

# Planning Committee - Statement of support from Jo Meloni

2 December 2019

As Headteacher of The Misbourne school I'd like to present reasons why I believe this development should be given the go-ahead without delay.

I could start by mentioning a large number of benefits to this project such as the energy saving from solar panels; increased school places; a newly landscaped area for students to sit and relax in supporting their mental health and wellbeing; larger indoor sporting facilities that will ease pressure during examination periods and more indoor space for practical PE so we do have to re-timetable PE groups into classrooms when the weather is too treacherous to go outside ....

...but instead I will focus on 3 main areas:

1. Firstly, the existing facility is a relatively small sports hall. It has one male and one female changing room, a cramped office and limited storage space. The condition of these facilities is no longer conducive for our students to learn in. It is damp, has an unpleasant odour and is uninspiring to learn and work in. It is of upmost importance that we support young people in leading healthy and active lifestyles, I believe that by investing in these new, larger indoor spaces, we will not only be providing a much improved and inspiring sporting facility, but we would be making an investment in our future.

2. Secondly there is the question of site safety. The proposed plans will vastly improve student, visitor and staff safety. We currently have a road that runs through the heart of the school. This is of particular concern at the end of the day when coaches and taxis arrive driving through the school at the same time as over 1,000 students are leaving class.

This new layout will contain the majority of vehicle movement at the back of the school within a new larger car park and coach drop-off area. Students leaving by foot from the front of the school, will no longer have vehicles to avoid.

Additionally, coaches would no longer be driving through the residential area along Misbourne Drive and are much less likely to be driving through the high street.

3. Finally, these proposals would bring a multi-million-pound investment into the village, a facility in which the community itself would benefit. We already have a strong relationship with a youth football group who would benefit from the improved changing and parking facilities.

With the addition of the performance studio we have further scope to engage local groups. One example is a current project to develop cheerleading in the area, working with other local schools, creating a club that caters for a large group of children from primary school to senior age groups.

The more we can provide activities such as this in the local area, the more the community will benefit. By providing purposeful activities such as this in the evenings, weekends and holidays, our young people, your children and grandchildren will grow up to become well rounded, healthy citizens.

When considering all the potential benefits, not just for our current young people and community groups but for generations to come, I would strongly recommend that you see your way to approve planning permission for this much needed development.