

Formal representation from the Burnholme Community College Parents' Action Group.

This representation refers to the Report of the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People, Janet Looker, entitled 'Secondary Education Provision on the East side of the city and the Future of Burnholme Community College', dated 15 May 2012 – hereafter called the proposal.

Summary.

In summary:

1. The Council claims it will keep community facilities, including a vital nursery, but only has funded plans to decommission the site.
2. There is no material evidence to show that all options to make BCC viable have been 'vigorously pursued' as repeatedly claimed on radio, in the press and at public meetings.
3. Future demand for secondary places will require BCC places by 2016 and there is no credible plan to meet future demand without BCC.
4. Closure does not properly recognise the services provided by BCC to SEN, disadvantaged and troubled children and there is no credible plan to preserve the same quality of services to these special groups.
5. Affordability has been grossly misrepresented through the consultation and there is no demonstration or indication that closure represents better value than retaining the school:
 - a. It was routinely repeated that the only source of funding for BCC was to top slice other schools when this is not true.
 - b. The full costs of closure are largely uncalculated and they are omitted from the proposal to misrepresent closure as being far better value than continuation of BCC.

6. There is a lack of evidence of active Council support to BCC and this suggests a strategy to starve the school of support in readiness for earliest closure.
7. BCC academic results show reasons to support it, not close it – Since financial issues are balanced and active options to support the school have not been ‘pursued with vigour’ closure is a political choice, not educational or financial.
8. Taken together these issues show that the consultation has not complied with statutory guidance and is a failure of the Council’s duty of care.

Introduction

This representation falls into the following parts:

- Part 1 – Inadequacies, inaccuracies, and misinformation in the Authority’s proposals to close:
 - Section A – Protection of Community Services.
 - Section B – Operating options already explored.
 - Section C – Future demand
 - Section D – Disadvantaged children.
 - Section E - Special educational needs
 - Section F – Parental choice
 - Section G – Affordability and best value.
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 - Conclusion.
 - Formal complaint.
- Part 2 - Options to keep Burnholme Community College (BCC) open.
- Part 3 – Public accountability requirements in the event of closure.

Part 1 – Inadequacies in the Authority’s proposals to close

Section A – Protection of Community Services

The proposal says that community services will continue after the school has closed. There is no plan for how a big site, with large empty buildings, would be maintained so that evening classes, drama and sports clubs could continue, and there is no recognition of any duty of care on the Council to keep the site safe.

The proposal asserts that continuing facilities would be ‘cost neutral’ but does not explain how this could be achieved.

Instead the proposal also states that the site will be ‘decommissioned’ at a cost of £25,000 – a sum sufficient only to close the facilities.

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A nursery provides a service of major community significance from the site, providing much needed local employment – its future is at risk from this proposal.

The proposal appears to mislead, making infeasible promises in the text that are not explained, planned or funded in the same paper. It does not show proper care and attention for the future of nursery services.

Section B – Operating options already explored

In the proposal, in verbal statements to Parents, on radio and in the press the Council has repeatedly claimed to have vigorously explored all possible avenues to keep BCC open: We have seen no evidence of this, despite repeated requests, and instead the Council is proposing to close a recently established, and superbly successful new facility for SEN.

The Burnholme Parents Action Group (BPAG) found that options such as a community café (building on existing coffee mornings in the school) collocating the Tang Hall Library and other ideas were developed by the school in outline and on paper. We found no evidence of active support for these ideas from the Council.

Despite BCC being directly next door to Applefields Special School, an SEN Satellite Class, recently established in BCC arrived only after the Council could find no other host. Far from BCC being the obvious first choice it was Manor School that was the Council's preferred option and BCC was not considered until late in the process.

We believe the Council wanted to close BCC in 2009, and failed, and so has done no more than fund BCC until the very next opportunity to attempt closure: To aid this they have misrepresented their support to mislead opinion about the viability of BCC and its site.

Section C – Future demand.

This year only 40 pupils selected BCC as first choice but 47 chose BCC as second choice, predominantly after first choosing Archbishop Holgate's Academy (AHA). BPAG found that parents are happily selecting BCC if they think they might not get their child into AHA. This means there is sufficient current demand in BCC catchment if AHA cannot take BCC children in the future.

Jake Wood, the Council's Policy Support Manager, reported this to the February meeting of the York Education Partnership Board, he said:

“...[demand for] places between Year 7 and 11 would exceed available places from 2017/18. It was noted that this data was secure as it was based on the number of children currently in school.”

This 2017 analysis leaves out inward migration that will be a major source of population growth particularly affecting York (Population Topic Paper - Arup Consulting, July 2011). In recent news, the Home Secretary is preparing contingency arrangements against mass immigration from countries within the EU - something only partly recognised in the Arup report and revealing a major upturn in migration pressure on York stemming from continuing economic problems in Europe: This means there are likely to be fewer school places than children needing them before 2017.

AHA is a big and very successful school and growing numbers of parents will continue to choose it from all across the City – this will put increasing pressure on AHA places to the exclusion of more and more BCC catchment children who will increasingly need BCC as their second choice because this same demand will also fill up other schools across York too.

We have asked for, but have not been given any glimpse of the plans for AHA and subsequent expansion in other schools - we believe that they do not exist in any credible form. In particular, we have requested architect plans for AHA, quantised and costed by surveyors, meeting building regulations. Instead, we have been told that the Council means to lodge BCC students in portacabins and then, presumably, to work out the details from there.

We believe the Council has no credible plan to accommodate its own inadequate projections of demand for secondary school places: Closing BCC will make this situation worse.

Section D –Disadvantaged children

It is already the case that BCC is often left with the children that other schools do not admit and, naturally, these are often low attainers from poor and challenged backgrounds for whom BCC provides a specialist

pastoral care...

The following is an extract from the submission made by Sue Williamson, BCC's Inclusion Officer, and it is printed in full because it needs to be a matter of public record:

So what kinds of experiences and problems do the pupils at Burnholme have that are different from pupils who live in more affluent areas? I carried out research into this theme, published by York University as my MPhil in 2010 - and over a 4 year period I tracked a sample group of 10 pupils who were all in the top set. No pupils had parents who had been to university, 1 pupil had spent time in a refuge for domestic violence, 1 pupil's uncle had been murdered, 1 pupil's father who had been a street drinker had been killed in a fight, 1 pupil's mother was in an institution for people with drink problems ... she died during the research. 1 pupil was sexually abused. 1 pupil gave birth to a child before she finished school - 2 others had their first child before they were 18. 1 appeared in crown court when he was 18. And this is the top set not an unusually deprived year. 3 had a close relative who had died in traumatic circumstances!

But that is only part of the story - the beginning. The main Burnholme story is the story of great success - of skill and energy that staff possess for working with pupils encountering traumatic experiences, the compassion and energy the pupils have for helping one another - and the respect and understanding that everyone in the school has for the culture of the community. The final chapter of the Burnholme story is how the pupils leave - in my sample of 10 pupils, 9 pupils gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade C or above - and 5 of these gained all A/As/Bs - 6 of the pupils had gained a full A level in philosophy at Burnholme - 3 went on to university - 6 are in employment.*

If you break up a community school, then the community suffers. When that community is one of the poorest and most disadvantaged in a city, and the sense of belongingness that the school fosters is lost

and pupils encountering misfortune are in a large school with a different school culture - there are going to be consequences. More NEETS, increase in crime rate? Worse than this?

And this, from Martin Cross...

I think I could add a couple of points which I don't mind being quoted about

Firstly would be to back what everyone is saying that I have always had a very high opinion of Burnholme from working with the school over the last eleven years. I have always felt that the staff are very committed to the young people and get to know them as individuals. Young people I've met have often said to me how they feel valued at school. I think this can have a significant impact on young people's mental health and help raise their confidence and self-esteem.

Secondly would be about the potential effects on young people and their families of the school closure. I would imagine that the whole process of the school closing and then a move to another school will be a difficult experience for all the young people and that for some young people this could understandably feel overwhelming. I would be interested to know if this has been taken into account in terms of the support that young people and families would need to help them through this transition. It may be that we see an increase to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services as a result.

I hope this is useful and do let me know if I can be of any more help. I wish you luck with it.

The proposal and consultation show a disregard and lack of care for disadvantaged children. Comparisons of costs and results between BCC and other schools have not been adequately adjusted for the extra challenge faced by BCC and deaf ears have been turned to any argument concerning emotionally, socially and economically challenged children from two of the most disadvantaged wards in York.

It is our view that the proposal has a careless and cavalier attitude towards disadvantaged children, and towards the special contribution from BCC, and that the Council has failed in its duty to pay specific care and attention to the interests of disadvantaged children.

Section E – Special Educational Need

The degree of SEN loading on BCC was radically understated in the proposal and had to be corrected...

I write with reference to a document you have written about Burnholme Community College - and which is intended to form part of the LEA's case to York Council for closure of BCC - in which you state as follows:

" BCC currently has 286 students, including eight students with a statement of Special Educational Need and 32 students who currently receive additional support".

I wish to point out that this is substantially incorrect and gives a misleading account. As the Inclusion Leader for BCC I am in a position to inform you that for the previous 5 years the % of pupils on the SEN register has remained at around 30%. This academic year is in keeping with this pattern; the amount of pupils on the SEN register is 81. When the pupils with a statement of SEN are subtracted from this, the amount with additional needs is 73. I should be obliged if you would correct this figure.

A brand new Applefield's SEN satellite class was established in BCC only 6 months ago and it has proved an outstanding success – more children are due to join it in a few months time but it is now facing closure and relocation: This despite pedestrian access between the schools being recognized by all as a significant factor in its success: A short walk provides two-way access to all the facilities and support available in Applefields.

Provision elsewhere will degrade this service, requiring specialists and children to travel to and from Applefield's facilities. Extra funding would be

needed to employ more specialist teachers to compensate for time lost in travel, to provide comparable facilities elsewhere, and to pay for travelling expenses of staff and chaperoned shuttle of children between sites - the proposal includes £100,000 for reprovision of the classroom only and there are no other costs recognized: This means the Council plans to significantly degrade SEN services.

The exceptional SEN value of BCC was outlined by representation from experts both to the Council and the BPAG, as follows:

Currently York has 2 special schools. Hob Moor Oaks Primary School is part of the Hob Moor Federation, collocated with Hob Moor Primary and is an extremely inclusive setting. Parents whose children attend Hob Moor Oaks value the fact their children are educated alongside their mainstream peers and have formal and informal opportunities for inclusion.

Burnholme Community School is adjacent to Applefields Secondary Special School. An extremely successful satellite class was established at Burnholme Community College in September 2011. This provision has really strengthened the links between the two schools. Burnholme Community College is a welcoming inclusive school with a can do attitude and a real interest in the individuals who attend the school. The collocation of the two schools provides the potential for developing a true centre of excellence in inclusive secondary education.

The close proximity to Applefields enables students based in the satellite provision to easily access medical, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy services and after school provision, which would be problematic if this resource was based in a different secondary school. The opportunity to strengthen and develop the links between Applefields and Burnholme Community College provides the opportunity to replicate the inclusive approach to special education that is available to parents and pupils at Hob Moor Oaks. This inclusive approach increasingly is what parents are now used to and want for their children.

*There is an increasing body of literature and research both nationally and internationally which confirms the success and benefits of small schools and the importance for a wide range of young people to relate to a smaller number of key adults in order to succeed and learn at secondary school. Further information can be found at : <http://www.hse.org.uk/index.php/research-publications/occasional-papers/> . The recent research by Barry Carpenter (**The Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Research Project** Developing pathways to personalised learning) Identified the increasing numbers of pupils in mainstream schools with complex learning difficulties who require a personalised approach to teaching and learning also should be taken into consideration.*

An expert assessment of the (in our view) irreplaceable qualities of the BCC Satellite is attached to this representation and forms part of it.

The proposal has no funding to make good the inevitable degradation in service caused by relocating the SEN Satellite and challenged children into schools that are miles apart from Applefields – the proposal withdraws quality services from SEN children.

It is our view that the proposal has a careless and cavalier attitude towards SEN, and towards the special contribution from BCC, and that the Council has failed in its duty to pay specific care and attention to the interests of SEN children.

Section F – Parental Choice

Parents of economically and socially disadvantaged children actively choose BCC because it is able to provide a small school community in which their children can survive and thrive. These families cannot run a car and BCC allows their children to walk or cycle safely to school within their own community. Archbishop Holgate's is the nearest alternative school but it lies on the opposite side of the Hull Road which is a dual carriageway arterial road that is extremely busy at rush hour – asking children to walk or cycle from BCC's streets does not respect child safety.

Closure of BCC will leave parents with AHA as the only practical and increasingly forlorn option as demand for places in AHA rises (see above): It is a big school, a faith school and an Academy lying outside the community (2 or 3 miles distant for some families) and any of these qualities may not meet parental preferences.

Planning permission for the new Derwenthorpe development cited BCC as the school providing education to children moving there. Now that Derwenthorpe is being built the Council has, in our view quite cynically, moved to close the school. The trip to AHA for children arriving in Derwenthorpe will be difficult if taken by safe and recognised routes.

We believe BCC closure is an affront to parental choice amongst the City's most challenged and often troubled families and it removes educational services underpinning Derwenthorpe development.

Section G – Affordability

The proposal does not contest the educational value of BCC but says that the only reason to close it is that it cannot be afforded: The BPAG has not been able to elicit, from the Council, any evidence to substantiate this claim despite repeated requests.

The only reference to the cost of creating sufficient future places after BCC closure is paragraph 82 that says:

....the potential cost of replacing 600 places, removed by the closure of Burnholme, by investing incrementally at other schools where demand increases, is not considered excessive compared to the costs of keeping the college open and the savings generated from closure'.

The proposal does not discuss or present a costed plan for 'other school expansion' to provide the places needed before 2017, but only quotes £2m for AHA expansion – a figure that appears to be a guess.

The proposal does not set out a plan for schools without BCC or its cost, nor does it compare the costs of school expansion with the (incomplete and adequately calculated) costs of closure that are in the proposal. We believe that the Authority does not know the costs of expansion to schools to replace BCC places and so cannot claim that school expansion is better value for money than retention of BCC.

The proposal does outline, but in a single round number that appears to be a guess, the cost of expansion to AHA – this is put at £2m but this expansion will only accommodate under ½ of BCC's existing places. This suggests that a fully costed school expansion plan to fully replace BCC would be £6m and more, taking 4 to 6 years.

The proposal also disingenuously states that the cost of subsidising BCC would be £5.4m, over an 8 year period, but this does not factor in rising numbers in the school that would progressively see it become self-financing. Using the proposal's own logic, we would estimate the likely cost to subsidise BCC, for the same 6 year period as the competing school expansion plan, to be between £3- 4m and so significantly less than the cost of expansion elsewhere.

Taking these affordability arguments together we believe that the Council has gerrymandered and misrepresented costs to falsely accuse BCC of being a dead-weight on the finances of other schools. The Council has made great play amongst the media and parents of the cost of BCC subsidy to other schools – a cost of £60,000 per school has been relentlessly repeated: This is disingenuous because it:

- Fails to mention that other schools have vacancies and deficits that are also being subsidised.
- Ignores that the Council has options to move money into the education budget according to its priorities.
- Inadequately recognises the additional costs of closure that, by the proposals' own logic, would have to be found from schools too.

It is our contention that the costs of replacing BCC are likely to be more than the costs of keeping it open: At a time of uncertainty about rapid growth in demand for secondary school places the Council is taking a blind and expensive gamble with school places, parental choice and taxpayer's money.

The honest representation of facts would be to say that the Council should choose to subsidise BCC as the least risk and best value option but it chooses to gamble and to finance closure instead – we believe York citizens have been actively misled regarding affordability and best value.

Section H – Support to BCC.

The Council has continually asserted that it has worked tirelessly to help BCC to recover a decent (and now well-founded) reputation amongst its community but the BPAG found the following issues:

- Parents in feeder schools unaware of BCC open nights when filling in their preference forms.
- BCC prospectuses not distributed alongside materials of other schools.
- Significant numbers of parents reporting anti-BCC prejudice in other schools.

The BPAG also found widespread ignorance of the achievements of the school, even within its own catchment. For example, very few knew that BCC has won national awards for its Art Department, its Science department has won a cash prize from Rolls Royce, its Business department won best team award in competition with schools across North Yorkshire, and BCC rugby league teams are amongst the best in the County.

The Council claimed ignorance of these issues and assured us that, despite what was found, the school had been appropriately promoted.

We do not believe this because the evidence is wholly commensurate with a Council strategy to starve the school of support in readiness for a second attempt at closure as soon as politically possible.

Conclusion

This representation is frank about our beliefs and we have used this candour throughout our consultation on the proposal. We are as ready to be proved wrong now as we have been through the last 3 months of work with the Council. However, we repeatedly raised our questions and suspicions but we have not received adequate answers to them - we therefore must conclude that our suspicions have foundation and that the proposal is flawed as we suggest.

Consequently, we believe that the intention of the Authority, since BCC was rerieved in 2009, has been to close BCC at the next and earliest opportunity: This is why a five year plan was not properly sponsored and why it was abruptly withdrawn at the first sign of difficulty.

In our opinion, the arguments above show that the Authority failed to follow statutory guidance in production of its proposal and in its consultation: We reserve the right to challenge both in law.

We are frankly appalled that it is a Labour Administration, loudly professing support for the needy in a time of austerity, that has written this proposal: A proposal to close a school that has made a breakthrough for SEN in York and that is working wonders with economically and emotionally challenged children in two of the most deprived wards in York (Hull Road and Heworth).

We name Janet Looker and James Alexander as the political drivers and joint authors of this proposal - without their support and direction the Authority and its officials could not have begun this action.

Formal Complaint

On behalf of BCC parents the BPAG makes the following formal complaint to the City of York Council:

That the proposal and consultation documents did not present a full, fair and balanced account of the BCC situation or all options for its resolution.

That Councillors and officials made wrongful, incomplete, inadequate and misleading assertions on radio, in the press and in public meetings to the detriment of a balanced and honest consultation.

That Janet Looker has pursued, directed and promoted a single-minded campaign to close BCC without care or concern for truth or fairness.

That CYC in single-minded pursuit of closure of BCC has shown disregard for the interests of SEN and disadvantaged children.

That CYC has not properly weighed all facts to ensure best value for the local taxpayer.

We submit this representation as our primary evidence but can provide more upon request.

Part 2 - Options to keep Burnholme Community College (BCC) open.

We believe that there will be little difference between the costs to close BCC and the costs to keep it open: Add to this the Council's own forecasts of population demand and no further argument or options are needed to keep BCC open.

Nevertheless, several options have been tabled but all remain incompletely explored because of a fundamental lack of support for BCC. They include:

- Extension to community services by a public access café, building on existing coffee mornings at the school.
- Bringing Tang Hall library into school premises.
- Creation of a 'through school' by merger with a local Primary.
- Creation of a sixth form college and 'federated' specialist secondary support to other schools around key BCC facilities (eg drama studio and sports) and curricular expertise (eg arts and business).
- Accommodation of a stand-alone primary pupil referral unit with access to SEN and child mental health services already integrated within BCC – this would relieve increasing difficulties within the existing referral arrangements (see appended booklet that was presented to the Council Cabinet prior to their decision - it forms part of this representation).

We believe that the case for closure of BCC is narrowly made to suit a political agenda. The Council has steadfastly refused to take an integrated services view, specifically in order to paint a most deleterious view of BCC by:

- Insisting all money must come from other schools when this is not true.

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- Failing to recognise how existing 'federation' and sharing of resource with other schools already saves costs and improves educational outcomes in other schools.
- Failing to consider how BCC benefit to other schools and to wider children services could be developed further.
- Failing to explore how the BCC site and assets could generate significant savings in budgets outside education – eg community services and social care.

The BPAG's own proposal, submitted during the consultation, has not had a reply from the Council and so we conclude that it has been dismissed without any consideration.

We believe a political agenda is being run at the expense of honesty, transparency and fairness – valid arguments are not being listened to and viable alternatives are not being pursued.

Part 3 – Public accountability requirements in the event of closure

The BPAG, to the extent that we have been able to examine the facts, are convinced that closure of BCC is a grave error that will cost as much, or more, than retaining the school. We further believe it involves serious risk to education in York.

Attached is the booklet presented to York Council Cabinet that adds other perspectives on our argument, especially those of the children and parents affected. We believe the BCC Community and all citizens of York have a right to understand the outcomes of closure and to hold accountable those responsible for it.

To this end we give notice that we request and require, on behalf of the taxpayers of York, that separate and clear account be made of the following:

- Tracking of all children caught in BCC closure so that the results of BCC may be reconstituted as if it had still been open – we require this until the last pupil currently in BCC has completed their GCSEs.
- Clear and separate account of:
 - All Council funding of extension in AHA, including temporary provision of accommodation and any other costs in AHA associated with the influx of BCC children.
 - All costs of closure of the BCC site and Council funding of any community or other services remaining on it.
 - Additional busing costs for children caught by BCC closure.
 - All Council funding of extensions or similar arrangements in any school in York to accommodate rising numbers.
- Full account of class sizes in York secondary schools, by school year.

We give notice that, if necessary, we will submit Freedom of Information Requests asking for this information – If simple procedures for collection of

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this information are put in place now we would not expect provision of it to be unduly onerous.

Good Practice Case Study



The Establishment of a Satellite Class for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties within Burnholme Community College

Case Study completed by: Carmel Appleton.
Advisory Teacher for Complex Needs. Applefields School

Background

In September 2009 formal expressions of interest were sought from interested CYC mainstream secondary schools in developing a partnership with Applefields School to establish satellite provision for a group of secondary aged children with severe / complex needs. The pupils would be on roll of Applefields School with the provision of teaching and support by staff from the staffing establishment of Applefields School. It was expected that these staff would be integrated as partners into the host school's staff community.

Burnholme Community College was one of three schools who expressed an interest in hosting the provision. The satellite provision was successfully established in Burnholme Community College in September 2011.

Overview of Provision

The Satellite Class based at Burnholme Community College offers a supportive inclusive provision for a group of KS3 pupils from Applefields Secondary Special School.

The pupils have a dedicated form base within school and access a range of opportunities.

including:

- inclusion in mainstream groups - a personalised inclusion timetable reflects each pupil's individual strengths and interests.

- the use of the school facilities
- involvement in lunchtime clubs, break times, assemblies
- involvement in special events and 'Option 6' Days.
- participation in the house system

The Satellite Provision is also accessed by Burnholme students who are working well below age related expectations for appropriate parts of their curriculum.

Burnholme Community College supported the establishment of the Provision by:

- Having a welcoming, inclusive and can do attitude. This has been from the entire Burnholme community - Teachers, support staff, admin team and pupils.
- The Senior Leadership Team working in close partnership with the Head Teacher and key staff from Applefields School to plan the provision in Spring / Summer 2011. This involved the Head teacher, Head of Lower School, SENCo, Business Manager, and Assistant Head – Curriculum.
- Providing a spacious well positioned base room. The base is in a central position on the ground floor, near the key stage 3 playground, toilets, disabled toilet and Burnholme Diner.
- Providing access to all school facilities both curricular and extra curricular and access to the mainstream school's ICT network including pupil passwords and internet access.
- Staff contributing to Satellite pupil's Annual Review reports.
- Providing support from mainstream school administration as required.
- Supporting the transition of the satellite pupils in the summer term and start of the autumn term. This included
 - providing a room to host visits as the Satellite Base was being not ready.
 - BCC SENCo and Head supporting parent and pupil visits.

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- Head teacher talking in all Year Assemblies about the planned setting up of the Satellite Base.
 - Organising pupil mentors to support the transition visits.
 - Inclusion in Yr 6 Transition Day activities.
 - Sharing of all school documentation – including ‘Starting Life at Burnholme Community College’ and ‘Staff Handbook’.
 - Involvement in Yr 6/ 7 induction activities e.g. Parent and Pupil Barbecue, visit to Lotherton Hall, Yr 7 Drama Day, School photos.
 - Induction activities for satellite staff in the summer term – meeting with Head teacher and SENCo re school policies, procedures and support available including staff buddying, training on computer network.
 - Opportunity to talk to whole staff group about key information about the satellite pupils at the start of the September Term.
- Involving Satellite pupils all aspects of school life and making them feel a valued part of the Burnholme Community.

Positive Outcomes and Impact of the Establishment of the Provision:

- Greater choice of inclusive provision now available within the City of York. Parents now able to apply to Applefields School and express a preference for their child to be part of the Satellite Provision. This has prompted applications to Applefields from two sets of parents for pupil places in the next academic year. Positive interest from mainstream parents of pupils currently in Yr 6 who see the provision as an asset for their child with SEN.
- Pupils well settled and progressing well in the Satellite Base and very high degree of parental satisfaction with the provision. This is evidenced by assessments held in Satellite Base, pupil annual review reports including pupil and parental contributions.
- Closer working and understanding between staff and pupils of both schools, this is evidence by the working practice

Areas for development to build on good practice in the first year and embed collaborative working between staff of both schools:

- Collaborative work to support the needs of low attaining pupils across the school including curriculum planning, moderation and assessment.
- Extend provision into KS4.
- Provide professional development opportunities for Burnholme Staff to work alongside staff in the Satellite Base.

Keep Burnholme Community Business College Open



Written on behalf of Parents by the BCC Parent's Action Group:
Dawn Leatt, Gary Douglas, Darren Whittaker, Adrian Fisher A.C.M.A.



I have taken this sense of pride with me into the world of work and every day life and take great pride in saying I went to Burnholme school. I feel it would be a massive shame and complete disappointment to people of York and especially the community of Burnholme if this school is closed”

GT – 2001 leaver

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...coming from a low income family they also helped my finances...for my GSCE art exam and made sure that I could always take part in after school activities. Without this I wouldn't have been able to go on to college and study for a futher 3 years and secure my future job.

Stacey Corner 2001 leaver

Why closure would spend £1,263,000 that could otherwise protect services and jobs.

The Authority's paper sets out:

- An option to close Burnholme Community College, and
- A 'Do Nothing' option.

The Closure option shows 'Optimism Bias' - the natural and unconscious tendency to favour the preferred option by underestimating risks, issues and costs involved.

The Do Nothing option looks as if it is the 'Keep Burnholme Open' option, but, it is not - it fails to consider what may be done to improve the school's position should it stay open.

Annex A shows an analysis of the 'closure' option (Annex 7 to the Authority's report) suggesting that costs are understated and that when all is fully accounted...

a 'worst case' cost could be in the region of £2,000,000

...money that would be better spent protecting key services and jobs, including investment in Burnholme.

A real 'Keep Burnholme Open' option, that would make this expenditure on closure unnecessary, is presented below.

There is no escaping significant costs, both moral and financial, from closure of this school.

The closure plan re-arranges education without improving its outcomes and it puts at risk the City's ability to deal with the demands of future growth (see below).



This school offers a high level of education and nurtures those in need of a little extra help. I hope that it is still open in 10years when my little boy starts his secondary education.”

Dr Lisa Marie Ashes – 1994 leaver

Why closure would not improve but adversely affect education standards in the short term.

Burnholme Community College is a small school where every child knows and cares for every other, across all years...

It is with total honesty that I can say that Burnholme was and still is so much more than a school... its a surrogate family to all who pass through it and it will always have a place in the heart of all of us who were once part of the Burnholme family.

The small school community of care, mutual respect and friendship is the secret ingredient in Burnholme and forcing pupils from it will be particularly distressing and demotivating for many.

Breaking up this extraordinary school to leave half its pupils in an empty, dying and dead-end school will damage education standards for those children.

Breaking up this extraordinary school to forcibly bus half its pupils into portacabins in an already big and full school cannot help their educational prospects either.

Cramming unhappy and disaffected children into an already big and full school will not help any child already in that school and the standards of the receiving school must be at risk.

Parents and special needs professionals have expressed real concern for the future of some of the children caught up in this disruption – they will be failed by it and the cost of failure is alternative provision that is 4 times the cost of mainstream, potentially leading to lifelong personal and social costs.

Either the Council makes expensive provision to avert educational failure or it pays for the consequences of it - perhaps for a lifetime. There is no escaping significant costs, social, moral and financial, from closure of this school.



Burnholme has been extremely supportive of many young people with mental health, social and learning problems who have been treated at Lime Trees. Staff have always done their best for the children...and made a huge difference to their futures... The ethos at the school has always been ... caring towards the most vulnerable. I sincerely hope that the planned changes do not go ahead.

Dr Chris Williams Consultant Child Clinical Psychologist

Why closure would fail our most vulnerable children.

A new Special Needs Satellite Class embedded in Burnholme was set up only 6 months ago – it represents many years of diligent planning by SEN specialists: It is a pilot, meant to expand to ever more mentally and physically challenged youngsters – our most vulnerable and needy children.

Though a run away success, closure would see it sit in an empty and dying school, with no expansion plans, and with no idea how or where it will go next! This innovative provision is providing fabulous help to vulnerable and easily damaged children – kids who will not understand or cope well with disruption and whose progress will be adversely affected by these changes.

“The day after closure was announced in school I had my SEN daughter sitting on the sofa, crying her eyes out, and refusing to get into her minibus to school – She kept repeating ‘I can’t go to my school –they are closing it. I like my school’.”

The Satellite is next door to Applefields, with easy access to medical, speech & language therapy, physiotherapy, including specialist after school provision, and there is a constant traffic through the connecting pedestrian gate – a walk-in, walk out access to experts and specialist facilities that is utterly invaluable.

And it is not only the SEN Satellite that benefits. Many parents choose Burnholme because it is a small school that can provide personalised care for their child. Many in Burnholme mainstream struggle with behavioural problems and psychological insecurities and the imminent presence of SEN specialist throughout the school, alongside understanding teachers who know them, means these kids who would otherwise disrupt or quietly fail instead prosper, their issues unnoticed by their peers.

Closure of Burnholme Community College will fail our most vulnerable and needy children: those already in the Satellite and all those who would join it. There is no escaping significant costs, social, moral and financial, from closure of this school.



Send my child to a large school, where he is one of a crowd, and I know he will be disruptive and we will have nothing but trouble with him.

Current Burnholme Parent

Why closure would destroy a chance of creating a flagship SEN and referral provision.

Burnholme can use its small school community to make a unique contribution to quality education in York because:

- Burnholme is able to provide tailored education to children from low income and challenging social settings who would struggle in larger impersonal schools.
- Burnholme already has excellence in stated Special Needs through its Satellite partnership with Applefields that can and should grow.
- A Pupil Referral Unit, with wholly separate entrance, playground and classrooms could be established, with Burnholme as a natural mainstream transition for primary children successfully progressing from referral to mainstream.

Burnholme already deals with SEN and challenged children without impact on its gifted and talented children or the general mainstream. The addition of a separate Pupil Referral Unit would resolve growing and unsustainable pressure on that service, at minimum cost: It would give York a fully integrated Referral, SEN and pastoral care option that is geographically and organisationally integrated with York's SEN and child mental health services.

It would also preserve parental choice for all those needing small school care for their vulnerable child.

Strong interactions between special needs experts in the school and the main school itself are already in place to make this work: The addition of a Pupil Referral Unit would have obvious synergies and would transform the financial viability of the school – both Applefields and PRU having lodger status in facilities provided by the main school.

Closure would cost much more than keeping the school open in the short term: This proposal (allied to steeply rising demand for places – see below) would make a thriving school the cheapest and educationally best option for the long term. Annex B outlines costs and benefits.

Speak with SEN and behavioural experts about the special contribution Burnholme Community College does, and could continue to make before you decide to close this extraordinary educational asset.



In our judgement, based on current evidence and the assumption of an early to medium term return to growth long term provision should be in the range of an annual average of 780-800 dwellings per annum on average.

Population Topic Paper – Arup Consulting July 2011

Why closure would leave the City with no strategic options to cope with rising demand for places.

Primary Schools in York have just received £2m in extra funding because of larger than expected intake – large numbers of children are already on their way towards Secondary education.

York's population is growing at over double the UK rate and, in the next 5 years, is likely to grow by nearly 12,000 - that could mean 1500 to 3000 more children in the City.

York Council's own prediction is that, for the foreseeable future, 800 new houses per annum need to be built if York is to grow and prosper – drawing in yet more new families and Secondary age children. (Arup report to CYC.)

500 new houses are coming on stream directly behind Burnholme, in Derwenthorpe, and another 2,500 must inevitably follow because, as the Arup report also says, currently identified building land will not be sufficient.

There are currently only 800 spare Secondary places, all years, in York schools

The strategic choice is clear at a time of huge uncertainty around future school numbers, either:


1. Run a major risk of ending up with too few places to provide a quality education to York's children.

Or,

2. Keep open a small school to provide places when demand inevitably rises- a school that also delivers unique services to priority communities in York.

Speak with SEN and behavioural experts about the special contribution Burnholme Community College does, and could continue to make before you decide to close this extraordinary educational asset. Look again at your strategy for prosperity and growth and the pent up demand about to break on the City.

Keep Burnholme Community College open.



...we consider that our central scenario of 960 additional jobs per annum to be a realistic figure... growth in the Science City sectors is expected to deliver higher levels of employment creation... These trends are likely to be reflected in migration

Population Topic Paper – Arup Consulting July 2011

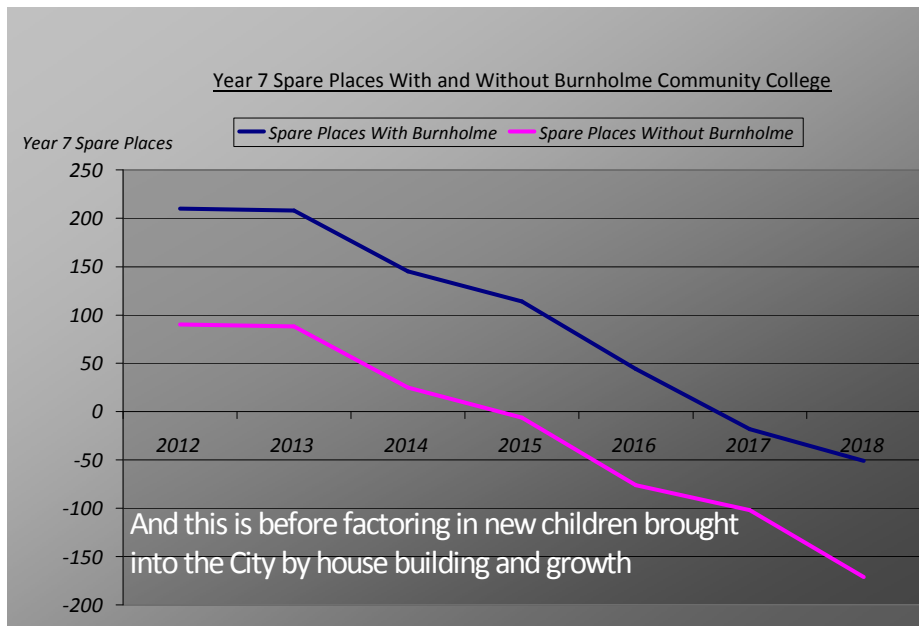
Why closure would close a school that would be viable shortly after its gates are closed.

A small investment to establish a badly needed Pupil referral Unit would significantly help the financial viability of the Burnholme school and site – it would also transform its significance as a principal education asset for York.

But, even without this needed development, Burnholme would likely become self-financing simply because steeply rising demand for places would make it so.

Parental choice now rules and this means that growing demand anywhere in the City, and its environs, puts strain on good schools - when demand outstrips supply (as the above shows it will) allocation of places then falls back on catchment.

Where will the children of Burnholme catchment go when other schools are already over-subscribed? Burnholme places will be needed because demand is set to grow steeply:





The College facilities provide so much for so many people and it is vital to keep them ... I think the college acts as a hub for the community as a whole, and to take it away would be like taking the heart of the community away.”
Ray Tudor – 1995 leaver

Why closure would inevitably lead to the loss of invaluable community facilities in a needy area of the City.

The Council says it wants to preserve the invaluable community facilities provided by the school but this is an unrealistic and forlorn hope if Burnholme Community College closes.

When money is so scarce it will not be possible to maintain evening classes and evening sporting facilities alone - The Council would have to pay considerable sums to keep a predominantly empty and otherwise useless building safe, weather-proof, warm and free from vandalism and dereliction – a totally infeasible proposition without the underpinning of a successful day school. Otherwise it would need to demolish the school and make good the site to just leave evening facilities – a huge cost and no part of plans for closure.

Perhaps the Council is prepared to pay out large sums to keep some sports fields and occasional use classrooms – But that cannot make sense and it would beg the question ‘What price is a strategically important school that serves a needy community?’

Closure of the school will inevitably lead to the loss of very important community facilities, operating in an area of recognised need, and serving the whole City and its surrounding communities.



My experiences at Burnholme have not only changed me as a person but also helped me shape the career that I am in. The relocation of all the children/young adults from the area to other schools would be demoralising to the community.

Paul Buckby – 1996 leaver

Why closure would see an entire community bussed across York and deny parental choice to it.

With Burnholme open almost all children walk or cycle to school.

The nearest secondary school to Burnholme is Archbishop Holgate's Academy but for many this is beyond reasonable walking distance and involves crossing Hull Road for cyclists - so children will need to be driven to school. This is recognised in the closure plan that includes costs of bussing children across York.

Some parents will not have the means to drive their children to AHS and the next nearest school is Huntington that is even further away. This means bussing will have to be a permanent feature after closure with all the costs, traffic problems and sustainability issues this involves.

Bussing an entire community's children to be reluctant part players in another area's school is not provision of quality education for the community at Burnholme.

Such a preposterous idea can only be suggested because it is Tang Hall kids and nobody but Tang Hall cares – Try suggesting it for advantaged areas and imagine the outcry from more articulate, better connected and better organised communities!

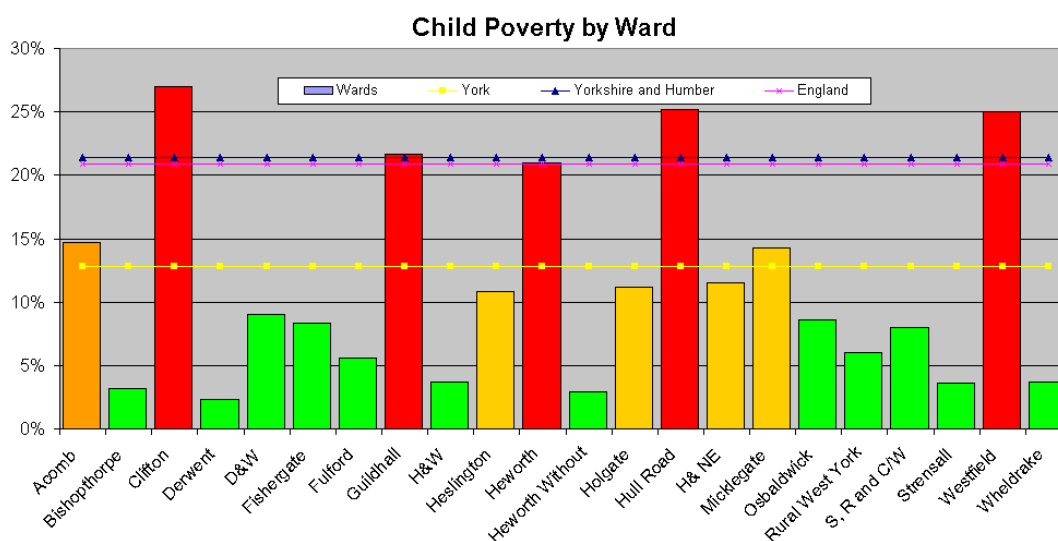
Because of the difficulties of travel across York, parents in Burnholme will have only one practical choice and that will be Archbishop Holgate's School: This is a big school, a faith school and an Academy and there are many parents who do not want to choose any of these options - but they will have no other practical choice .



The best thing though, to come from my time at Burnholme are the people I met at school, a couple of my friends from school are like my family. Our friendships are effortless and Burnholme was our meeting place all those 10 years or so ago on year 6 day and now we sit and watch our children play together.

AG – 2006 leaver

Why closure is against all that the Council stands for



The Council aims to protect the needy from the severity of cuts – no-one in York is more needy than a child growing up in Tang Hall, Hull Road and Heworth (see graph above).

What James Alexander has said:

- “...we are focusing on areas such as employment and skills and family support, and... working to develop a financial inclusion strategy,”
- “with the right interventions and proper support.
- “With that support, people can aspire to achieve and that benefits the whole city, socially and economically.”

What closure would mean:

- **Closing** a Business College focussed on “employment and skills” and “proper support” for people to “aspire to achieve” to the benefit of “the whole city, socially and economically.”
- **Closing** a major community centre offering “right interventions” and invaluable sports, drama and other facilities to the benefit of “the whole city, socially and economically.”



Fast forward 6 years since leaving, and I am preparing to start work as a graduate trainee in assurance (basically accounting!) for a global professional services firm, having recently left Durham University with a first-class honours degree in Maths and Physics.”

LP – 2005 leaver

How to make it work

The Burnholme Plan is working:

Last year the target was 70 and 66 chose Burnholme – a mere 4 pupils down

This year 40 chose Burnholme with 47 second choices – a full school if second choices had ended up in Burnholme.

20 Hempland families (Burnholme’s main feeder Primary) chose Burnholme this year when only 6 did last year, showing parental choice is turning towards Burnholme.

School results improve year on year (see Annex C) and its value added matches the outstanding schools in York – pupils make the same progress in Burnholme as they would in the very best schools in York.

Burnholme isn’t full today for a combination of reasons:

- Burnholme has had only two full years of a 5 year plan to turn around a reputation for failure – Parent opinions have not had fair chance to change.
- Archbishop Holgate’s Academy, due to the extraordinarily low numbers of Year 7 students this year, were able to take all Burnholme catchment applications – something that rising demand and growth in York will soon make impossible (see above) – then where will Burnholme children go?
- Parents were wary of Burnholme because the imminent threat of closure was never lifted – as the current consultation shows.

So,

Invest in Burnholme’s future using the money that would be needed to close it - closure would cost a lot more and leave no options when demand for secondary places grows.

Create a small school provision of unique value in York, focussed on the most needy pupils from a most needy community.

Advertise the success and quality of Burnholme amongst parents and actively promote a school where gifted and not-so-gifted, well-adjusted and not-so-well-adjusted pupils make the best progress they can...



The location of the school also benefitted my friends and I because we all lived nearby and could see each other outside school hours. Again, I look back and can see how beneficial the school was in helping me form lasting friendships as well as a strong local identity. It would be detrimental to the area and its children if future generations aren't offered the opportunity to be taught by attentive staff in a nurturing environment."
Sam Johnson – 2003 leaver

Burnholme Community College

watch a thousand flowers bloom



Educating to the highest standard and building a
community of prosperity and friendship
in Hull Road, Heworth and Tang Hall

The future of any community lies with its children...

Burnholme Community Business College gives our most needy children the skills, confidence and self esteem for a life of work and self-reliant good citizenship.

Stand up for what is right.

Keep Burnholme Community Business College Open



My experiences at Burnholme have not only changed me as a person but also helped me shape the career that I am in. The relocation of all the children/young adults from the area to other schools would be demoralising to the community.

Paul Buckby – 1996 leaver

Annex A – The True Costs of Closure

The closure plan is to keep the full school running for 2 years with half of its pupils remaining in it, to finish GCSEs, while the other half is bussed to Archbishop Holgate's Academy (and perhaps other schools): The full costs of the school will persist while additional costs of closure are incurred on top.

There are a number of costs that seem too low or missing altogether:

We believe that key support staff will also need to be retained and the Authority's costs do not seem to reflect this.

Only £91,000 has been included to cover the costs of teachers who do not transfer effortlessly into jobs elsewhere.

The annual bussing cost appears low.

Decommissioning costs of only £25,000 either betray the fact that there is no real intention to preserve community facilities or the costs are too low.

The report does not include costs for expansion to schools to accommodate growing demand once Burnholme has closed (other than immediate work in Archbishop Holgate's Academy).

Neither does it include the costs of providing PRU and other services that could otherwise be accommodated in Burnholme.

It does not factor in the strong likelihood that some children will be failed by this disruption, requiring costly interventions, possibly including alternative provision.

Paragraph 70 of the main report purports to show how much saving would be made but it assumes that nothing positive is done to change the position of Burnholme if it stays open - it simply projects the current level of subsidy indefinitely into the future.

The council may also be mortgaged to an Academy for the next 25 years.

Annex A – The True Costs of Closure (continued)

The Council's costs of closure to end of 2015/16 are:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Net Annual Additional Cost	151	215	491	406	1,263

This total of £1,263,000 is understated and the timing of expected payments need only change slightly to make the numbers even higher over the next 4 years. Then there is considerable risk around this complex plan that could cause yet more expenditure.

On the other hand, this paper shows that growing pupil numbers, augmented by genuine savings from PRU and Satellite expansion into Burnholme, would see Burnholme providing a net benefit to the Council budget by the end of 2015/16.



...loved every moment of the 5 years I spent there. All of the teachers were great and I always felt like there was someone to help/talk to... achieved triple distinctions in my course at college and now study at the University of York studying a degree in Law.

Matthew Walters – year 2009 leaver

Annex B – The Positive Alternative

Currently the Primary Children's Behaviour Support Unit at Westfield School in Acomb is closed and Primary aged students from there are now at Danesgate with the senior aged students. This is not ideal at all.

By turning the Burnholme reprographic room and Paul Gough's office into toilets (the sewerage pipes are already there) Burnholme could accommodate a large number of primary aged students with behavioural difficulties; They would have an entrance and playground quite separate from Burnholme senior aged students.

By simply blocking off access at the junction with the link corridor, and halfway along the Maths corridor on the first floor, a completely separate and safe teaching area would also be created.

Some reorganisation of room usage could be necessary but certain classes don't require specialist rooms e.g. Maths, Humanities.

The cost of conversion would be in the tens not hundreds of thousands of pounds - a fraction of the extra cost of closing Burnholme.



Burnholme Community College was one of the most important and influential institutions that I have attended. I am now educated to postgraduate level having recently completed an MA in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture at the University of York.

Sam Johnson – 2003 leaver

Annex C – Burnholme’s Results 2011

In 2011 Burnholme was a school witnessing many children boarding buses from outside its own gates to go to other schools. Nevertheless, Burnholme had its best results ever – part of a trend of improvement that is likely to continue with 2012 results set to be even better again:

Of Primary pupils joining Burnholme:

- 28% are below expected educational standards (‘low attainers’).
- 46% are around standard (‘medium attainers’).
- 26% are above standard (‘high attainers’).

For these children, Burnholme achieved the following:

- 98% achieved 5 GCSEs or more, and
- 88% of pupils gained 5 or more at A* to C grade.
- 90% of pupils entering Burnholme as ‘high attainers’ went on to achieve 5 or more A* to C grades, including Maths and English.

The Value Added score is a measure of how much educational progress a pupil makes from joining until leaving a school: Burnholme’s 2011 score shows that it matches the best in York:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| ○ Burnholme Community Business College | 1012 |
| ○ Archbishop Holgate’s Academy | 1012 |
| ○ Canon Lee Community School | 1001 |
| ○ Huntington School | 999 |
| ○ Joseph Rowntree School | 980 |