

STATEMENT ON PAULTON SCHOOLS EXPANSION**Cllr John Bull**

My colleague Liz Hardman and I are aware of considerable concern arising from the consultation initiated at the end of January. There was some criticism by parents of the way in which the actual consultation was carried out but most of the objections concerned the prospective size of the schools (particularly the infants) and the consequences for road safety and access if the schools were expanded on the same site. We would like to make three requests of the BANES Cabinet member to alleviate these fears.

1. We would like a commitment that every Paulton child of primary school age will be able to attend a school in the village. I believe that most of the objections received also took this as given.
2. BANES needs to be sure that it has the maximum funding available to carry out any expansion. Although some of the additional pupil numbers arise from the building on the former Polestar printworks site, some are also due to the rise in the birthrate over the past four years. The Government's Basic Need capital funding is for just this purpose and we ask that BANES secures the maximum amount from this source, supplementing it from its own capital reserve. This may then provide enough money to build on another site in the village and this should be explored. The idea has its downsides ; a new school would need to be a primary , since four separate junior and Infant schools in Paulton would be nonsensical ,and would presumably be single –form entry. We would have some concern about rival schools in an area the size of Paulton , with all the difficulties about deciding admissions policies etc.

One idea that could be considered is moving the Junior school to a new site , with the Infants remaining where they are.

3. Finally , there is an on-going road safety problem that must be addressed, whether numbers expand on the present site or not. The roads around the schools are narrow, with few opportunities for parking , causing congestion and potential road safety hazards at the start and

end of the school day. There is a village traffic scheme drawn up, to be funded from the Polestar s.106 money but this will not be available until a certain number of houses are occupied. We ask BANES to fund this scheme as soon as any school expansion is in place and to supplement it with other measures to ensure children attending the school are safe.

To sum up, we have three requests :

1. Support the principle of all primary age paulton children attending a school in Paulton if their parents wish it.
2. Ensure the maximum funding from all sources is available and explore the possibility pf alternative sites.
3. Bring forward funding to implement traffic management measures round the existing schools.