

CLLR JOEL HIRST – CULVERHAY SITE

As a representative of the Odd Down ward, Cllr Steve Hedges and myself would like to celebrate this proposal to secure the Culverhay site for education.

While our preference would have been for a regular community school, retaining the site for education is very much welcomed.

There is much to commend in the paper before you today: The focus on our most vulnerable children: those with special educational needs and those who need alternative provision. Investment in jobs in the South West of Bath.

The cabinet member and officers deserve a huge thanks for persisting in bringing these business cases forward and securing government funding.

The proposal is an imaginative way of bringing together two different needs onto the one site. The proposal will ensure that Culverhay continues with education and the proposal reduces the hardship for families, by providing specialist places more locally in B&NES, reducing the burden of long commutes.

However, there is a “could do better” element to my comments, which I’m aware Cllr May is working hard to progress forwards.

Focusing on the swimming pool element and our young people, in particular, deserve swimming pools in local communities. We must continue to work hard to ensure that the site has the opportunity to have a swimming pool and fitness facilities onsite.

It’s not acceptable that: 25% of our 11-year-olds can’t swim, that it’s hard to access swimming pools in the South West of Bath, that 38% of our residents in deprived areas are disabled from accessing active exercise facilities. We need to do better. I understand that the economic circumstances make it very difficult to fund new swimming pools, but we need to be ambitious, and if we care about the health and wellbeing of our residents (and particularly our residents in the most deprived part of the city of Bath) we need to focus on that and find a solution.