

As ward councillor for Paulton, I would like to reflect some of the views of residents regarding the proposed expansion of our Primary Schools. Although representations were received from 34 respondents, an e petition of 93 signatories and 102 leaflets delivered to B&NES officers, must also be considered to illustrate the depth of feeling engendered by the proposed expansion. For many, we are at a critical tipping point, with not enough critical mass to support a full new school and a school site where access is too limited for the proposed expansion.

We are all agreed that pupil numbers will rise in the forthcoming years, so clearly additional places are needed. We support the principle that all Paulton children of Primary School age should have the choice of attending school in Paulton, should they so wish. What residents do not want to see is Paulton Schools becoming a hub to attract pupils from other local villages and from nearby housing developments such as Monger Lane, in Midsomer Norton.

Many residents' preferred option would be building a new school in a different location. Both schools' governing bodies in conjunction with B&NES officers have reviewed this alternative and rejected it. Building a new single form entry Primary School on the new housing estate, with the proposed numbers would be costly and would probably lead to mixed age group teaching.

So the site at Paulton Infant and Junior Schools is the option under consideration. The actual site itself at the Infant School where the building will take place and **I'm not meaning the road access**, does lend itself to expansion as no playground space will be lost. It is fairly central to the village. The main problem with it is access.

There are other concerns about falling standards with a much larger intake. However the governing bodies of both schools have assured us that they are capable of adapting and absorbing the increased numbers without compromising educational standards. As a governor of Paulton Infant School for the past 17 years, I do believe them.

The main issue with expansion as outlined by all the representations received, be they on paper, email or leaflet is to do with road safety and increased traffic problems on a site that is already too congested. If this expansion goes ahead as it needs to to offer school places for Paulton children, traffic management solutions must be given top priority. This would include a detailed review of the existing highly congested road conditions around the schools. New school travel plans need to be developed and a robust solution to the highways issue must be in place before the expansion takes place.

To conclude, I support the Governing Bodies of both schools in accepting the principle of expansion, as long as there is a planning application which will provide detailed solutions to the traffic issues