Oldfield School application for Academy status. He appealed to Cabinet not to take a final decision at this meeting but to continue in discussions over the two alternative options put forward by Culverhay Governors.

Cllr Paul Crossley made a statement in which he emphasised the importance of Culverhay School to its community. The depth of feeling of local people had been demonstrated by the fact that they had turned up in large numbers for four meetings. He asked Cabinet to see that closure would not be a strong decision – it would be a wrong decision. He felt that schools like Culverhay were better for being small and for being places where staff knew their students well. He asked the Cabinet to consult on turning Culverhay into a co-educational school.

Cllr Gerry Curran (Chair of Governors, Culverhay School) asked the Cabinet not to close the school. He reminded Cabinet that the original strategy had been for a co-educational school in the north and the south of the city. He still believed that closing Culverhay School would be absolutely the wrong decision and reminded the Cabinet that the school had cooperated with the Council for many years over the plans to turn it co-educational. He felt that Cabinet had been ill-advised to support St Marks School which did not appear to have the support of its community or the Diocese. He was sure that places would not be available in local schools for displaced Culverhay boys.

Sue East (Bath Primary Heads Group) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website]* asking the Cabinet to put in place a flagship of community learning centred around Culverhay. She felt that at a time when so many changes are taking place, it would not be wise to close Culverhay.

Sean Wyartt (Assistant Head, Culverhay School) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website]* in which he expressed the view that the proposals to close Culverhay School did not seem fair, open or legal to many parents and supporters of the school.

Richard Thompson (Head, Culverhay School) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website]* in which he said that to close Culverhay school would leave a hole at the heart of a vulnerable and less advantaged community and appealing to Cabinet to reconsider the school's proposal to create an all-through co-educational academy, which had the full support of local primary Heads.

Sue Adams (Head, Southdown Infants School) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 5 and on the Council's website]* giving her full support to keeping Culverhay School open as an all-through co-educational academy. She reminded the Cabinet of the social deprivation in Southdown, Twerton and Whiteway and said that Culverhay had always been at the heart of the whole community. She felt that her school should be co-located onto the Culverhay site as a first step towards the proposal.

Sarah Wall (Parent, Culverhay School) in her statement reported on a meeting which Councillor Watt had held with parents a few days before, at which he was unable to explain whether his plans would mean that boys would leave Culverhay at the end of Year 8 or Year 9. She felt this would be critical for boys when choosing their GCSE options. She reminded Cabinet that in the first consultation, over 70% of respondents had supported the proposal for 2 co-educational schools in Bath – one each in the north and south of the city; and that in the second consultation, over 70% had supported retaining Culverhay School as a co-educational school. She appealed to Cabinet to listen to the consultation responses and to keep Culverhay School open

James Eynon (Head Boy, Culverhay School) said that there was a fine line between bravery and stupidity. He reminded Cabinet that Culverhay had supported the first consultation but he felt that Cabinet had reneged on the school. The message seemed to be that openness, honesty and integrity did not get rewarded. He thanked all the staff of Culverhay for what they had done for him and said that he was proud to have been a student at such a good school.

David Eynon (Parent, Culverhay School) said he felt that the consultation process had achieved nothing, because Oldfield School had sabotaged it and had then done a deal with Councillor Watt to stay open and had been rewarded with £1.8m. He reminded Cabinet that the closure proposals had been opposed by 74% of respondents. He was astounded that Councillor Watt had been supported the closure of Culverhay School, even before the consultation had started. He felt that this had brought shame on the Council and the Cabinet.

Sarah Moore (Friends of Culverhay) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 6 and on the Council's website]* appealing to the Cabinet to give full consideration to the fact that the first consultation period had supported the retention of a co-educational school in south Bath; and that clearly, if two schools were retained in the north, large numbers of pupils would have to travel to the north every day.

Sean Turner (Deputy Head, Culverhay School) said that he had been staggered when at an earlier meeting Councillor Batt had made light of the hardship and deprivation experienced by many in south Bath. It was amongst the top 13% of deprived areas in the country. He observed that Culverhay School was the only secondary school in Bath with an identifiable local community.

David Dunlop (The Bath Society) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 7 and on the Council's website]* in which he said that he felt Councillor Watt had already made up his mind. Culverhay was more than a school: it had users of all ages and interests.

Jayne Nix (Parent, Culverhay) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 8 and on the Council's website]* referred to the fact that at Full

Council the previous week, Councillor Watt had said he had not at that point seen the consultation responses; and yet the next day, he had actively proposed closure which she felt indicated a failure to listen to those who had responded. She was concerned that Cabinet members were failing to listen to the large majority of people who were warning them that to close Culverhay would be the wrong thing to do. Daniel Bryant (ex-pupil, Culverhay School) made a statement in which he observed that the Head of Ofsted had said that league tables alone were a simplistic way to judge a school. He wanted the Cabinet to take full account of the other aspects of Culverhay School when making its decision. He appealed to Cabinet therefore not to close the school.

Steve Wakefield (ex-pupil, Culverhay School) made a statement *[a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 9 and on the Council's website]* in which he said that the proposal was ill-conceived and appealed to Cabinet not to close Culverhay School.

Daniel Hine (ex-pupil, Culverhay School) made a statement saying that although Culverhay had not been his first choice, he had nevertheless thrived there and had achieved ten GCSE passes at A-C. He thanked the staff of Culverhay and said he was proud that the school had an ethos of building on each pupil's strengths.

Albert Lightfoot made a statement in which he said that closing Culverhay School would lead to future problems if a Bristol school should be closed. He appealed to Cabinet not to make the mistake of closing the school.

Vincent Inchley (ex-pupil, Culverhay School) pointed out that Culverhay School had an ever-increasing curriculum. He felt strongly that closure would be wrong and asked Cabinet to reconsider the proposals.

Ann Harding (Governor, Culverhay School) said that 6 months earlier, she had not expected Cabinet to be considering such a move. Co-educational status had been promised to Culverhay School for years, and the school had waited patiently as it worked with the Council to achieve this. She felt that Culverhay had been stitched up by the Cabinet and the other schools. She challenged the accuracy of some of the data in the second consultation document. Referring to the contention that two-thirds of local children did not choose Culverhay, she pointed out that even larger numbers of local children did not choose Oldfield and St Mark's Schools. She felt that Culverhay School had expertise which no other school could offer to its pupils. The item was introduced by Councillor Chris Watt. He recognised the very strong feelings about the issue but reminded the Cabinet that they had the responsibility to make difficult decisions about local services. He said that in the consultation process, 47% had agreed the Council's strategy. In the second consultation, although 74% had been opposed to closing Culverhay, nevertheless 24% had supported it and it was very unusual to have any support at all for closing a school. He introduced the 6 main issues emerging from the consultation responses, which had been listed in paragraph 5.6 of the report and explained how the issues had all been fully considered and addressed. He also compared the 2 alternative proposals against the 6 issues, as explained in section 9 of the report, and explained why he was convinced that closure of Culverhay was the right course of action. In particular, he referred to the fact that the Schools Forum view was that a Planned Admission Number of less than 120 would not be viable, which would mean that both alternatives would prove not to be deliverable.

He moved the proposals, including clause (4) which had not appeared in the published recommendations and which related to the need to seek ways of mitigating transport and uniform costs for families.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney seconded the proposals. He reminded Cabinet that historically the issue had not been only about surplus places. The number of students at Culverhay School had reduced from 599 in 1999 to 364 in the current

year and had been reducing year-on-year. It now had 43% surplus places. The funding of empty desks was not sustainable from the small school financial support. Regarding co-educational status, if Oldfield School had remained single-sex, Culverhay could not have gone co-educational. Culverhay could only stay open if Oldfield had been closed, which none of the speakers had suggested. He said that the alternative proposals put forward in the consultation were not viable. He reminded the Cabinet that when surplus places had been reduced, there would be extra funds available to spend on existing pupils.

Councillor Vic Pritchard referred to the issue of travel, which Councillor Watt had already mentioned. He asked Councillor Watt to explain what travel assistance he would seek to provide for those who had further to travel as a result of the proposed closure.

Councillor Watt said that some of the figures quoted in the consultation about travel distances had ignored the availability of Halfpenny Bridge, and had assumed that pupils would have to cross the river at Windsor Bridge which added a half mile to the journey. He said that for families in receipt of free school meals, journeys over 2 miles to any of their nearest three schools between 2-6 miles would be funded by the authority. He also expressed his aspiration that children with statements who presently had free transport to school should retain this to mitigate the disruption following their transition to a new school. Finally he said that it was anticipated that many Culverhay teachers would choose to change school along with their students, giving a level of continuity for students.

Councillor David Hawkins said that after reading the detailed reports he supported the recommendations.

On a motion from Councillor Chris Watt, seconded by Councillor Malcolm Hanney, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To AGREE that its policy is to close Culverhay school, with no further admissions to year 7 in September 2012 and beyond;
- (2) To AUTHORISE the publication of the necessary statutory notice of closure, open for public representation for 6 weeks;
- (3) To DELEGATE to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services the process of implementation and to determine the relevant statutory notices.
- (4) To NOTE the potential funding implications in respect of transport and school uniforms arising out of this decision and ask the Director and Cabinet Member to investigate options for mitigating transitional costs in consultation with the Schools Forum.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

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SPECIAL CABINET MEETING Thu 25th Nov 2010

The following Statements and Questions had been registered by the time of publication.

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 23 notices of intention to make a statement at the meeting. Where the intention is to speak about an item on the Agenda, the speaker will be offered the option to speak near the beginning of the meeting or just before the Agenda item.

Re: Culverhay School (Agenda Item 11):

- Cllr Dine Romero
- Cllr John Bull
- Cllr Paul Crossley
- Cllr Gerry Curran (Chair of Governors, Culverhay School)
- Sue East (Bath Primary Heads Group)
- Sean Wyartt (Assistant Head, Culverhay School)
- Richard Thompson (Head, Culverhay School)
- Sue Adams (Head, Southdown Infants School)
- Sarah Wall (Parent, Culverhay School)
- Simon Scarborough (Teacher, Culverhay School)
- James Eynon (Head Boy, Culverhay School)
- David Eynon (Parent, Culverhay School)
- Sarah Moore (Friends of Culverhay)
- Sean Turner (Deputy Head, Culverhay School)
- Claire Brown (Parent, Culverhay School)
- David Dunlop (The Bath Society)
- Jayne Nix (Parent, Culverhay)
- Daniel Bryant (ex-pupil, Culverhay School)
- Steve Wakefield (ex-pupil, Culverhay School)
- Daniel Hine (ex-pupil, Culverhay School)
- Albert Lightfoot
- Vincent Inchley (ex-pupil, Culverhay School)
- Ann Harding (Governor, Culverhay School)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

None

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

01	Question from:	Malcolm Dodds (Chair, CycleBath)
<p>(a) Can the Cabinet confirm that cyclists are still second highest priority in the Council's transport policies?</p> <p>(b) Does the Cabinet acknowledge the importance of the Victoria Bridge to Bath cyclists, as the only traffic-free river crossing in the city, and a key link to the National Cycle Network Route 4?</p> <p>(c) Can the Cabinet confirm what other signed, equally safe alternative routes have been designated for cyclists whilst the bridge is closed and how these have been communicated to cyclists?</p> <p>(d) Can the Cabinet confirm the date for the re-opening of the bridge for cyclists?</p> <p>(e) Can the Cabinet confirm the amount of money provided in the S106 agreement for Southgate to provide for additional cycle parking?</p> <p>(f) Can the Cabinet confirm that this funding has been ring-fenced for this purpose?</p> <p>(g) Can the Cabinet confirm how much of this money has been spent so far and how many additional cycle parking places this has provided?</p> <p>(h) Can the Cabinet confirm that all cycle parking facilities are provided only after consultation with the police and CCTV operators so as to maximize security for Bath cyclists?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>(a) Yes, the second highest transport user priority is cyclists, but the priority list needs to take into account local circumstances. The proportionate increase in the number of cyclists in B&NES has been higher than any other transport user group in recent years.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Whilst Victoria Bridge is not the only traffic free river crossing (there are other footbridges), its importance is acknowledged for cyclists.</i></p> <p><i>(c) An alternative North-South route is being developed across the Destructor Bridge.</i></p> <p><i>(d) There is no date set for re-opening the bridge. The investigations carried out to date have identified that the bridge in its current state is unsafe for cyclists and given this it would be irresponsible to reopen the bridge until suitable remedial works have been completed.</i></p> <p><i>The assessment and cost estimates of carrying out the works to allow the bridge to be reopened have yet to be completed but an options report is expected by the middle of next month (December).</i></p> <p><i>(e) £10k</i></p> <p><i>(f) Yes</i></p> <p><i>(g) None of this money has been spent so far. The new cycle stands provided to date (about 23) replace those installed prior to the development. A further 218 stands provided in the station area have been incorporated within the Bath Spa station scheme as the final stages of development are implemented. The Council is working to identify and define other locations to prioritise from this S106 source.</i></p> <p><i>(h) Cycle stands are provided where there is demand for cycle parking and where there is natural surveillance from people passing by. However CCTV covers most of the city centre, including Southgate, and cycle stands would normally be covered by routine CCTV surveillance. The Council provides CCTV to cover as much as the City as possible.</i></p>		

**Statement to Cabinet 25-Nov-10 by Sue East
Culverhay**

- + Representing all of the 27 headteachers of the Bath Primary schools –these views are also shared by many headteachers from outside the Bath LAP**
- + We are asking not simply to keep Culverhay open, but that the council consider putting into place an alternative kind of educational provision, not available elsewhere in Bath and North East Somerset. A flagship community of learning that would continue to mark out Bath and North East Somerset as a highly performing Local Authority in terms of its schools.**
- + All members of the Bath primary heads group have a collective passion for securing the best outcomes for all of our children.**
- + ALL of the children in the city matter to ALL of us and we believe that the educational needs of these children are best met through a diversity of settings, offering a maximum range of parental choice.**
- + We believe there is a place within the current secondary system for a smaller school setting, particularly suited to more vulnerable learners who find transition difficult.**
- + This year Bath and North East Somerset is the most highly ranked Local Authority in the South West measured on GCSE results**
- + Last year Bath and North East Somerset was ranked 12th nationally.**
- + We believe that you have an opportunity here to catch a new vision for education and do something new which would put Bath and North East Somerset at the cutting edge of educational provision.**
- + Alternatives to closure need to be given serious consideration: for example, a ‘wrap around school’ serving children from aged 3- 18 with the added benefit of close links to a Teaching Training college.**
- + A flagship establishment, a place of excellence and innovation.**

- ✚ We live in the most uncertain times at present. We ask you to pause and consider other changes that are presently afoot, for example, what are the new implications for local demographics as the new government's plans for reducing tenancy duration come into effect?– Would not more families with school age children would be able to be housed in the area around Culverhay.**
- ✚ We are presently witnessing an increased demand on places at Primary level. In the present economic climate we are also seeing children coming into the state system whose parents might previously have looked to Bath's many private schools**
- ✚ We do not believe this is the right moment to be removing a school**
- ✚ At the present time, Education across the world is at a cross roads . In the UK all headteachers are hanging on trying to make sense of what Michael Gove is saying and to analyse what the new possibilities on offer might mean to our individual schools and to our schools collectively. We are waiting , watching, working together, wanting to make the best decisions for all.**
- ✚ We are urging you likewise not to make a rash, ill advised decision, but to look at the possibilities that may be afforded by the new government's thinking.**
- ✚ We believe that this is the right time to be taking a transformational step. A time to be doing something radically different. It is a wonderful opportunity.**
- ✚ A flagship academy, for all ages.**
- ✚ The most amazing and inspirational things can happen at times of great change – here is an opportunity to embrace and make our own, a new model of education , a flagship establishment, for Bath. A small co-educational learning centre in the heart of a well established local community.**
- ✚ We urge you not to vote for closure but instead to open the door to a new and transformational approach to learning.**

Statement from Sean Wyartt (Assistant Head, Culverhay School)

Councilor Watt in the Chronicle said; "He admitted that it had been a difficult decision to make, but hoped that in the future people would be able to look back and realize it had been the right thing to do.

Considering the comments in the press likening the closure of Culverhay to the final part in a jigsaw, the complete disregard of the Cabinet and Conservative Party generally to any of the points made and the blatant political nature of the decision, it does not seem it has been a really difficult decision.

During this charade we have been told there is only the need for one school North of the river, Keynsham would be better served by having only one school, BANEs residents should not be paying to educate pupils from neighboring authorities. We were also told that Culverhay is the best site for a school in the city, that it adds great value and there needs to be a school on the site.

In the end we see a decision that sees two schools north of the river ignoring the fact that St. Marks is likely to become unviable as pupils move to Oldfield. We see two schools in Keynsham even though neither has as high an Ofsted grading as Culverhay. We see BANEs not only educating students from outside the authority (BANES is the third highest importer of students in the country) but looking to invest money made from the sale of Culverhay in a sixth form college for a Catholic school of which over 30% of students come from outside the authority.

Is 30% not the percentage of parents who want a denominational school? Perhaps stopping these pupils coming into Bath and enabling an ecumenical school to be formed would solve both the surplus places issue, the financial issue and enable a co-ed school to serve the South West of Bath.

The initial proposal folded when articulate middle class public protest in Conservative wards was made. Let's be honest the change to then close Culverhay was because you felt it was easier to close Culverhay, the parents would not be able to articulate their opposition; how wrong you have been proved. Problem is you have backed yourself into a corner and cannot find a way out without losing face. Do not insult the people of the South West of Bath by continuing to suggest this is the difficult but right decision.

However I am sure that the 85% of pupils from outside BANEs at Broadlands will agree with this decision, the 76+% at Oldfield, the 34% at St. Gregory's etc. the pupils, parents and community in the South West of Bath will not however; but then why should they matter? They do not vote Conservative. I also feel the wider Bath population will question this decision when the true and long term costs are revealed. Will this be in time to make their views known in the May elections?

I would have raised the contradictions in the decisions that have been made; the illogical change in path, the fact that this decision is based on no clear argument and the fact that it seems those making the decisions are looking at their own self interest particularly with the local elections in May. There seems little point however as the concept of consultation seems to have been ignored throughout, the concept of pandering to middle class Conservative voting support however seems very much alive.

Therefore as the Cabinet will not listen to the community perhaps they will listen to a legal representation. The Parents Action Group funded by an ex local resident who made his money in retail selling sweets to Culverhay students in the sixties and seventies and now wants to put something back into the community, will be seeking a legal challenge based on the following, and I am sure, many other reasons:

- No explanation has been given for the change in decision regarding Keynsham and therefore suggests an issue of equal opportunities. An issue that Councilor Hanney has been so happy to talk about in other circumstances.
- The fairness of the Consultation process in light of the comments made in the press.
- The misleading if not directly incorrect use of figures by Officers in presentations. In particular I refer to the figure given for students living closest to Culverhay which in fact contains pupils who live closest to St. Gregory's.
- The fact that representations were made to other schools involved regarding federation before any consultation process on Culverhay had taken place.
- The lack of effective and suitable provision for Culverhay students should this decision be made.

The authority has already been contacted by a solicitor representing a parent on behalf of her stated son and can be assured that, as a school that believes pupils come first, we will ensure all our pupils are able to access similar support if required.

Through this legal challenge we will not be seeking to preserve Culverhay as a special case but we will be seeking a process that sets out fair criteria to make a decision by. A process that sees all schools graded on a number of criteria which should be decided in advance by the authority, heads, governing bodies and parent and community representatives; a process that should have been used in the first place.

A process like this with all signed up at the start open, honest and transparent might then see the sort of political and educational unity which surrounded the council's decision to elect their own leader as Mayor, for four years, with little or no regard to the public's views. Funny how some issues create political unity.

Criteria should include standards and progress but also site suitability, and potential for expansion, current costs, and outstanding maintenance costs, percentage of students attending who live in BANEs, sustainable transport, and Congestion issues as a starting point. This would be a truly difficult decision because the answer could not be determined around self interest. But as with the most difficult decisions it would also produce the right answer and deliver an education system fit for the 21st century.

As you have probably gathered I and, I think, many others do not believe this is about education or surplus places it is simply politics. The fact that politicians voted on mass along party lines clearly shows this. Not so much the actual decision but the manner in which this decision has been made is a disgrace.

Statement from Richard Thomson – Headteacher of Culverhay School to Cabinet on 25th November 2010

I remain immensely proud to be the Headteacher of Culverhay School. I am here tonight to ask the Cabinet members to reconsider the recommendation to close Culverhay School.

The decision you have to make is a momentous one; one that will have profound implications for the future of secondary education within the city for generations to come. In the current context of a rapidly changing educational landscape, there is a golden opportunity to pursue a radical and transformational alternative to closure – a course of action which would leave a hole at the heart of a vulnerable and less advantaged community.

Culverhay's alternative proposal, to allow the school to transform itself into an all through co-educational academy, could potentially deliver a profound transformation in standards, not only in the south west of Bath, but across the wider educational system. Such a provision would be highly distinctive, increasing the diversity of choice for parents and could become a 'flagship provision' for the Local Authority. The Academy would also leave the educational system in a stronger position in terms of being able to respond to a rapidly changing educational landscape.

For example, from his latest pronouncements, it would appear that Mr Gove is determined to reduce the influence and contribution of universities in recruiting and retaining the next generation of teachers – essential if the profession is to continue to drive up standards and to improve outcomes for children and young people. His expectation is that schools will increasingly take on the responsibility for all aspects of teacher training. However there are genuine concerns about the capacity of schools to be able to deliver this extra obligation, particularly at a time of dwindling resources.

The induction and training of new entrants to the profession is time consuming and there are important areas of pedagogy which need to be covered thoroughly. The proposed, new all-through academy would allow the Local Authority to deliver a new model of initial teacher education, with university PGCE programmes being delivered from the heart of the school. A theoretical session could be consolidated by an immediate opportunity to practise what had been learned in the classroom with 'live' pupils. I believe the quality of the teacher training experience we could offer in partnership with BSU would be outstanding and could help to recruit, train and retain the very best new entrants to the profession, both at primary and secondary level, adding value to the education system as a whole in Bath and North East Somerset.

You will hear many representations tonight from the wider educational community in the Authority about the quality of the work the school already does now for its community, but also supporting the principle of an all-through academy, as a transformational driver. I would ask the Cabinet to take heed of the weight of professional opinion, particularly from primary Headteachers, who have a huge amount of expertise and many years of distinguished service to the education system, in support of our alternative proposal.

I urge the Cabinet to embrace the opportunity it has been presented with; an opportunity which will meet the strongly articulated wishes of Bath parents for non-denominational co-educational places; which retains an excellent site for educational and community uses; which consolidates and

develops leading edge practice in initial teacher education for the benefit of future generations of school children.

Closing Culverhay slams the door on the opportunity to remodel secondary provision in the city – an opportunity which will never be available again. I ask Cabinet members to allow us the time to develop our proposal with the wide range of powerful educational partners who wish to support us in our continuing work on behalf of children, young people and the wider community. Closing the school is not the answer to the challenges faced by our education system.

Statement to Cabinet 25-Nov-10 by Sue Adams, Head, Southdown Infants School

Reasons for keeping Culverhay open...

I speak in support of keeping Culverhay open and urge the Cabinet to seriously consider the alternative proposal offered by Culverhay to reorganise as an all through coeducational school:-

- I believe that we need Secondary provision in our immediate local community – a recent needs assessment commissioned by the Local Authority to provide evidence for the Children and Young People’s plan found that our local areas of Southdown, Whiteway and Twerton are areas of multiple deprivation and poverty.
- They rank within the 15 – 20 % most deprived areas in England with the rest of Bath ranking within the top 10% of least deprived areas. Our local wards scored extremely low in the Child Well-being Index for material well being, health & disability, education, crime, housing and children in need.
- Having worked in this community for nearly six years I know this to be true but I also believe that we will not serve this community well by forcing the young people to seek their secondary education elsewhere in different communities.
- Having identified the specific needs of the local families how can we then act by closing Culverhay which is and always has been at the heart of our community – the one aspect that our wards scored highly on was Environment – we have good access to green space, woodland, children living close to schools, leisure and sports provision all of which are provided by Culverhay – the closure of Culverhay would then lower the area’s ranking in this aspect too.
- The LA have a prime opportunity to develop an innovative all through provision by co-locating primary age children onto Culverhay site – this would ensure that our families have continued local choice for education and also provide a different choice for other Bath families.
- Michael Gove wants to develop the next phase of the academies programme – to encourage the best schools to work in partnership with others to raise standards and to promote innovation and diversity in the schools system – surely Culverhay’s proposal does exactly that.

- An all through co ed academy would fulfil the criteria in the White Paper 21st Century Schools – wider support to improve the outcomes for young people, parenting support programmes, co-located health and social care professionals, high quality local knowledge about the needs of the children, young people and their families – and all of this would be provided within safe walking/cycling distance of their homes.
- Instead of changing schools three times and having to build new friendships and working relationships each time, partnerships would be developed from the moment the children started at nursery and would be built on and continued until the children left the school. Evidence from other all through schools shows that it would eradicate the traditional dip in achievement on transitions.
- Lord Laming’s report recommended integrated multiagency working to meet the needs of communities with vulnerable children and families – he said that ‘nowhere was it more important that the voice of the child is heard’ – who is listening to the voices of the Culverhay students?
- The families and community have worked tirelessly to demonstrate how important it is to keep this school open. It would be a tragedy to close Culverhay - it would be deeply felt and have long lasting repercussions on present and future students; to dismiss the proposal without serious consideration would be to miss the opportunity to develop an innovative setting which could tackle inequalities, close the disadvantage gap – and meet the needs of our families within our own community.

Statement to Cabinet 25-Nov-10 by Sarah Moore

When you make your decision this evening, I would like to ask you to please take into consideration the following:

- a) During the consultation earlier this year, the Council suggested 2 new schools with combined PAN of 320 pupils (1 North and 1 South), a reduction of 380 places from the original 3 schools, which is only half of the so-called surplus places. The council was clear there were only enough children in the North of the city for 1 school with a PAN of 160. However, you have now retained 2 schools in the North with a combined PAN of 294. This clearly shows that a large number of children are going to be FORCED to travel long distances from the South of the city to fill these places in the North, when Culverhay closes. It was also stated by Children's Services that it is not acceptable for the children in the North to have to travel to schools in the South, so why is it acceptable for the children in the South to have to travel to the North, this is certainly not fair?
- c) We keep being told that only 1/3 of the boys from Culverhay's local community choose to attend Culverhay, this actually equated to 39 boys from the local area in 2009, however, only 28 girls from Oldfield's local community chose to attend it in 2009, with nearly as many again choosing Hayesfield. Combined with the children from South Gloucestershire and Bristol, Oldfield still only managed to reach a total of 135 pupils out of a PAN of 192. So even with it's current Outstanding rating it is not attracting girls.
- d) A lot of people choose to travel long distances on reputations of schools, this will mean there is no evidence to suggest spaces will be freed up at either Beechen Cliff or Ralph Allen and our children will be the furthest distance from these schools than even a large number of children in the North, as admission distances are calculated in a straight line and does not take into account geography. This decision will therefore take away any CHOICE of school our children will have.
- St Stephens school on Lansdown is 2.6 miles from Ralph Allen (in a straight line) and St Saviours in Larkhall is 2.5 miles, my postcode in the South West is 3.2 miles, which again gives clear evidence that very few places will be freed up at Ralph Allen for the Children in the South west.

We were told by Tony Parker that they are looking at moving our children out at the end of Year 9, which meant not only will they make GCSE choices at Culverhay for subjects that may not even be covered at the new school, they will have to deal with a transition at the beginning of their GCSE year. Then we were told by Cllr Watt that he was looking at moving the boys at the end of Year 8. So within 3 months of moving they would have to make choices for GCSE and in some cases miss out on subjects they could have otherwise taken at Culverhay because they are not covered at the new school. This clearly shows the transition has not even been properly considered.

I appreciate the decision to close a school is a very difficult one, however, it should only be taken if it is the right decision, and the closure of Culverhay clearly is not the right decision. It is the Authority's inability to address the residents requirements for a co-educational school on the site many years ago that has helped to see the school's intake reduce to the level it is currently at and it is only the Authority that can make the RIGHT decision to keep this school open for the community and see the intake rise significantly over the next few years, with the introduction of girls.

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The Fate of Culverhay - David Dunlop (The Bath Society)

Cabinet meeting 25th November 2010

Last week we were treated to what was described as “wrecking amendments” to two motions.

The first (regarding Culverhay) included the phrases “collation of responses” and “asks the Cabinet to consider all responses carefully in making an informed decision”

Since then, Councillor Watt’s statements as reported in the Western Daily Press make it plain that his mind is already made up “in the wider interests of the whole of Bath.”

He fails to accept that Culverhay is a vital Community asset as described last week by Squadron Leader Brian Higgins. It is obviously more than just a school- with many more user groups of all ages.

Furthermore what provision has been made for an increase in the birth rate ?

Have the traffic and travel costs of closure been analysed since last week’s statement by Chris Shire – and if not why not ?

The second wrecking amendment contrasts with the cost cutting approach to Bath schools.

Instead of following Transport Ministers guidance, you resolved to persist with the out-dated, flawed and costly Bath Transport Package unchanged except for “an element of additional council funding “ – presumably by selling off assets.

The Bath Society believes that your approach to both topics is inconsistent and unfair. Will one of the assets to be sold off be Culverhayschool ?

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Last Tuesday I attended the full council meeting. At this meeting Councillor Watt clearly stated he had not seen the consultation results and was still looking into things (not his exact words but words to this effect). The next day the proposal was made to close Culverhay. Did you take into account the consultation results and even read the comments. I would assume the answer is NO as you had not seen the results on Tuesday evening and the announcement was made Wednesday morning.

WHY DID YOU BOTHER TO CONSULT US?

One question that Councillor Watt and Tony Parker will not answer is 'WHAT CHANGED, WHY CULVERHAY?' It had always been indicated that Culverhay would become co-ed. What changed was as a governor of Bath Spa University Councillor Watt knew they would be interested in buying the site. As a governor of Bath Spa University you should have made a Declaration of Interest but never until this October when people were making comments! Why did you not make the declaration when all this consultation business started?

Councillor Watt engineered this whole farce. Councillor Watt steered the original consultation to proposing the closure of Culverhay. Councillor Watt knew Bath Spa University would be interested in buying the site and in this bad economic climate it was a good deal for the Council and Bath Spa University. Funny enough on Wednesday 17th November the proposal for closure was made and next day we hear about the expansion plans for Bath Spa University and how they will be looking for to accommodate 600 student!!

Now we hear Bath Rugby Club have offered 7 million to build a new leisure centre on the Culverhay site so the existing Bath Leisure Centre will be demolished for the Rugby Club to expand and guess who is involved with Bath Rugby Councillor Watt!!

Maybe Councillor Watt should read the code of conduct for councillors as laid down by the Standards Board of England regarding their declarations of interest!!

You have kept open the schools in the Conservative constituents and want to close the school in the area where you know your party has no political representations. A very clever move in the light of up and coming local elections.

WHAT HAPPENED TO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE CHILDREN!!

The consultation results show 74% of people in favour of keeping Culverhay open.

How can they all be so wrong and 1 man so right.

Statement to Cabinet 25-Nov-10 by Steve Wakefield

Madam Chairman, Cabinet,

Steve Wakefield, ex pupil and co founder of old boys website. I believe I represent the opinions of up to 500 ex pupils. Among our number are many creators of small businesses, heads of mining operations in Canada, Australia, South America, a director of a worldwide oil exploration company, and the civil engineer charged with overhauling London's Victorian sewage system.

Some 40 years ago, my father, then heading the Technical School PTA stood before a similar committee, to plead that the school stay open. Your predecessors chose to close the Tech and the school was amalgamated to form Culverhay, in order to better serve the community of the SW area of the city. Bath lost a very special educational resource.

I want you to re-consider closure of Culverhay on several grounds, and re-open consultation.

Your main reason for this closure seems to be Baths pupil numbers. I thought low pupil teacher ratios were supposed to be a good thing and don't seem to be a problem at Kingswood, The Royal, and King Edwards, whose results trumpet this fact!

Culverhay has been wanting to go co-ed for many years, and been refused. If it were allowed to do so, given its catchment area, it would attract siblings of those presently at the school, and be a substantially larger school, maybe double the numbers thereby justifying its existence.

The area needs a school which provides skills for future jobs, and Culverhay is already well along that route with its emphasis on Math's and Computing. Vocational training could also be incorporated into a larger school. Its results show it is having a very positive effect on its pupils lives.

It makes no sense transport wise to increase the overall number of cross river journeys inflicted on the already traffic struck citizens of Bath. The resulting rush hour jams and pollution don't bear thinking of, whichever route is chosen, unless every pupil is provided with a bike and uses it! I notice a huge number of present pupils walking to school – surely to be encouraged.

Respectfully, you were elected to carry out the wishes of the electorate. The electorate of the SW of Bath, overwhelmingly wish the school to stay open. Closure of Culverhay, will rip the communal heart out of an already underfunded area of the city.

You have a unique opportunity, to provide the people of the South and South West of Bath, with a new dynamic and forward looking school, full of opportunity and providing Britain with the useful young people of the future.

PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS ILL CONCEIVED PROPOSAL.

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