

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

Executive Forward Plan Reference	E2548
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Determination of statutory notices to Expand Six Primary Schools in Keynsham, Bath, Peasedown St John and Paulton

Date of Meeting	10-Apr-13
The Issue	<i>Determine statutory notices proposing the expansion of Bathampton Primary, Castle Primary, Paulton Infant, Paulton Junior, Peasedown St John Primary and Weston All Saints C of E Primary schools to create additional pupil places</i>
The decision	<p>(1) To APPROVE the proposal to expand Bathampton Primary school;</p> <p>(2) To APPROVE the proposal to expand Castle Primary school;</p> <p>(3) To APPROVE the proposal to expand Peasedown St. John Primary school;</p> <p>(4) To APPROVE the proposal to expand Weston All Saints C of E Primary school; and</p> <p>(5) To APPROVE the proposal to expand Paulton Infant school and Paulton Junior school.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>There is a need for additional school places to be provided to meet existing and projected demand from the local population in these areas due to underlying population growth in general and to new housing development currently under construction so that the Council can meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and for these to be in the area in which they are needed and where the pupils are living. Provision of additional places in these schools will facilitate local families being able to obtain a place for their children at their local school, which will help to strengthen community cohesion and make it viable for as many children as possible to be able to walk or cycle to school from wherever they live in Paulton due to the central location of the schools in the village.</p> <p>Expansion to create more places will help to increase parental choice in these areas of the Authority where the local population is growing and a new family might move into the area and require a school place in year. The schools proposed for expansion have good educational standards with OFSTED ratings of Good or Outstanding and are popular with parents. Creating additional places in these schools with proven good standards will make it possible for more parents to access this high quality education for their children.</p> <p>The schools proposed for expansion are located close to the areas of projected increased population growth and the school sites have sufficient space to allow the expansions to take place. As set out in the agreed School Organisation Plan 2011-2015 it is the Council's policy to expand existing schools where this is possible.</p> <p>The Governing Bodies of the schools proposed for expansion are fully</p>

	<p>engaged with the Local Authority with the expansion proposals process for their school.</p>
<p>Other options considered</p>	<p>To not expand any of the schools and not create any additional places This option was rejected as the Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of sufficient school places in the right area to meet demand and to promote diversity and increase parental choice. Projections of future pupil numbers based on underlying population growth and pupils generated from new housing development and parental preference indicate a future shortfall of primary school places in these areas of the Authority and at these schools if action is not taken to add more places.</p> <p>To continue to use temporary short term solutions to the provision of additional school places This option was rejected as although temporary classrooms and one-off 'bulge' classes have been utilised to good effect in the past to create places in the short term, these are only temporary solutions and do not represent a workable strategy for the provision of additional places in the longer term where permanent solutions are required.</p> <p>To expand other schools rather than the ones named This option which was suggested by some respondents was rejected as the schools chosen represent the most appropriate options for expansion as they have good educational standards, they are popular with parents, the school sites are of a sufficient size to accommodate the expansion and they are located in the areas of projected future demand from new housing and/or underlying population growth, thus enabling the maximum number of children possible to attend their local school and be able to travel to school sustainably. In Paulton, any other schools expanded elsewhere would mean a significant number of families living in the village would have to travel out of the village, taking journeys by car due to the distance, increasing traffic in and around Paulton.</p> <p>To build a new school in Paulton on the Polestar site rather than expand the existing schools This option which was suggested by some respondents and is referred to in the leaflet circulated by the local action group. It was rejected as it would require a new area of land which is not available as the planning application for the development has been determined and the land uses on the site allocated. Sufficient capital has been secured to invest in local services proportionate to the need generated i.e. to expand existing schools but not to build a whole new school which cannot be justified. The children generated by the Barratts development are calculated to gradually displace pupils at the point of first admission to the schools who would have in the past gained a place at Paulton but who do not live in Paulton and who live closer to another school. The children generated by the Bovis Homes development are calculated to generate approximately 88 primary age pupils - less than half of a 210 place school - and therefore a new 210 school on the Polestar site could not be justified or financed.</p> <p>Build a school smaller than 210 places It is Council policy that a new school should be a minimum of 210 places to avoid issues such as the school having to organise on mixed age teaching and managing on a smaller revenue budget.</p>

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Move the existing schools off the current site and opening a new 630 place school on the Polestar site

This would result in families living in some parts of the village, particularly to the south of Paulton, having to travel further to get to school and the likelihood of increased traffic through the centre of the village as a result. The location of the current schools towards the centre of the village represents the most accessible location for the majority of Paulton. This would also mean that a new all through primary school would be provided, not the existing separate Infant and Junior schools.

It is Council policy to expand existing schools where possible in the first instance. The proposed expansion of the Infant and Junior schools will allow sufficient space for pupils generated from the new housing in Paulton to be accommodated plus some additional places to allow for future growth in Paulton and for any additional pupils generated by underlying population growth in the village. No further significant new housing development is planned for Paulton in the future. If the proposed new housing development at Monger Lane on the edge of Midsomer Norton to the south of Paulton was to go ahead, the pupils generated from this development would be accommodated within Midsomer Norton as this development would serve to expand Midsomer Norton to the north rather than Paulton as some have suggested. The proposed development site is closer to schools in Midsomer Norton than to Paulton Infant and Junior schools.

To relocate either Paulton Infant school or Paulton Junior school onto a new site.

This option was rejected as it would require a new area of land which is not available to the Council and would result in difficulties for parents who might have children in both schools who would need to be in two places at the same time when dropping off or picking up their children from school. It would add to traffic movements at peak times in Paulton and could impact negatively on joint working between the two schools.

Declarations of Interest

None

The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision