

## **STATEMENT BY CLLR DINE ROMERO**

### **THE FUTURE OF THE CULVERHAY SCHOOL SITE**

I am here tonight to ask you to confirm your commitment to vocational education on the Culverhay school site, and, at the same time, as it is the same site, to confirm that you do wish to see the swimming pool reopened.

With regards to the school, I am aware that by there are plans for both primary and secondary alternative provision to be brought together in a new build replacing several of the stand-alone buildings. This I supported as cabinet member and continue to do so.

However, this should not be the limits of this administration's ambition.

Despite a commitment within the Lib Dem's manifesto of 2023 and indeed from 2019 the future for the main part of the site still is unclear.

We know there are education inequalities within our population, some of these are generational, we know that the current, mostly academic education offer is not right for every child, we also know we need to build up a skilled work force for the future in particular in green and renewable industries, so I hope you will work with Bath college to address these issues and bring vocational education to Culverhay.

As Cllr May is very aware, the college has been working over a number of years, and a number of administrations, on a proposal for vocational education at Culverhay for children from the age of 14.

They have asked for certainty from the council on Culverhay, without this firm assurance potential capital investment and the project itself could be at risk. So please let the college know that you, we, are committed to vocational education at Culverhay.

While I'm talking about Culverhay I also ask that this administration looks at reopening the swimming pool, swimming is a life skill, as well as a great form of exercise for many more people than high impact sports and should be accessible for everyone. The city centre pool and the one in Keynsham are not near enough to be a viable choice for many local families on low incomes or for older people so with Culverhay closed they no longer go swimming at all.

It is well known that swimming pools are expensive to run, since they have high energy bills, it is true few make money, but I would hope that improving the health of the residents in one of the more deprived parts of Bath would counter a purely financial argument.

Culverhay's aged boilers are well passed their best, so you could use this as a chance to try something new and radical and showcase your commitment to green energy. Why not create a self-sufficient system to heat the pool a system which is reliant entirely on renewable energy? Maybe you will create enough energy to heat and power the rest of the building?

If you open the pool and properly promote the sports facilities, you could finally address in a meaningful way health inequalities.

You have a golden opportunity to do better for the population in the SW of the city and for future generations across Bath.

But you need a vision for long term economic, social and health improvements, over many years and generations.

Will you commit to doing this, will you do everything you can to enable vocational education at Culverhay? Will you commit to addressing health inequalities where it is needed and so commit to reopen the swimming pool?

I hope so and would like to add an invitation to Cllr May, cabinet member for Children's services to update the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on progress.