

**STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR DINE ROMERO TO COUNCIL MEETING 20TH
JANUARY 2011 ON FUTURE OF CULVERHAY SCHOOL**

Councillors,

I am reading this statement to you in response to the notice given for the closure of Culverhay School, so I would like it recorded as such, to inform the decision.

It has been said that this decision for closure is based on surplus places. But in Bath we only have about 10% surplus places. This offers a reasonable degree of flexibility, allowing for parental choice, and future population growth. As a council we have an expectation of 2000 new homes in the Western Riverside, plus the houses likely to be built at the 3 MOD sites, this will lead to larger numbers of children.

Our problem in Bath is actually that this “surplus” is focused in very specific areas, around Culverhay, St Marks and Oldfield Schools.

None of these schools are failing schools, as all have been classed as at least good by Ofsted. However none are popular with their natural catchments as they stand at present. Yet, two have been allowed to remain open and to transform, but not, so far, the third.

Culverhay has not been fighting to stay open as it is, a boys’ school; but has been fighting to become a non-denominational co-educational school. This is what 72% of the respondents to the initial consultation asked for. It is what the school itself has wanted to be for the last 20 years. It was in anticipation of this, that the current head teacher was appointed.

Girls want to attend this school, their parents want them to, it is their most local school. When the Friends of Culverhay surveyed parents of nearby primary schools, the parents of 555 children were in favour of a non-denominational co-educational school on the site. Please confirm the validity of this survey, with your own consultation, don’t just close Culverhay!

Currently 95% of boys going to Culverhay walk. Increasing the numbers attending this local school will help achieve our council goals around reductions in car travel and community sustainability. Other non-denominational schools are at least 50minutes walk away. There are no direct bus routes.

60% of Bath’s children live to the South of the river. The original consultation acknowledged this, and suggested a co-ed school on the Culverhay site. It has been said many times that this is the best site for a secondary school in Bath.

Culverhay serves the area in Bath that has the greatest social, economic and educational need. This is recognised nationally as a fact.

Culverhay has the greatest CVA score within Bath. The educators at Culverhay are increasing their student's attainment beyond the national baseline and to a greater extent than any other school in Bath. The boys have the third highest level of GCSE A* - C within BANES.

There are many reasons why Culverhay should be given the same chance that other schools have been given to re-invent themselves, and provide even better education and learning experiences, but I only have 3 minutes!

Please allow a non-denominational co-educational school on the Culverhay site!

Please note that the community wishes to register an interest in the buildings and land at Culverhay School.