

EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE

19<sup>th</sup> March 2013

QUESTIONS TO THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from David Clapham, Chairman, Keston Village Residents' Association**

- Q1 The Councils current UDP Policy C7 permits new or extensions to existing educational establishments provided that they are located so as to maximise access by means of transport other than the car. Given that the Public Transport Accessibility Level is 1a, (very poor) how can expansion be justified?

**Reply:**

*This is a planning issue that should be directed to the Planning Sub-Committee.*

**Supplementary question:**

The consultation process indicated that all aspects of the consultation responses would be reported to Education PDS Committee. Why wasn't it made clear in the consultation process that some issues would not be considered?

**Reply:**

*All aspects of the consultation responses have been considered and have contributed to a proposed amendment to the recommendation of the Education PDS Committee for the Portfolio Holder for Education to agree expansion for an additional 'bulge' year of one form of entry for the academic year 2013/14 in place of the proposed permanent expansion.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Soraya Williams**

- Q1 How can you increase the school size as proposed if in doing so it will be causing parents to have to put their younger children in danger? Parents are having to park in car parks in Commonside, West Common Rd, Baston Rd. There are no pavements, they walk along the road.

**Reply:**

*Health and safety of pupils is a key concern. I am aware that some roads leading to Keston CE Primary School have no pavements but am pleased to note that in the last nine years there have been no accidents involving any children attending Keston CE Primary School. Both parents and the school*

*have a sensible attitude to underpinning safety issues which help keep children safe.*

**Supplementary question:**

Just because there have been no accidents to this date, it does not mean that there will be no accidents in the future, particularly if there is a vast increase in the number of pupils and road users.

**Reply:**

*An increase in the number of pupils and road users does not mean that the level of safe behaviour of parents, pupils and residents will reduce. There is a high quality of teaching in Keston CE Primary School which raises awareness of pupils and their parents around safety issues.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Hilary Ryder**

Q1 The LBB Constitution states the following:-

13.02 Principles of decision making: All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

(a) Proportionality (i.e. the action resulting from the decision will be proportionate to the desired outcome);

Can the portfolio holder explain how he will address the issue of proportionality in reaching his decision in respect of agenda item 7c?

**Reply:**

*In considering the consultation, I am minded to amend the proposed recommendation by agreeing an additional 'bulge' year of one form of entry for the academic year 2013/14 in place of the proposed permanent expansion. I am also minded to revisit these issues at a later date to look more closely at the impact of any permanent expansion of Princes Plain Primary School on the demand for pupil places in the Strategic Planning Area.*

**Supplementary question:**

How will you consult with the neighbourhood if the decision is made for permanent expansion of Keston CE Primary School?

**Reply:**

*The Portfolio Holder for Education will come to his/her conclusion by assessing if there is still a need for additional pupil places in the area and then a new consultation process will be undertaken with all interested parties.*

### **Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Toby Blythe**

Q1 Despite repeated requests during the consultation, no meaningful proposals to deal with the acknowledged and serious traffic issues associated with Keston have been put forward from LBB - Why is this?

**Reply:**

*The serious traffic issues in the area have been looked at and are included in the consultation responses. These issues will be reflected in decision I am minded to make and will be looked at again if any decision is made to move for permanent expansion.*

**Supplementary question:**

Nothing has been put forward regarding serious traffic issues. What measures are being considered?

**Reply:**

*A number of issues are being looked at with a view to mitigating the serious traffic issues identified and the movement of traffic in the area. This could include walking buses, school buses or dedicated pick up points. More radical solutions may also be considered.*

### **Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Charlie May**

Q1 In the face of such overwhelming, obvious and compelling evidence that the location of Keston School makes it inappropriate for expansion how can the Education department still recommend approval of this proposal?

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

A supplementary question was not asked as Charlie May was not present.

### **Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from John Algar**

Q1 With the proposal to double the school intake, who will be taking full responsibility for the safety of the children and residents during peak times in the narrow entrance, Lakes Road and private unadopted Keston Avenue, used as the exit

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

The Education and Care Services Department has proposed Keston CE Primary School be expanded as it is a good school. No concern has been given to the impact on Keston Village and the local residents. If the same consultation is undertaken again with a view to permanent expansion of the school, how will you support the area?

**Reply:**

*Many schools in the Borough could be considered as being located in the wrong place by local residents. The planning aspects of any proposed expansion will be looked at very closely, but the concern of the Portfolio Holder for Education is to look at the local need for pupil places and the capacity of the school to expand.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Michael Ormond**

- Q1 Given the Local Authority accepts “there are no measures that could fully resolve” the significant issues concerning traffic congestion and safety (point 3.8 Consultation Outcomes), how can it be possible to expand the school on educational reasons alone?

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

Can I request the decision for permanent expansion be made after the meeting of Plans Sub Committee No. 3 on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 to avoid predetermination of the planning decision?

**Reply:**

*The decision does not need to be made immediately and can be made after the meeting of Plans Sub Committee No. 3 as appropriate.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Paul Haskey**

- Q1 Hyder Consulting’s traffic survey has only considered the impact of expanding the school to accommodate two bulge classes. How can the LBB report justify extrapolating the conclusions of that report to apply in the case of the much

larger proposed expansion? Is no further consideration of traffic issues intended?

**Reply:**

*I am minded to agree expansion for an additional 'bulge' year of one form of entry for the academic year 2013/14 in place of the proposed permanent expansion. The Planning Sub-Committee will consider traffic issues arising from the expansion in more detail.*

**Supplementary question:**

So will more discussion take place at Plans Sub Committee No. 3 on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013?

**Reply:**

*On the basis of the traffic survey commissioned by the Residents' Association there is no reason not to expand the school.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Vivien Haskey**

Q1 In view of the earlier comments about the viability of single entry primary schools, why is the LBB planning to close Bromley Road Infants School in Beckenham (where there is a 3 form entry infant school) and change it into a single form entry primary school?

**Reply:**

*An exercise has recently been conducted Beckenham around the future need for primary places in the area as several major housing developments are currently underway and are expected to increase demand for school places. Following completion of the exercise it has been concluded that it would be viable for Warren Road Junior School to become a three form of entry primary school with the potential to further expand as needed, and for Bromley Road Infant School to become a one form of entry primary school.*

**Supplementary question:**

Mrs Haskey noted that some one form entry primary schools appeared to be considered viable and queried whether Keston CE Primary School was viable as a one form of entry school.

**Reply:**

*One form of entry primary schools tend to be more vulnerable to staffing changes and can find it difficult to manage financially. The proposal for Bromley Road Infant School to become a one form of entry primary school will be considered in light of these issues and the particular circumstances of the*

*area that indicate that there will be an increased demand for primary school provision in Beckenham.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from David Clapham, Chairman, Keston Village Residents' Association**

Q2. The UDP Policy for Transport T13 says "The Council will normally resist developments that would substantially increase traffic on roads which are not hard paved". 100 cars and parents and children use Keston Avenue now and the Schools expansion will increase this substantially, how can this development be justified?

***Reply:***

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

Can a scatter diagram be provided of where the pupils of Keston CE Primary School live?

***Reply:***

*This can be arranged; however the existing 'bulge' year is atypical in that expansion came at a late stage in the school year. A number of pupils with special educational needs also joined the school at this time to access the specialist support provided.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Hilary Ryder**

Q2 Paragraph 3.7 of the report agenda item 7c States that:- "The responses received and the comments made at the Consultation meeting show a significant level of opposition to the Proposal" - does the Portfolio Holder believe that the significant concerns raised by the local community have been adequately addressed by officers to enable him to make an informed decision?

***Reply:***

*The issues raised by local residents in the consultation have been taken into account but many do not relate to the Education aspects of the proposed expansion of school and are based on traffic and parking concerns.*

**Supplementary question:**

You suggest there could be a radical rethink of access to the school. What is it?

**Reply:**

*Aspects could include reconsideration of the road network in the area so that an 'unofficial' one way system is not needed.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Toby Blythe**

Q2 Knowing that planning consent will be required for expansion and there are serious highways and traffic related issues already, why is it that LA Education Department does not consult with the planning department early to consider planning potential of expansion, saving a lot of time and public cost?

**Reply:**

*The aspects of the legislation and regulations that operate for planning consent and the way the Education and Care Services Department carries out consultations regarding the proposed expansions of schools means that the two areas are kept separate.*

**Supplementary question:**

The two issues are inexplicably linked. Do you not think that to not link the two Departments results in a flawed process?

**Reply:**

*The decision does not need to be made immediately and can be made after the meeting of Plans Sub Committee No. 3 as appropriate.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Charlie May**

Q2 Why does the Education Department not consider the planning aspect of any expansion plans during the consultation process especially when there are such obvious planning issues to consider?

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

A supplementary question was not asked as Charlie May was not present.

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from John Algar**

Q2 How will LBB Highways justify the absence of sight lines exiting the dangerous junction of Keston Avenue into the 30mph plus Heathfield road, visibility splays fail policy.

**Reply:**

*This is a planning issue that should be directed to the Planning Sub-Committee.*

**Supplementary question:**

You have quoted the traffic survey. Are you recommending the permanent expansion of Keston CE Primary School for an education reason?

**Reply:**

*I have looked at all aspects of the two reports which make it clear that expansion of Keston CE Primary School is feasible. There is no case made in either report to preclude expansion of the school.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Michael Ormond**

Q2 The Bailey Partnership commissioned traffic survey from Hyder Consulting UK Ltd has been widely criticised by local residents as factually incorrect and misleading, will the Local Authority investigate this miscarriage before going further with their decision process?

**Reply:**

*The Bailey Partnership traffic survey is a standard survey carried out when any school is seeking expansion. On the basis of the traffic survey carried out on behalf of the Keston Village Residents Association there was no reason identified to preclude the expansion of the school.*

**Supplementary question:**

All the residents are talking about traffic issues but we have been told that only education issues related to the proposed expansion will be considered. Why are the traffic issues reported in the consultation not being addressed?

**Reply:**

*My decision around the proposed expansion of the school must be based on education considerations and cannot be made based on planning and traffic issues.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Paul Haskey**

Q2 The response of the ambulance service is ambiguous and I see no response from the fire service. Is no other consultation intended on this important issue? We would like assurance that all consultations have been conducted on the basis of full expansion of the school (not just two classes).



**Reply:**

*A recent Fire Service survey described access to Keston CE Primary School as 'adequate.'*

**Supplementary question:**

Were the Fire Service made aware of the proposed expansion of the school?

**Reply:**

*The survey was carried out at the request of the Keston Park Residents' Association and the results were looked at in light of the potential expansion of Keston CE Primary School.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from David Clapham, Chairman, Keston Village Residents' Association**

Q3 Keston Avenue has no pavements and the exit onto Heathfield Road has poor, almost non-existent sight lines for drivers. This is dangerous and is diametrically opposed to the sentiments contained within UDP Policy T18. How can the further development of Keston CE School be justified?

**Reply:**

*This is a planning issue that should be directed to the Planning Sub-Committee.*

**Supplementary question:**

Please can you explain why planning issues are being 'bounced' to the meeting of Plans Sub Committee No. 3 on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013, as that planning application is only considering a single storey extension to provide two additional classrooms and not permanent expansion of Keston CE Primary School.

**Reply:**

*I am minded to agree expansion for an additional 'bulge' year of one form of entry for the academic year 2013/14 in place of the proposed permanent expansion. A full consultation will be undertaken if any decision is made to move for permanent expansion at a later date.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Hilary Ryder**

Q3 Why does the report 7c not identify the number of people who signed the petition but did not send in individual objections as objectors in paragraph 3.7 table 2?

**Reply:**

*Petitions are considered separately from the rest of the objections received.*

**Supplementary question:**

If a second consultation is undertaken around permanent expansion in the future is it better for those objecting to the application to put their objections in writing rather than in a petition?

**Reply:**

*Individual action by those objecting to a proposal by writing an objection letter is generally seen as a stronger message than signing a petition.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Toby Blythe**

- Q3 Response to issue 5 states that 'all schools are considered for expansion'. This is misleading because LBB immediately applies 'successful and popular' criteria thus eliminating many schools. Farnborough school however (area 5) is 1FE, more successful, more applications, has better access. Why is Keston ahead of Farnborough for expansion?

**Reply:**

*We have looked particularly at schools with the potential to expand in Strategic Planning Area 5. Keston CE Primary School has been prioritised for expansion over Farnborough Primary School as there is higher demand for pupil places at Keston CE Primary School. This will be revisited at the next meeting of the Primary Place Planning Working Group.*

**Supplementary question:**

That is a different answer than that given to a recent Residents' Association meeting where residents were told that there was no Headteacher support for expansion at Farnborough Primary School.

**Reply:**

*There is strong support for expansion from staff at both schools. However staff support was perceived to be higher at Keston CE Primary School.*

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Charlie May**

- Q3 What happens further down the line if this proposal is approved, when the small village area is overrun daily with school traffic and the situation is genuinely unmanageable. Who will be held responsible for future problems and accidents associated with school traffic?

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

A supplementary question was not asked as Charlie May was not present.

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from John Algar**

- Q3 What steps have been taken to avoid the impact this proposal will have on Keston Village and its residents long term.

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

A supplementary question was not asked as the period of time allocated for questions had expired.

**Oral Question for the Education Portfolio Holder received from Michael Ormond**

- Q3 Given the Council's strategy of "Building a Better Bromley" and their desire "to achieve the status of an Excellent Council", how do they feel they can achieve this if they go against the majority of local residents desire to keep Keston School as a single form entry?

**Reply:**

*A statement in response to the questions received was reported by the Portfolio Holder for Education.*

**Supplementary question:**

A supplementary question was not asked as the period of time allocated for questions had expired.