

## **Cabinet 21-July-2010 Statement by Sarah Wall**

I feel that Culverhay & the community around it has been deceived and cheated by this consultation, nowhere within the consultation document does it even suggest that a school will not remain on the Culverhay site.

Amongst the many community services Culverhay provides are the very important, much used and very needed sports facilities all of which will be lost with the school. A large part of the community that this school services is Twerton, which has been identified as one of the most deprived areas in the country, how then can this panel recommend removing this school & its vital resources from such an area?

Over 98% of Culverhay pupils live in B&NES, many within in walking distance. How then can B&NES justify closing this school and suggest Oldfield School stay open when over 72% of their pupils live outside of B&NES. Where is B&NES support of the healthy school's initiative and encouraging pupils to walk to school?

How does the panel propose that the pupils who attend Culverhay will get to school if it is closed, how are parents in an area of high deprivation suppose to finance travel to school? And how will another school motivate these boys to attend & achieve? This is something which Culverhay does so well.

Culverhay takes the dreams & aspirations of its pupils and enables them to turn them into reality; that is fact; Culverhay is in the top 5% of schools nationally for individual pupil progress, few other B&NES school can boast of these figures. Under the Every Child Matters legislation how can B&NES possibly suggest the closure of a school that enables their pupils to achieve so much?

The one thing that has been clear for a very long time is that parents in this authority want more co-educational places, which is something that Culverhay has been keen to develop for several years and have co-operated with the LEA during this consultation and are prepared to continue to do so.

It appears that the panel's decision has been swayed by Oldfield hiding behind an out of date 3 & a half year old OFSTED report & their announcement that they are to apply for academy status. It also seems that the head teacher of Oldfield cares nothing for the children of this authority or the wishes of their parents and appears to hold them along with the democratic process in complete contempt through her refusal to participate in this consultation & by encouraging the parents of her pupils to ignore it. Cllr Chris Watt is reported to have said "It remains difficult to cooperate or coordinate with Oldfield" Why then would the panel suggest keeping this school open & closing Culverhay when 66% of those who responded to the consultation wanted a co-educational school on the north of the city & one on the south, why then has the panel gone against what the majority want? Why consult if you're going to ignore the outcome?

I beg that this cabinet do not allow the children of this authority to be denied a school which always puts their needs first, by allowing the authority to be backed into a corner & bullied by one school using rushed through legislation from a government in its infancy. Rather B&NES must show the young people of this authority that they really do matter by standing up for their rights and opening a co-educational school at Culverhay, a school 98% of whose pupils live in B&NES and who ensure that very individual pupil really does achieve their very best.

Finally if Oldfield is such an outstanding school then why is it under subscribed and why does it have to take so many out of county pupils, surely if it's ethos was that good then every parent in B&NES would be fighting to get their daughter in there, instead many girls who live near to Oldfield choose Hayesfield.