

Cabinet Resolution

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2097

Review of Secondary Schools in Bath

Meeting Date	21 st July 2010
The Issue	<p>In March 2008 Council approved a strategy for the future of secondary schools in Bath & North East Somerset. In May 2008 Cabinet agreed to consult on proposed changes to some Bath schools specifically the closure of Culverhay (boys), Oldfield (girls) and St Mark's C of E schools and a linked proposal to open one new co educational school in the north of the city and one new co-educational school in the south of the city.</p> <p>A public consultation exercise on this proposal was undertaken between March and May 2010 and this report sets out the results of the consultation.</p>
The decision	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To SUPPORT the proposed federation of St Mark's C of E school on its current site with St Gregory's Catholic College, with joint Post 16 provision for both schools. Invite the two schools to proceed with this hard federation so that it is in place for 1 September 2011;</p> <p>(2) To SUPPORT Oldfield school in seeking to become a co-educational academy and obtain written confirmation from the Head and the Governing Body by Friday 17 September 2010 that co-educational status has been included in the school's Application to Convert to an Academy sent to the Secretary of State, with the intention that it will become a co-educational academy by 1 September 2012;</p> <p>(3) That if written confirmation that co-educational status has been included in Oldfield school's Application to convert to an Academy by Wednesday 1 September 2012 is not received by Friday 17 September 2010 the LA to commence a competition to invite proposers to submit bids for a new 160 place co-educational 11-18 school on the existing Oldfield school site and to propose the closure of Oldfield school and the opening of a new co-educational school on 1 September 2012;</p> <p>(4) To CONSULT on the proposal to close Culverhay school.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>There are 5,545 places available for pupils aged 11-16 in the seven secondary schools in Bath. However, only approximately 4,000 pupils living in Bath and the surrounding villages (including approximately 400 pupils from a much wider area attending St Gregory's Catholic College as their nearest Catholic secondary school) attend these schools. Despite an additional 800 pupils attending Bath secondary schools from outside Bath and North East Somerset, there remain around 750 unfilled school places in these seven schools. The majority of these unfilled places are in Culverhay school and St Mark's C of E school with a smaller but significant number at Oldfield school.</p> <p>Therefore, in order to ensure the effective use of resources, provide schools with sufficient pupils to maintain a broad and balanced</p>

curriculum with a range of options and to raise standards only six secondary schools are required.

The consultation responses have revealed strong support for the strategy to reduce the number of schools from seven to six.

In order to maintain choice and diversity and to meet parental preferences it is important to maintain both single sex and co-educational provision and church and non-church school places. Therefore it was proposed to retain one single sex boys school (Beechen Cliff) one single sex girls school (Hayesfield) a co-educational school (Ralph Allen) and a Catholic secondary school (St Gregory's Catholic College). This strategy was also well supported by the consultation responses (71%).

In order to maintain the balance of church school places and also to provide more co-educational places a further two schools need to be provided. Due to the difficulty and cost of obtaining land for a secondary school in an urban area such as Bath existing school sites need to be used.

It is proposed that these two schools should be:

1. An 11-18 Anglican Faith School on the St Mark's C of E school site. The key factors in reaching this conclusion are:

The Diocese of Bath and Wells already owns this land and there is already an 11-18 school on this site;

The hard federation proposed by St Mark's C of E school and St Gregory's Catholic College and supported by the Dioceses of Bath and Wells and Clifton has every potential to significantly raise standards at St Mark's C of E school and increase the number of pupils on roll;

There is strong support from the local community for a secondary school on the site;

The long and difficult journey for a significant number of pupils if there were no school in North East Bath (particularly from the Larkhall and Lambridge areas). The journeys to school and traffic across the city would be reduced if local children were to attend the school on this site.

2. An 11-18 co-educational school on the Oldfield school site. The key factors in reaching this conclusion are:

The current school with a 192 Planned Admission Number is able to provide sufficient co-educational places on the site;

Modifications to the buildings can be undertaken within a budget of approximately £1.5m to enable both boys and girls to attend the school;

Oldfield school is already on 'Outstanding' school (OFSTED 2007) and the Governing Body have expressed a desire for the school to become a co-educational school;

There is very strong demand from local parents for a co-educational school on the site, particularly from parents of primary age pupils;

A co-educational school on this site would reduce the journeys to school and traffic across the city if local children were to attend the school.

These decisions would however mean that a consultation on the proposal to close Culverhay school with no new school on the Culverhay site would need to be carried out. If the decision was made to close the school with no new school on the site, careful consideration would need to be given to the impact of this on pupils and staff at the school and on the local community. If Culverhay school was to close, the pupils from the area could be accommodated in the six remaining schools throughout the City.

	<p>Currently a large number of boys from the Culverhay school area attend Beechen Cliff and Ralph Allen schools. They would continue to be able to do so with boys also able to attend Oldfield school if it were to be a co-educational school.</p> <p>Currently all girls from the Culverhay school area gain places at Oldfield, Hayesfield and Ralph Allen schools. They would continue to be able to do so.</p> <p>Catholic children (boys and girls) from the Culverhay school area gain places at St Gregory's Catholic College and they would continue to do be able to do so.</p>
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>Other options were considered and evaluated against following key criteria;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they would contribute to improving educational standards • The extent to which they maintain choice and diversity but meet parental demand church and co-educational places • Whether they reflected the views in the consultation including the level of support for individual schools. • Whether it will lead to a more efficient use of resources • Whether proposals would enable young people to access a local school and reduce travel across the city.
<p>The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision</p>	