

APPENDIX 2

A Review of Secondary Schools in Bath

Following a review of all secondary schools by the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel a plan for the future of secondary schools in Bath was unanimously agreed by the Council and Cabinet in 2008.

The plan for Bath is aimed at addressing the key challenges identified in the review and proposes:

- A reduction in the total number of schools from seven to six to remove surplus places and reflect the current and future need in Bath.
- A reduction in the number of single sex places and the provision of more co-educational places to meet parental demand.
- Creating the right size schools which are educationally and financially secure.
- The provision of sufficient church school places to meet the level of demand.
- Maintenance of one single sex girls school and one single sex boys school to provide choice for parents.

A public consultation exercise was undertaken between March and May 2010 seeking views on the overall plan for Bath as set out above and a specific proposal to close Culverhay, Oldfield and St Mark's Church of England School and to open one new 11-18 co-educational school with a planned admission number of 160 in the north of the City and a linked proposal to open one new 11-18 co-educational school with a planned admission number of 160 in the south of the City.

During that consultation there were developments which had to be taken into account when considering the options available. The new Government announced legislation to enable a greater number of schools to become Academies (independent schools funded directly by central Government), with those judged outstanding by Ofsted able to be fast tracked to become Academies.

Culverhay School and Oldfield School indicated that they would seek academy status. Also during that consultation period St Mark's Church of England School presented plans to federate with St Gregory's Catholic College with a shared post 16 provision.

The consultation process showed that there was strong support for the overall plan for Bath which was supported by 72% of respondents. These responses were in relation to the plan as a whole not specific proposals for

St Mark's Church of England School, Oldfield School and Culverhay School, although the plan described included new schools north and south of the river.

In July 2010 the Cabinet considered the results of the consultation and having taken into account the responses received and the proposals put forward by schools during the consultation agreed to;

- Support the proposed federation of St Mark's Church of England 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.
- Support Oldfield School in seeking to become a **co-educational** academy and obtain written confirmation from the Headteacher 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.
- 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;
- Consult on the proposal to close Culverhay School.

Progress on school proposals

Following the decision of Cabinet in July, St Mark's Church of England School and St Gregory's Catholic College have undertaken a consultation and agreed to pursue the development of a 'soft' federation which will see the schools retaining separate governing bodies but working collaboratively, with the intention that the headteacher of St Gregory's will provide executive leadership to St Mark's, with a view to raising its standards further. This fulfils the core aims of the original proposal for a 'hard' federation which the cabinet supported in July. The development of a joint sixth form, which was also supported in the previous cabinet decision (21 July 2010) will require St Gregory's to be re-designated as an 11-18 school (rather than 11-16 only). This now requires a consultation exercise by St Gregory's and will require the local authority to determine the statutory notice of change. Writhlington School will also be involved in the

federation but only in areas such as a co-ordinated curriculum, staff professional development, sharing specialisms and 14-19 provision.

In line with the previous cabinet resolution (21 July 2010) Oldfield School confirmed by 17 September that it would pursue conversion to co-educational status. Following a public consultation process, the governors agreed to become a co-educational school from September 2012 and have published a statutory notice to this effect, which will be determined by the local authority. The authority has committed to provide the necessary capital to enable the site to be made suitable for co-educational use and work is in hand to plan and undertake the necessary works. Oldfield School is now proceeding with its application to the Department for Education for conversion to a co-educational academy.