

**EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE
19th March 2013**

Statement from the Portfolio Holder for Education in response to Oral Questions received.

Within the role of the Executive Member responsible for Education my remit with regards to the proposed expansion of a school such as Keston CE Primary is very specific and limited. I must consider only those matters which are directly related to the education of children within the Borough and specifically of those children whose parents have expressed a wish to see them educated at Keston Primary.

Other matters which relate to the expansion of any school which are planning (and traffic) related must be considered by others at a Planning sub-Committee meeting. In the case of Keston Primary that meeting will take place on Thursday next.

There is clear and demonstrable evidence across the Borough of a need for an increase in the numbers of Primary School places, similarly there is evidence that a substantial number of parents living in reasonable proximity to Keston wish to have their children attend Keston Primary for their introductory years in education. It is also clear that Keston Primary has the capacity to expand given its performance, staff capabilities and financial position.

Giving due regard to all of the above I am therefore minded to approve the expansion of Keston Primary School by one form of entry (30 children) commencing September 2013. However I am aware that there are issues that will arise from this decision which I can attempt to mitigate.

In order to allow the necessary time to further investigate options in Educational Planning Areas 5 regarding school placements and to address options regarding access to Keston Primary School, many of in the case of the latter, such as the use of Parking Regulations, which are not in my gift, I intend to expand the School in September 2013 as a one form of entry 'bulge' year-group only, not at this time as a permanent expansion. As previously discussed the temporary expansion commencing in September 2013 is completely justified and necessary.

The Planning sub-Committee meeting on Thursday evening will consider building proposals designed to address the temporary expansion proposed for September 2013 only, (and to a degree the previous temporary 1 FE expansion that occurred in September 2012). Planning Permission is being sought at this time for building works to accommodate this expansion such that works can be completed in good time for the 2013 intake.

Should it prove necessary and desirable to permanently expand Keston Primary School to two forms of entry, further planning permissions would be sought for further modest buildings expansions on the site. Such proposed permission might well include measures both physical and regulatory to address the various concerns expressed by residents regarding access to the School.