

Paulton Schools' Expansion

Cllr Liz Hardman

My fellow ward councillor, John Bull and myself would like to represent to the Cabinet some of the concerns felt by Paulton residents regarding the expansion of both schools. Parents do feel the consultation process is being rushed through with a decision already made regardless of what residents think.

Paulton Junior and Infant schools are outstanding so it is understandable that parents are concerned about the effects of expansion on educational standards and opportunities. In order to make sure that these standards are maintained, we would urge B&NES to ensure that it gets the maximum funding available not only from S106 money paid for by the property developers, but also from the Government's Basic Need Capital Funding.

The schools need to expand, not only because of the new housing developments, but because of the increase in the birth rate in Paulton. We support the provision of extra Primary School places in Paulton, because we believe that every Primary age child should have the opportunity to attend school in Paulton, should their parents wish it.

However, many of the concerns are that expansion will cause huge extra problems for traffic and parking. I realise that access to the school site and traffic management issues are part of the planning application process and are separate from the consultation process. However, this is an urgent consideration as B&NES Highway officers have already objected to the proposed enlargement plan for the Infant School. We would therefore ask B&NES to ensure traffic improvement schemes are in place before any enlargement occurs.

We could see new opportunities in the expansion of pupil numbers with an opportunity to resolve the problems of traffic congestion. A new school could be built well away from the present site, if there was enough funding for this. Another idea could be the siting of the Junior School in a different location.

To conclude:

- We would like traffic management schemes in place if the existing schools are to be expanded prior to their expansion.
- We want all Paulton children of Primary age to have the opportunity to attend school in Paulton if they so wish
- We would like to see the maximum funding available for expansion, be it on the same site or on other sites