



# **BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

## **REVIEW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION Phase 1: Chew Valley and Keynsham Area**

**A Review by the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure  
Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**28<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2005**

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**FINAL VERSION**

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## Introduction

The Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel is undertaking a review of Secondary Education in the whole of the Bath and North East Somerset area which will run for around 15 months. There are thirteen secondary schools in the area, and the review is taking place in three phases. The first, currently in progress, is looking at the Keynsham and Chew Valley area, whilst the second will look at the Bath area, and the third at schools in Midsomer Norton and Radstock. At the end of this whole process the Panel will make recommendations for improvements to secondary education provision in the area to the Executive Member for Children's Services. This will contribute to the vision for the future of Secondary Education in Bath and North East Somerset. Conclusions from the Review will also be incorporated into future updates of the School Organisation Plan.

This report deals with the first stage of the Panel's review, looking at Keynsham and Chew Valley. It does *not* set out the Panel's recommendations, but only their findings for this stage of the review. The Panel will not reach conclusions or formulate recommendations until the end of the whole review process when the Panel will have a view of the wider picture across the whole of the Bath and North East Somerset area.

This report is therefore not a conclusive document, but rather an indication of the Panel's work so far. It sets out the evidence which the Panel have received, and their initial findings for the Chew Valley and Keynsham area. The three schools being looked at in this phase of the review are:

- Chew Valley School

The school is located in Chew Lane, Chew Magna. It is a community school serving students aged 11-18. At September 2005 there are 1159 students on roll. This includes 186 students in the Sixth Form.

- Broadlands School

The school is located in St Francis Road, Keynsham. It is a community school serving students aged 11-18. At September 2005 there are 1080 students on roll. Post-16 education is provided on the school site in partnership with Norton Radstock College.

- Wellsway School

The school is located in Chandag Road, Keynsham. It is a community school serving students aged 11-18. At September 2005 there are 1362 students on the roll. This includes 285 students in the Sixth Form.

The report is supported by a number of important appendices which provide key background information and evidence for this review.

## **Context**

There are thirteen secondary schools in the Bath and North East Somerset area. Nine of these are co-educational schools, including one Church of England school and one Roman Catholic school. There are also four single sex schools, two boys' schools and two girls' schools.

Although overall results are good, there are significant differences in the performance of our secondary schools, results at post-16 are below national averages, and a number of schools are very overcrowded, while others have a significant number of surplus places. Present government policy is that the Authority will be receiving a sum of money to renew one secondary school by 2011 and an even larger sum in the middle of the next decade for the replacement and refurbishment of our other secondary schools. It is important that prior to this some of our existing problems are resolved and we are in a good position to spend this money on the right things.

The review will take place in three phases. The first has looked at the Keynsham and Chew Valley area, the second will look at the Bath area, and the third at schools in Midsomer Norton and Radstock.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Involvement**

Since 2003 the EYCL Panel have been engaged in reviewing Primary Schools in the area. Whilst this work continues, there is an emerging need to review the Secondary Schools in the area, because it is important to ensure that future secondary provision matches the needs of the current and future generations.

The Panel's membership is formed from a cross-party group of Councillors, as well as co-optees representing Parent Governors, Governors and representatives of the Church of England and Catholic Dioceses.

## **Purpose of this Overview and Scrutiny Review**

The purpose of this review is to examine the current Secondary School provision in Bath and North East Somerset, and to make recommendations for improvements to that provision.

The review will aim:

- To promote high educational standards, improved attendance and improved standards of behaviour  
*It is a statutory responsibility of the Council to promote high standards. Good attendance and behaviour are a prerequisite to achievement.*
- To promote the effective use of resources (money, buildings, land and people)

*This aims to ensure that finite resources are focussed on learning and teaching.*

- To seek to provide high quality facilities for young people, staff and communities  
*This incorporates the extended school concept and aims to ensure that secondary school sites and buildings become the centre of services in each area regardless of whether users have school-aged children or not.*
- To make the choice of a local school the natural and easy choice for parents / carers whilst recognising the wider area served by Church schools  
*This aims to increase the number of young people entering their first preference school, improves community cohesion and reduces travel by car*
- To ensure that a school is within reasonable walking / cycling distance of home and /or reasonably accessible by public transport.  
*This aims to ensure that the negative effects of travel to school are mitigated*

The Panel's recommendations for the future structure of Secondary School provision will be passed to the Executive Member for Children's Services.

## **Objectives of the Overview and Scrutiny Review**

It is anticipated that the review will recommend action for a pattern of provision which will be sustainable:

- for the ten year period following the conclusion of the reviews, includes the implementation of the findings of the Learning & Skills Council Strategic Area Review (StAR) and takes account of the effect of primary area reviews, i.e 2006 to 2016.
- for the ten year period following the implementation of "Building Schools for the Future", expected to be 2016 to 2026.

This will contribute to the vision for the future of Secondary Education in Bath and North East Somerset. Conclusions from the Review will also be incorporated into future updates of the School Organisation Plan.

Appendix 1 provides the full Terms of Reference for this Review.

## **Review Methodology**

The Panel have carried out a number of research and evidence gathering activities in order to inform their findings.

## ***Reports from the Service***

The Panel have received several briefings and a discussion paper from the Education Service. (See Appendix 2)

The information provided has encompassed issues such as:

- Numbers of pupils on the school rolls
- Levels of academic achievement
- Site and building areas
- Outstanding maintenance issues
- Financial information, e.g. funding per pupil, standards funding, budget share per pupil etc.

The Panel have been able to discuss these issues with the service and this has facilitated them in defining the scope and Terms of Reference for this review.

## ***Engagement with Schools, Parents, and Governors***

The Panel issued a four page information leaflet to head teachers, Chairs of Governors and parents at the three secondary schools under review during this phase: Chew Valley, Wellsway and Broadlands. The same information was also sent to the designated Primary Schools for this area.

The leaflet consisted of a letter from the Chair of the Panel, background on the reasons for the review, the timescales for this phase of the review, and an invitation to schools, parents and governors to respond to the panel with their views. A copy of the leaflet is available at Appendix 3.

The Panel received 5 responses and these are available at Appendix 4.

The Panel also sought to engage with the public through a web page and a series of press releases with which they encouraged the public to attend meetings, or write or e-mail to the panel with their views.

## ***Visits to Schools and engagement with School Councils***

The Panel visited each of the three schools under review, and spent time touring the buildings and grounds, talking to the Head teachers and staff, and also talking to the School Councils. The Panel spent time talking to each of the School Councils without teaching staff present. The information provided by the Councils was particularly helpful and much valued by the Panel members.

### **Contributor Session**

A public Contributor Session was held by the Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> November, and this marked the end of the evidence gathering stage of this review. During this evening meeting, the Panel heard from the head teachers and governors from each of the three secondary schools in the area, as well as from local Ward Councillors

The invited speakers who attended were as follows:

Broadlands School – Mrs Linda Ogden (Head) and Brian Davies (Chair of Governors)
Chew Valley School – Mr Mark Mallett (Head) and Peter Sanders (Chair of Governors) plus 2 other governors.
Wellsway School – Mrs Andrea Arlidge (Head) and Ashley Timmis (Parent Governor)

Full notes for the contributor session are attached at Appendix 5.

## **FINDINGS**

Due to the broad range of evidence and information gathered by the Panel in this review, the Panel's findings have been arranged in thematically organised sections, which reflect the key areas of the scope of the review.

These findings, together with the findings from the Bath, and Midsomer Norton and Radstock stages of the review, will all feed into forming the Panel's recommendations. Once these recommendations have been formulated, at the end of December 2006, they will be submitted to the Executive Member for Children's Services through the existing O&S tracking process via the Weekly decision register, and the Executive Member will be asked to respond to the Panel with regard to their recommendations within a six week timescale.

### **School Buildings**

#### *Chew Valley*

Overall the Panel felt that Chew Valley school was in excellent condition. It is a rural school which was well maintained and surrounded by a great deal of attractive green space. The Panel highlighted that this allowed for the possibility of future development, in the context of the buildings being somewhat undersized for the school's needs, whilst the school has more than the recommended amount of land. The sports facilities were felt to be particularly good, however the classrooms generally were seen as not suitable for modern use – although this was a common factor in all three schools visited. The sixth form centre was noted to be in poor condition and the hall was not big enough to accommodate the entire student body, and again this was recognised as being a common factor amongst the schools. The Panel noted the current use of temporary buildings, to which their attention was drawn both on their visit, by the School Council and the staff, and also at the contributor session.

#### *Broadlands*

The Panel felt that the key issue at Broadlands was lack of space. Playing area was limited, whilst playing fields themselves were at some distance from the school and frequently became flooded during the winter months. The school council pointed out that the corridors were narrow and there were some queries over whether the school buildings, although noticeably well-maintained were fit for purpose. However, the technology rooms which have been refurbished are very good.

Physically the school is constrained in what it can do to address its space limitations. There is no land to develop on and as the school is sited on a housing estate it cannot expand outwards either. The school could expand upwards but this would not address the issues of general lack of space and poor accessibility of playing fields. The fact that the school is surrounded by housing is a social constraint as well as a physical one in that pupils, who cannot all be kept on site during lunchtimes because of space limitations, are allowed off the site at lunchtimes. This can cause



difficulties with neighbours, and means that teachers have to patrol the estate to oversee pupils. The Panel recognise that the head teacher and staff are doing their best in a difficult situation, and that the problems of having the pupils off site is being well managed.

### *Wellsway*

The Panel felt that overall Wellsway gives a mixed impression. The school clearly has excellent academic results, however the buildings as a whole are somewhat tired looking, although there are some new blocks. The entrance to the school is not easily identifiable and the general layout of the site is poor.

There is good space around the school site, and the whole has a campus feel to it, particularly with the links to local infant and junior schools. Although the school has 165% of the recommended land for its needs, part of this is greenbelt, and this was noted as a constraint on any potential further development.

The school has a small library which is put to multiple use. The sixth form centre is good, however it was considered to be overcrowded. The Panel noted that the school consider that the sixth form centre is inadequate for the number of students.

## **The Curriculum**

### *Chew Valley*

Chew Valley is a specialist Performing Arts College.

Those subjects taken at GCSE/GNVQ in summer 2005 were:

Art	Italian
Business	Maths
Drama	Media Studies
English Language	Music
English Literature	Physical Education
French	Religious Studies
Geography	Science (Double)
German	Spanish
Health & Social Care	Technology
History	

There is some loss of pupils at sixth form level with just over half of Year 11 staying on to the sixth form. The remainder go to college courses or employment.

The Panel noted Chew Valley's aspiration to become a full extended school. They also noted that some pupils experience difficulties in attending after school clubs because of transport issues. The school provides a counselling service, however they would like more space to do this.

### *Broadlands*

Broadlands' specialism is science and engineering, and the school's timetable is well-gearred to its intake.

Those subjects taken at GCSE/GNVQ in summer 2005 were:

Art Biology Chemistry D&T: Resistant Materials D&T: Graphic Products D&T: Electronic Products D&T: Textiles Technology Drama Engineering: Double Award English Language English Literature French Geography	History Mathematics: Modular Statistics Media Studies Music Physical Education Physics Religious Studies CP Religious Studies Judaism Science: Double Award Science: Module Human Physiology and Health
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Thirty five out of 65 classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. Pastoral care within the school is seen to be good. At sixth form level the school operates a unit called B6 which is a partnership with Norton Radstock College. However in the post 16 age group many of the Bristol pupils who attend up until 16 return to Bristol colleges.

Broadlands is an extended school which is well-used and appreciated by the community. However the Panel noted that there may be some issues around identifying what the school's community is, as so many of the pupils attend from Bristol. It was recognised that to some extent the school is a south Bristol school based in Keynsham.

### *Wellsway*

Wellsway has excellent academic results, and has recently been cited as amongst the top 250 schools in the country. During the Panel's visit to the school they noted that the school seems to do a lot of work with "gifted and talented" pupils. It has not yet got a specialism however is preparing to submit an application for specialist status in maths and sport. There are approximately 15 interactive whiteboards out of 85 classrooms.

Those subjects taken at GCSE/GNVQ in summer 2005 were:

Art Business Studies Child Development	Graphic Products History ICT
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Drama Electronic Products English English Literature Food Technology French Geography German	Mathematics Music Philosophy and Belief Philosophy and Belief (1/2 course) Physical Education Resistant Material Science (Double) Science (Single)
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The curriculum can be somewhat restricted by the accommodation available to the school, for example in the area of performing arts, where in order to offer dance the school have to rent a venue in Keynsham.

The Panel heard that there is a good PTA who work well to support the school, and that there is also some community use of the school's facilities. A new Astroturf sports field has been recently opened and this will also be open for use by the community.

## **School Organisation**

### *Chew Valley*

The school has 1159 pupils including 185 students in the sixth form, and is full with 200 pupils in each year group. The school is accessible for pupils with physical disabilities, and also has good special educational needs facilities.

There are good partnership links with nearby primary schools and these were seen by the Panel to be a very good idea. The school also receives good parental support and this should be encouraged and continued.

There are some issues around transport to and from school. It was noted on several occasions that there are issues with the Chew Valley Explorer. Currently its timetable means that it misses the start and finish of the school day by 15 minutes. There has also been some suggestion that the service might cease entirely. Both the School Council and school staff flagged this up as an issue.

### *Broadlands*

Broadlands has 1080 pupils and is full with 210 pupils in each year group. Any reduction in the numbers attending the school would, it was felt, impact on the school's ability to provide the current range of subjects. The school has marketed itself well particularly in the Bristol area and has a good partnership with its feeder Primary Schools.

Broadlands contains a good unit for pupils who have visual impairments.

The Panel feel that parental involvement in and help with the school should be encouraged but also recognise the difficulties inherent in this as so many parents live in Bristol. There is clearly already a good degree of commitment being made by parents to their children's school and education in the approximate £25 per week in travel fares for Bristol children to attend the school, which was highlighted at the contributor session.

### *Wellsway*

Wellsway has 1362 pupils and is full with 210 pupils in each year group. There are good links with primary schools, particularly the infants and juniors on the same site.

There are approximately 280 pupils in the sixth form. The school has recently appointed a new headteacher who will of course bring her own style to the school.

## **Admissions and Attendance**

The admission policies for Chew Valley, Broadlands and Wellsway schools are all the same, and are consistent with policies across the Bath and North East Somerset area.

### *Chew Valley*

In September 2004 there were 252 pupils from North Somerset representing approximately 22% of the total number on roll and a further 160 from Bristol representing approximately 14% of the total number on roll. Thus it can be seen that almost 36% of total numbers on roll come from outside Bath & North East Somerset. Some of these pupils live closer to Chew Valley than to other secondary schools and therefore this is their natural choice, for example pupils from Felton and Winford in North Somerset. The North Somerset primary schools that are situated within the Chew Valley Area of Prime Responsibility are Dundry, Felton, St Katherine's Primary & Winford Primary Schools. However the Panel note that attendance at a particular primary school does not mean that there is an automatic transfer to a particular secondary school. Equally attendance at a particular primary school does not form part of the admissions criteria if a secondary school is oversubscribed.

There are no major issues at Chew Valley with attendance or unauthorised absence. There are low numbers of permanent and fixed exclusions from Chew Valley.

### *Broadlands*

In previous years Broadlands pupils had been attending from further away in Bristol. Frequently now many come from the Brislington area (just over a mile away), and this is seen to be because the school has become more popular. At September

2004 there were 671 students from Bristol on roll from a total of 1060. This represents approximately 63% of all students.

There are no major attendance issues at Broadlands, and it is seen as a well-motivated school. There are low numbers of permanent and fixed exclusions from Broadlands. Where a South Bristol pupil is excluded they are however returned to Bristol and there are no reciprocal arrangements for exclusions with Bristol Schools.

### *Wellsway*

There are no major issues with attendance at Wellsway. There are low numbers of permanent and fixed exclusions from Wellsway.

At September 2004 there were 130 South Gloucestershire students on roll which is approximately 10%. Often these students will enter the school on appeal. This is a historic catchment area for the school with many pupils' family members having attended the school in previous years. Indeed some South Gloucestershire pupils enter Wellsway after attending Temple Primary in Keynsham. At sixth form level the school also receives some students from a wide range of schools in Bath and South Gloucestershire, with the largest numbers coming from Oldfield School in Bath.

### **Overarching Factors**

The Panel noted that an issue which may well affect all three schools in the Keynsham and Chew Valley area is that there is likely to be new housing development in the medium term resulting from the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The Regional Spatial Strategy is

“a new kind of plan up to the year 2026. It will set a regional framework about ‘where things go’, what the scale of development should be, and the links between broad issues like healthcare, education and crime, as well as basic infrastructure such as transport. It will aim to protect what is highly valued about the region, at the same time making provision for sufficient new homes and jobs and retail and leisure facilities to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly affluent population”<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear the extent or location of such housing developments. However, up to 5,000 houses are possible and such a development would generate the need for a new secondary school.

The Panel have therefore given some consideration to a range of scenarios which might occur and which might therefore have an effect on the three schools.

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<sup>1</sup> From website of South West Regional Assembly, [http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/RSS\\_Developing.shtml](http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/ourwork/RSS/RSS_Developing.shtml), 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

In the case of Broadlands and Chew Valley, any housing development in the Whitchurch area could impact on the schools. The village is within the Broadlands Area of Prime Responsibility but some students in Whitchurch will also attend Chew Valley. However, a large increase in housing in Whitchurch might generate the need for a new school.

If Chew Valley were to need to take in more pupils due to smaller housing development the Panel would anticipate that this would be managed by expanding the current school. The key factor for Chew Valley would be to ensure that it continues to serve the children of the surrounding areas.

Of some relevance for the future of both Broadlands and Wellsway may be the current development of a Keynsham vision. For the past few months, the Keynsham Development Advisory Group, comprised mostly of local Councillors, has been meeting to discuss ideas for the long-term future of the town. The emerging Keynsham Vision is a “work in progress” and sets out, in broad terms, the challenges facing Keynsham today, and the strategic direction the Advisory Group would like to see the town going in. It draws on previous work, such as Vision 2000 and the Town Plan, but specifically takes a long-term view. The drivers behind the formation of the vision are rooted in economic development, but the Advisory Group have tried to take a broad overview of the town, and take social and cultural factors into account as well. Officers will be taking soundings on the emerging Vision over the next two months, with a view to taking a modified version to the Executive in April, along with a Business Plan and Spatial Plan which will be prepared by consultants in the New Year. If agreed, wider public consultation will take place after this.

Issues were raised around the possibility of a Keynsham sixth form college, however it was felt that the demand would simply not be high enough for this. It was noted that St Brendan’s College just over the border in Brislington is able to take sixth formers and would be likely to expand if demand were to rise.

The impact of Bristol’s building schools for the future programme was also noted. The “Building Schools for the Future” (BSF) is a programme covering all secondary schools in England and offers the potential for the rebuilding or upgrading of all secondary schools over a fifteen year period from 2005. As new schools are opened in Bristol, this may result in pupils attending these schools rather than travelling to Keynsham. It is questionable whether (setting aside any future housing issues) Keynsham needs more than one school. The Panel will need to give consideration to this possibility in their final report and recommendations, at the end of the entire secondary school review process. They noted the evidence received at the Contributor Session around the possibilities of merging the two current schools, thereby forming one main school taking from 1250-1500 pupils.

## **Options for the Future**

The options for the future which the Panel will need to consider when they come to make their final report and recommendations may therefore be seen as follows.

### ***Maintaining the status quo***

When the potential impact of both the Bristol Building Schools for the Future programme, and the housing expansion outlined in the 25 year spatial strategy are taken into consideration, the Panel are clear that no change whatsoever is unlikely to be a viable option. Some change is therefore likely, although the extent of that change will need to be the subject of the Panel's final conclusions and recommendations.

### ***Building Schools for the Future***

As the Bristol Building Schools for the future programme goes ahead, demand for places at Broadlands is likely to decline. One possible solution to this issue may be to merge the two existing schools in Keynsham, and the Panel will give this their full consideration in their final report. In considering this in their final report the Panel will bear in mind issues around, different school models (secondary schools can be for ages 4-19, 4-16, 9-13 and then 14-19 (middle school and senior school), 11-16, or 11-19), location, 6<sup>th</sup> form provision etc.

### ***Housing Development***

The Regional Spatial Strategy makes it clear that it is very likely that there will be housing development in this area in the medium term. The Panel noted that for every 5000 houses which are built, the capacity is generated to fill one new secondary school. They therefore feel it important that they give this their consideration in formulating their final report and recommendations at the end of the secondary school review process.

## **Next Steps**

Following the publication of these findings for the Keynsham and Chew Valley phase of this review, the Panel will move on in the New Year to look at secondary education in the Bath area, and then in the autumn of 2006 to look at secondary education in the Midsomer Norton and Radstock Area. At the end of this entire process a final report with recommendations for the entire secondary education provision in the Bath and North East Somerset Area will be produced, and submitted for consideration to the Executive Member for Children's Services.

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference for the Review
Appendix 2	Discussion Paper
Appendix 3	Information leaflet issued to schools, parents and governors in Keynsham and Chew Valley area
Appendix 4	Correspondence received by the Panel during this phase of the review.
Appendix 5	Notes of the Contributor Session

Appendices are available separately and copies can be obtained by contacting the Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW, or by e-mail to [scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01225 396410.

## Acknowledgements

The Panel wish to acknowledge the great help and assistance given to them in undertaking this phase of their review by the school head teachers and governors, and school councils. They would also wish to thank all those who attended the Contributor Session and took the time to write into the Panel, and the Officers who have been involved in supporting the Panel Members during this phase of the review.