

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 July 2013

Agenda item: 10

Wards: Borough wide

Subject: Approval of statutory proposal to permanently expand Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Pelham, Poplar and Singlegate Primary Schools

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley

Lead member: Cllr Martin Whelton

Forward Plan reference number: 1266

Contact Officer: Tom Procter – Service Manager, Contracts and School Organisation

Recommendations:

- (a) To approve the proposals for a prescribed alteration to expand Hillcross Primary School from 420 places plus nursery to 630 places plus nursery with a permanent admission number of 90 per year from September 2014 subject to receiving planning permission by 31 December 2013.

That the reason for this decision is to provide basic need school places in the local area and the expansion of Hillcross Primary School provides extra places in an area of demand at a successful and popular school. The council's Head of Education is satisfied that the leadership of the school has the management capacity to continue to raise standards while the school expands.

- (b) To approve the proposals for a prescribed alteration to expand Merton Abbey Primary School from 210 places plus nursery to 420 places plus nursery with a permanent admission number of 60 per year from September 2014 subject to receiving planning permission by 31 December 2013.

That the reason for this decision is to provide basic need school places in the local area and the expansion of Merton Abbey Primary School provides extra places in an area of demand at a successful and popular school. The council's Head of Education is satisfied that the leadership of the school has the management capacity to continue to raise standards while the school expands.

- (c) To approve the proposals for a prescribed alteration to expand Pelham Primary School from 210 places plus nursery to 420 places plus nursery with a permanent admission number of 60 per year from September 2014 subject to receiving planning permission by 31 December 2013.

That the reason for this decision is to provide basic need school places in the local area and the expansion of Pelham Primary School provides extra places in an area of demand at a successful and popular school. The council's Head of

Education is satisfied that the leadership of the school has the management capacity to continue to raise standards while the school expands.

- (d) To approve the proposals for a prescribed alteration to expand Poplar Primary School from 420 places plus nursery to 630 places plus nursery with a permanent admission number of 90 per year from September 2014 subject to receiving planning permission by 31 December 2013.

That the reason for this decision is to provide basic need school places in the local area and the expansion of Poplar Primary School provides extra places in an area of demand at a successful and popular school. The council's Head of Education is satisfied that the leadership of the school has the management capacity to continue to raise standards while the school expands.

- (e) To approve the proposals for a prescribed alteration to expand Singlegate Primary School from 210 places plus nursery to 630 places plus nursery with a permanent admission number of 90 per year from September 2014 subject to receiving planning permission by 31 December 2013.

That the reason for this decision is to provide basic need school places in the local area and the expansion of Singlegate Primary School provides extra places in an area of demand at a successful and popular school. The council's Head of Education is satisfied that the leadership of the school has the management capacity to continue to raise standards while the school expands.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Since 2008/09 the council has needed to implement unprecedented increases in the capacity of primary schools to meet demand. Forecast from the GLA is that this rise will continue to 2016/17 and much of it will then be sustained. As part of the required primary school expansion programme, Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Pelham, Poplar and Singlegate Primary Schools have all provided additional in reception year classes in recent years. It is proposed that the schools will provide permanent additional forms of entry.
- 1.2 The council has been progressing the legal process required for the significant enlargement of the schools. Following the statutory consultation the council has published a statutory notice giving a further four week period for comments and objections to be made prior to final decision.
- 1.3 The statutory notice period expired on 20 June 2013 and it is now for the council to decide whether to agree to the significant enlargement of Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Pelham, Poplar and Singlegate Primary Schools. As statutory decision maker, the council must also state the reason for the decision. The decision must be made within 2 months of the expiry of the statutory notice period, by 20 August 2013.
- 1.4 Sufficient capital resources are approved in the council's Capital Programme for all five expansion schemes.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to secure the provision of sufficient school places for its area. There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children entering school age, fuelled by the number of live births that has risen by approximately 39% in the last ten years.
- 2.2. Following a request from the council, Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Pelham, Poplar and Singlegate Primary Schools have all provided additional places in reception year classes in recent years. It is proposed that the schools will provide permanent additional forms of entry.
- 2.3. The expansion of these schools is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012, 21 additional reception year classes were provided to keep up with rising demand. To ensure classes were only required when absolutely needed this dropped to 18 classes for September 2013, but the GLA population and school roll forecasts, now based on the 2012 census, show a growing demand in reception year until 2016/17, with their standard model showing a peak need of 27 to 28 forms of entry in that year, before a plateau and then very modest fall.
- 2.4. To continue the gradual move up to be 2 forms of entry and 3 forms of entry respectively in each year group in each school, it is necessary to go through a two stage statutory process for the significant enlargement of the schools. Following the first 'statutory consultation stage' the council published a formal statutory proposal on 23 May 2013 to expand the schools.
- 2.5. The consultation section of this report outlines the results of the consultation and statutory notice period and officers' response.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. There is a statutory requirement to provide school places but this could be undertaken by expanding alternative schools or a new school. The schools were chosen as part of the council's school expansion strategy on the basis of the following criteria: educational standards, parental preference, Smaller schools expand where feasible, location, physical constraints of existing school sites, value for money and affordability and diversity including balance of faith and non-faith provision.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

Statutory Consultation

- 4.1. For the statutory consultation the following bodies were consulted, consistent with the requirement for statutory expansions: staff, parents and governors of the schools, all other Merton primary schools and other primary schools within 2 miles of the schools, all Merton secondary schools, Director of Children Services at London Boroughs of Lambeth, Wandsworth, Croydon and Sutton, Southwark diocese, archdiocese of Southwark, Merton Councillors, Trade Union Representatives, and the two LB Merton MPs. Copies were also distributed to public libraries in Merton. The consultation document was also distributed to local residents within close proximity to the school and was available on the LB Merton website

4.2. A statutory notice regarding LB Merton's intention to make prescribed alterations to all five schools was published on 23 May 2013 in the local newspaper, in the local library, advertised on the school gate and on the council's website. As required in the regulations, four weeks were provided for any person to object to or make comments on the proposal. Appendix 1 provides a copy of the statutory notice.

4.3. The details on a school by school basis are below:

Hillcross

4.3 Statutory consultation: The consultation commenced with a consultation paper issued on 25 September 2012 with a closing date of 26 October 2012. A consultation meeting was held on 9 October 2012. Local residents were also invited to discuss issues related to the impact on the neighbourhood.

4.4 26 responses were received to the consultation, 7 from parents/pre-school parents, 13 from local residents, 2 from staff/governors, and 4 where their category was not classified.

4.5 Appendix 3 provides a summary of the responses and minutes of the consultation meeting. In summary, the overwhelming concern raised was increased traffic and parking, and concerns regarding the impact on the school character. In addition, one local school commented that as a small school they should be expanded to meet the need instead.

4.6 Statutory notice: Five responses have been received, four raising concerns regarding traffic and parking, one of which also questioned whether the expansion would provide for local places, and whether it would be detrimental to a good functioning school. One person raised the possible visual and other impact on their rear of the property.

4.7 Officers' response: The school was given an 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted at its last inspection in 2011. The school is over-subscribed even with the extra 'bulge' classes provided since 2011. This is one of the largest primary school sites in the borough with an extensive on site playing field. The council has commissioned transport impact study as part of the planning application process and will implement recommendations from this study. It is therefore recommended that expansion of this popular and successful school should proceed subject to the receipt of planning permission.

Merton Abbey

4.8 Statutory consultation: The consultation commenced with a consultation paper issued on 1 October 2012 with a closing date of 8 November 2012. A consultation meeting was held on 23 October 2012. Local residents were also invited to discuss issues related to the impact on the neighbourhood.

4.9 8 responses were received to the consultation, 2 from parents/pre-school parents, 3 from local residents, 1 from staff/governors, and 2 where their category was not classified.

4.10 Appendix 4 provides a summary of the responses and minutes of the consultation meeting. In summary, the key concern raised was construction

access for the building works, specifically that it should be from Merantun Way rather than adjacent to the school entrance at High Path.

4.11 Statutory notice: No representations were received

4.12 Officers' response: Educational standards:- The school was given a 'Good' rating by Ofsted at its recent inspection in December 2012. This included an 'Outstanding' rating for its effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement. The number of preferences for the school has increased in recent years so 2FE is considered sustainable. The school is one of the last in the Wimbledon that has the physical space to expand and its current permanent 1FE is the smallest size of LB Merton Primary schools. The site size is appropriate for expansion, while noting some of the constraints to a simple expansion. In response to the consultation the council is ensuring the construction access will be from Merantun Way. It is therefore recommended that expansion of this popular and successful school should proceed subject to the receipt of planning permission.

Pelham

4.13 Statutory consultation: The consultation commenced with a consultation paper issued on 6 November 2012 with a closing date of 14 December 2012. A consultation meeting was held on 29 November 2012. Local residents were also invited to discuss issues related to the impact on the neighbourhood.

4.14 35 responses were received to the consultation, 27 from parents/pre-school parents, and 8 from local residents.

4.15 Appendix 5 provides a summary of the responses and minutes of the consultation meeting. In summary, there was support for expansion in a number of responses, especially for parents with pre-school children, but some concerns were raised regarding disruption during the building works, current safety on the highway (for which a petition was raised) and play space for double the number of pupils, and therefore a new school would be preferred.

4.16 Statutory notice: No representations were received

4.17 Officers' response: Pelham was provided with a 'Good' Ofsted rating at its recent inspection in February 2013. In 2013, even with an extra class provided in a temporary capacity the school offered to only just over 400 metres and if it had only been its permanent number of 30 it would have been below 110 metres. The school is only 1FE so the smallest size of LB Merton Primary schools. Expansion has been not preferred previously as it is a constrained site and therefore the scheme is expensive. However, it meets the key criteria and despite extensive such searches for new sites there are no practical alternatives to expanding existing schools within a reasonable timescale. In response to concerns raised in the consultation, a careful design including a linked 3-storey building ensures play areas are protected and improved as much as possible and changed management of lunch and play times will ensure pupils will benefit from sufficient play

space. It is therefore recommended that expansion of this popular and successful school should proceed subject to the receipt of planning permission.

Poplar

- 4.18 Statutory consultation: The consultation commenced with a consultation paper issued on 8 November 2012 with a closing date of 14 December 2012. A consultation meeting was held on 22 November 2012. Local residents were also invited to discuss issues related to the impact on the neighbourhood.
- 4.19 47 responses were received to the consultation, 22 from parents/pre-school parents, 16 from local residents, 6 from staff/governors, and 3 where their category was not classified.
- 4.20 Appendix 6 provides a summary of the responses and minutes of the consultation meeting. In summary, there was support for expansion in a number of responses, but some concerns were raised regarding disruption and safety during the building works and play space for the additional number of pupils. At the same time the council consulted on some of the adjacent recreation ground being an exclusive secure play space for the school during school hours. It was made clear that the expansion of the school was not dependent on this but the majority of people who responded supported this idea. In addition, one local school commented that as a small school they should be expanded to meet the need instead.
- 4.21 Statutory notice: No representations were received
- 4.22 Officers' response: The school was given a 'Good' rating by Ofsted at its last inspection in 2010. The 2012 'Raise on Line' demonstrated pupil achievement continued to be above the national average. In 2012, even with an extra class provided in a temporary capacity the school was over-subscribed and on its permanent admission number experienced a reducing catchment area. Admissions data outlined above shows it will meet demand within the local area so is in the appropriate location to expand. The proposed design will provide a sustainable solution for the school with related accommodation improvements e.g. demolition of poor quality early years accommodation and a new hall. It is therefore recommended that expansion of this popular and successful school should proceed subject to the receipt of planning permission.

Singlegate

- 4.23 Statutory consultation: The consultation commenced with a consultation paper issued on 13 November 2012 with a closing date of 20 December 2012. A consultation meeting was held on 27 November 2012. Local residents were also invited to discuss issues related to the impact on the neighbourhood.
- 4.24 26 responses were received to the consultation, 12 from parents/pre-school parents, 11 from local residents, and 3 where their category was not classified.

- 4.25 Appendix 7 provides a summary of the responses and minutes of the consultation meeting. In summary, there was support for expansion in a number of responses, but some concerns were raised regarding parking and some felt the school would be too large. There was some concern regarding the play space, with a number seeing that the proposed shared area for play with the adjacent park would be a good thing/essential for the school, but others were not supportive.
- 4.26 Statutory notice: Two representations were received. One stated that the expansion cannot come soon enough to ensure the school can provide places to local children. The other from an existing parent raised an objection stating that although expansion to 2FE could be supported, 3FE presented risks for a large school including impacts on remoteness to local community, behaviour management and school-parent communications. They stated that the site was too small and raised concern with security for the shared play area, and an APA should be considered to cover Colliers Wood.
- 4.27 Officers' response: Singlegate was provided with an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating at its last inspection. In 2012 and 2013, even with an extra class provided in a temporary capacity the school offered to a narrow catchment and 90 places per year would enable it to offer to a reasonable distance. The purchase of the adjacent building offers the opportunity for the council to provide 90 places per year at an 'Outstanding School' with the capacity to ensure its high standards are maintained. It is therefore recommended that expansion of this popular and successful school should proceed subject to the receipt of planning permission.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. None of the schemes are yet to receive planning permission for the permanent schemes but temporary arrangements are in place to ensure the required reception year classes in September 2013 will be in place and to ensure the required accommodation will be available for when the schools permanently expand from September 2014.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The capital cost of the schemes and funding was agreed by council as part of the capital programme in March 2013 and the outcome of a bid to the DfE for part of the costs is due shortly, which would reduce the future council borrowing costs to fund the scheme
- 6.2. It is envisaged that additional secondary provision will be required as pupils move through the primary sector. At present the Capital Programme 2014-17 contains £23.7 million for Secondary Expansion. Additional information is currently being collated to formulate proposals for this element of the programme and this will be reported as appropriate..

- 6.3. The revenue impact to operate the larger schools will be funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant, which increases on the basis of additional pupils, although there is a delay in receiving the funding for the additional pupils and it is not retrospective. This is the position whichever school is expanded.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The council has a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that sufficient schools are available for its area.
- 7.2. Proposals for prescribed alterations to schools must be made in accordance with statutory procedures set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and associated regulations and having regard to statutory guidance published by the Secretary of State. Prescribed alterations include the enlargement of the premises of a school which would increase the physical capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and by 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is the lesser).
- 7.3. Under current regulations, the authority is the decision-maker for these proposals. In making its decision, it must have regard to the statutory guidance for decision makers contained in 'Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School or Adding a Sixth Form'. The relevant sections are contained in appendix 2 to this report.
- 7.4. There are four key issues to be considered before considering the merits of the proposals:
- (1) Is all relevant information provided? The full proposals follow the template provided by the DfE and therefore give all the information required by the regulations.
 - (2) Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements? The notices were drafted by the council's legal section to meet all statutory requirements. They have been published in the local paper, at the school site and distributed to public libraries in Merton to meet publication requirements, as well as on the council's website.
 - (3) Have the statutory consultations been carried out prior to the publication of the notice? Details of the consultations, which met the statutory requirements, are included in the full proposals.
 - (4) Are the proposals linked or related to other proposals? Although proposal for the 5 schools were published at the same time as each other to save advertising costs, the proposals were clearly stated as not linked with each other and are not linked with other proposals.
- 7.5. In deciding whether or not statutory proposals should be approved, all proposals must be considered on their individual merits. The Guidance requires consideration of the effect on standards and school improvement, school characteristics, the need for places, funding and land, and any other relevant issues, including the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them. The decision maker should be satisfied that any capital required to implement the proposals will be available. Paragraph 6 above confirms that sufficient funding has been agreed by the council to

fund the scheme. The Decision Maker also needs to be satisfied that the admissions arrangements meet the provisions of the Schools' Admissions Codes. This is the view of officers. All five schools are community schools included in the admission arrangements applying generally to Merton community schools. The school's admissions policies will remain unchanged following expansion with the exception of Poplar Primary School where the additional 30 places only will be on the basis of an Admissions Priority Area. This is as for the 2012/13 extra 30 reception places, which was approved by the Schools Adjudicator.

- 7.6 There is a presumption that proposals for the expansion of popular and successful schools will be approved. There is no single definition of a successful and popular school; this is for the decision maker to decide having regard to the school's performance and the number of applications for places and any other relevant evidence.

The Local Authority feels that all five schools would be considered under the presumption for the expansion of successful and popular schools. All are rated in their last Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding' schools. All are oversubscribed on their current permanent admission numbers.

- 7.7 It is for the council to decide whether or not to approve the proposals. In view of the expenditure to be incurred and the effect on local communities the decision of whether or not to expand the school is a key decision. The regulations require that a decision on the proposals be made within two months of the end of the representations period, or the proposals must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator. There is a duty to implement approved proposals. The governors of the school that is subject to the proposal, the local Church of England Diocese, and the bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese each have the right to appeal against the authority's decision to the Schools Adjudicator. Any such appeal must be made within four weeks of the local authority's decision.

- 7.8 Proposals may be approved conditionally by reference to any of the possible conditions set out in the Regulations. These include the grant of planning permission. The council must set a date by which the condition must be satisfied. As planning permission has not yet been obtained for the work to expand the schools, it is recommended that the proposals are approved on condition that planning permission is obtained by 31 December 2013.

- 7.9 All the proposals relate to community schools and the local authority would therefore have a duty to implement any proposals that are approved.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The expansion of the schools will contribute to the Authority providing access to a local primary school place for all its residents who want one. There are no specific equalities impacts.

9.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 All capital schemes have a financial risk. The schemes are working to affordable capital budgets set on the basis of an estimate from a quantity surveyor. It is therefore expected that the building works will be completed within the described budget.
- 10.2 Health and safety will be considered carefully to ensure there will be a clear separation between pupils, teachers and parents and construction works.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1- Copy of the statutory notice.

Appendix 2- Statutory Guidance – Factors to be Considered by Decision Makers

Appendix 3 - Hillcross Primary School - Copy of consultation document and summary of consultation responses and minutes of public meetings and individual responses to the statutory notice.

Appendix 4 - Merton Abbey Primary School - Copy of consultation document and summary of consultation responses and minutes of public meetings.

Appendix 5 – Pelham Primary School - Copy of consultation document and summary of consultation responses and minutes of public meetings.

Appendix 6 - Poplar Primary School - Copy of consultation document and summary of consultation responses and minutes of public meetings

Appendix 7 - Singlegate Primary School - - Copy of consultation document and summary of consultation responses and minutes of public meetings and individual responses to the statutory notice

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 The full 'prescribed information' detail for the five statutory notice can be viewed on-line on <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm> or by request to Contracts and Schools Organisation at the council civic offices.

APPENDIX 1 – COPY OF PUBLISHED NOTICE

EXPANSION OF HILLCROSS, MERTON ABBEY, PELHAM, POPLAR AND SINGLEGATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that London Borough of Merton intends to make prescribed alterations from 1 September 2014 to:

Hillcross Primary School, community primary school, Ashridge Way, Morden, SM4 4EE;

Merton Abbey Primary School, community primary school, High Path, London, SW19 3HQ;

Pelham Primary School, community primary school, Southey Road, London, SW19 1NU;

Poplar Primary School, community primary school, Poplar Road South, London, SW19 3JZ; and

Singlegate Primary School, community primary school, South Gardens, London, SW19 2NT.

Hillcross Primary School

The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from two forms of entry to three forms of entry.

Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 420 and the proposed capacity will be 630. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 450. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 60 and the proposed admission number will be 90.

Merton Abbey Primary School

The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from one form of entry to two forms of entry.

Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 420. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 245. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 60.

Pelham Primary School

The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from one form of entry to two forms of entry.

Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 420. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 227. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 60.

Poplar Primary School

The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from two forms of entry to three forms of entry.

Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 420 and the proposed capacity will be 630. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 442. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 60 and the proposed admission number will be 90.

Singlegate Primary School

The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from one form of entry to three forms of entry.

Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 630. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 266. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 90

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposals. Copies of the complete proposals can be obtained from: Contracts and School Organisation, London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre Morden SM4 5DX or accessed at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on any of the proposals by sending them to:

Director of Children Schools and Families
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre,
Morden,
SM4 5DX.

Signed: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families
Publication Date: 23 May 2013

Explanatory Notes

The council is making separate (unrelated) proposals to expand Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Pelham, Poplar and Singlegate Primary Schools. Representations can be made on each proposal and each proposal will be considered separately for approval by the council.

The expansions of each school would be implemented gradually by an increase in the size of the reception year. To help to meet the increased demand for places, as an exception the schools have made additional pupil places available in the reception year group in previous years and all of the schools will offer the places for the reception year starting in September 2013 up to the proposed admission number stated in this Notice with the exception of Singlegate Primary School and Poplar Primary School which will offer 60 places for the 2013/14 reception year group. The Council is proposing to increase the admission number permanently for each of the schools from September 2014

Statutory Guidance – Factors to be Considered by Decision Makers (Paragraphs 4.15-4.16)

4.15 Regulation 8 of The Regulations provides that both the LA and schools adjudicator **must** have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when they take a decision on proposals. Paragraphs 4.17 to 4.73 below contain the statutory guidance.

4.16 The following factors **should not** be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of the proposals. All proposals **should** be considered on their individual merits.

EFFECT ON STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A System Shaped by Parents (Paragraphs 4.17-4.18)

4.17 The Government's aim, as set out in the Five Year Strategy for Education and Learners and the Schools White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools For All, is to create a schools system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity. In particular, the Government wishes to see a dynamic system in which:

- weak schools that need to be closed are closed quickly and replaced by new ones where necessary; and
- the best schools are able to expand and spread their ethos and success.

4.18 The EIA 2006 amends the Education Act 1996 to place duties on LAs to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools in their areas. In addition, LAs are under a specific duty to respond to representations from parents about the provision of schools, including requests to establish new schools or make changes to existing schools. The Government's aim is to secure a more diverse and dynamic schools system which is shaped by parents. The Decision Maker **should** take into account the extent to which the proposals are consistent with the new duties on LAs.

Standards (Paragraphs 4.19-4.20)

4.19 The Government wishes to encourage changes to local school provision which will boost standards and opportunities for young people, whilst matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents' needs and wishes.

4.20 Decision Makers **should** be satisfied that proposals for a school expansion will contribute to raising local standards of provision, and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people. They **should** pay particular attention to the effects on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic groups, children from deprived backgrounds and children in care, with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps.

Diversity (Paragraphs 4.21-4.23)

4.21 Decision Makers **should** be satisfied that when proposals lead to children (who attend provision recognised by the LA as being reserved for pupils with special educational needs) being displaced, any alternative provision will meet the statutory SEN improvement test (see paragraphs 4.69-4.72).

4.22 The Government's aim is to transform our school system so that every child receives an excellent education – whatever their background and wherever they live. A vital part of the Government's vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school has a strong ethos and sense of mission and acts as a centre of excellence or specialist provision.

4.23 Decision Makers **should** consider how proposals will contribute to local diversity. They **should** consider the range of schools in the relevant area of the LA and whether the expansion of the school will meet the aspirations of parents, help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

Every Child Matters (Paragraph 4.24)

4.24 The Decision Maker **should** consider how proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with "Every Child Matters" principles which are: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution to the community and society; and achieve economic well-being. This **should** include considering how the school will provide a wide range of extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and applied learning training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs, e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Equal Opportunity Issues (Paragraphs 4.27)

4.27 The Decision Maker **should** consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example, that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. Similarly there needs to be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area, while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

NEED FOR PLACES

Creating Additional Places (Paragraphs 4.28-4.30)

4.28 The Decision Maker **should** consider whether there is a need for the expansion and **should** consider the evidence presented for the expansion such as planned housing development or demand for provision. The Decision Maker **should** take into account not only the existence of spare capacity in neighbouring schools, but also the quality and popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for places in the school proposed for expansion. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less popular or successful schools **should not** in itself prevent the addition of new places.

4.29 Where the school has a religious character, or follows a particular philosophy, the Decision Maker **should** be satisfied that there is satisfactory evidence of sufficient demand for places for the expanded school to be sustainable.

4.30 Where proposals will add to surplus capacity but there is a strong case for approval on parental preference and standards grounds, the presumption **should** be for approval. The LA in these cases will need to consider parallel action to remove the surplus capacity thereby created.

Expansion of Successful and Popular Schools (Paragraph 4.31-4.34)

4.31 The Government is committed to ensuring that every parent can choose an excellent school for their child. We have made clear that the wishes of parents **should** be taken into account in planning and managing school estates. Places **should** be allocated where parents want them, and as such, it **should** be easier for successful and popular primary and secondary schools to grow to meet parental demand. For the purposes of this guidance, the Secretary of State is not proposing any single definition of a successful and popular school. It is for the Decision Maker to decide whether a school is successful and popular, however, the following indicators **should** all be taken into account:

a. the school's performance;

- i. in terms of absolute results in key stage assessments and public examinations;
- ii. by comparison with other schools in similar circumstances (both in the same LA and other LAs);
- iii. in terms of value added;
- iv. in terms of improvement over time in key stage results and public examinations.

b. the numbers of applications for places;

- i. the Decision Maker should also take account of any other relevant evidence put forward by schools.

4.32 The strong presumption is that proposals to expand successful and popular schools **should** be approved. In line with the Government's long standing policy that there **should** be no increase in selection by academic ability, this presumption does not apply to grammar schools or to proposals for the expansion of selective places at partially selective schools.

4.33 The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less popular schools **should not** in itself be sufficient to prevent this expansion, but if appropriate, in the light of local concerns, the Decision Maker **should** ask the LA how they plan to tackle any consequences for other schools. The Decision Maker **should** only turn down proposals for successful and popular schools to expand if there is compelling objective evidence that expansion would have a damaging effect on standards overall in an area, which cannot be avoided by LA action.

4.34 Before approving proposals the Decision Maker **should** confirm that the admission arrangements of schools proposed for expansion fully meet the provisions of the School Admissions Code. Although the Decision Maker may not modify proposed admission arrangements, the proposer **should** be informed that proposals with unsatisfactory admission arrangements are unlikely to be approved, and given the opportunity to revise them in line with the Code of Practice. Where the LA, rather than the governing body, is the admissions authority, we will expect the authority to take action to bring the admission arrangements in to line with the School Admissions Code.

Travel and Accessibility for All (Paragraphs 4.35-4.36)

4.35 In considering proposals for the reorganisation of schools, Decision Makers **should** satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account. Facilities are to be accessible by those concerned, by being located close to those who will use them, and the proposed changes **should not** adversely impact on disadvantaged groups.

4.36 In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker **should** bear in mind that proposals **should not** have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. The EIA 2006 provides extended free transport rights for low income groups – see Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance ref 00373 – 2007BKT-EN at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications. Proposals **should** also be considered on the basis of how they will support and contribute to the LA's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

FUNDING AND LAND

Capital (Paragraphs 4.57-4.59)

4.57 The Decision Maker **should** be satisfied that any land, premises or capital required to implement the proposals will be available. Normally, this will be some form of written confirmation from the source of funding on which the promoters rely (e.g. the LA, DCSF, or LSC). In the case of an LA, this **should** be from an authorised person within the LA, and provide detailed information on the funding, provision of land and premises etc.

4.58 Where proposers are relying on DCSF as a source of capital funding, there can be no assumption that the approval of proposals will trigger the release of capital funds from the Department, unless the Department has previously confirmed in writing that such resources will be available; nor can any allocation 'in principle' be increased. In such circumstances the proposals **should** be rejected, or consideration of them deferred until it is clear that the capital necessary to implement the proposals will be provided.

4.59 Proposals **should not** be approved conditionally upon funding being made available, subject to the following specific exceptions: For proposals being funded under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or through the BSF programme, the Decision Maker **should** be satisfied that funding has been agreed 'in principle', but the proposals **should** be approved conditionally on the entering into of the necessary agreements and the release of funding. A conditional approval will protect proposers

so that they are not under a statutory duty to implement the proposals until the relevant contracts have been signed and/or funding is finally released.

OTHER ISSUES

Views of Interested Parties (Paragraphs 4.73)

4.73 The Decision Maker **should** consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them including: pupils; families of pupils; staff; other schools and colleges; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers; LAs; the LSC (where proposals affect 14-19 provision) and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership if one exists, or any local partnership or group that exists in place of an EYDCP (where proposals affect early years and/or childcare provision). This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period. The Decision Maker **should not** simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the Decision Maker **should** give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

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Hillcross Primary School

Consultation on proposed permanent
expansion of the school from 2FE to
3FE (60 to 90 pupil places per year)

***Responses to be returned by
Friday 26 October 2012***

***Consultation meeting at the school on
Tuesday 9 October 2012:
Parents 6.30pm
Local residents 8.00pm***

What is proposed?

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to meet that need through expanding our best schools and the ones which parents most wish to access.

Hillcross Primary School is currently a two-form entry (2FE) school, admitting up to 60 pupils in two classes per year, providing education for 420 pupils across the School excluding the nursery. As an exception, the school has taken an extra class in reception year in September 2011 and September 2012, accommodated through converting a spare space for a classroom, and a single classroom temporary unit.

The Council wishes to permanently expand the school from September 2013 to be a three-form entry (3FE) school, admitting up to 90 pupils per year in three classes. This will mean it would eventually have up to 630 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but the expansion of the places would be gradual until reaching all year groups in 2017/18.

A drawing of the area showing the location of the proposed additional buildings will be available for discussion at the public consultation meeting and then on the LB Merton website <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Why is the Council proposing a change?

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children reaching school age, fuelled by a birth rate that has risen by 39% in the last eight years. Our population forecasts indicate that demand will continue to rise for at least the next five years and this rise will then be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Hillcross Primary School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012 LB Merton schools have provided for an increase of 21 additional reception classes to ensure sufficient places are provided. A report to the Council's cabinet in February 2012 outlined the extent of the increased demand and the overall strategy to provide the additional places. The report can be accessed on the LB Merton website through the following link:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/w-agendas/w-fpreports/1124.pdf

Hillcross Primary is a popular and successful school. In its recent Ofsted inspection published in April 2011, it was judged to be "Outstanding". The school has filled its temporary 90 reception year places in both September 2011 and 2012. With demand for places forecast to further increase over the next few years the expansion of the school is considered essential for the council to provide sufficient local school places.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

The purpose of this consultation is to allow anyone, and especially parents with an interest, to raise questions or concerns regarding the proposal so that the council can decide whether to publish a formal statutory proposal to expand the school to provide 630 permanent places.

It also forms a consultation with local residents prior to the council submitting a formal planning application in early 2012 for the building works.

Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting has been organised, to be held at Hillcross Primary School, Ashridge Way, Morden, SM4 4EE, on Tuesday 9 October

at 6.30pm for parents to attend to raise any questions, concerns or ideas for the development of Hillcross Primary School and primary education in LB Merton generally

at 8pm for local residents to attend to raise any planning application related matters

Representatives from the council and school will be at both meetings

What is the next stage?

Following this consultation the Authority will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal and to submit a planning application for the building works. During the statutory proposal process there would then be a further four-week period for anyone to raise an objection before the decision maker (normally the Council) makes a formal decision on the proposal.

The consultation will also inform the council for a planning application for the building, should it decide to proceed with the proposal

Please provide comments or on a separate sheet by Friday 26 October 2012

Post to: Contracts and School Organisation, Children, Schools and Families
Department, London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre, London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX

Or: Completed responses can be given by hand to the main office at Hillcross
Primary School, and these will be forwarded to the Council

Alternatively, an electronic version of the response sheet will be available on
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>
Responses can be e-mailed to: schconsult@merton.gov.uk

**Comments on the proposed expansion Hillcross Primary School to
provide 630 places**

(You may continue on a separate sheet)

Are you:

- A parent with a pupil currently at Hillcross Primary School _____
- A parent with pre-school children _____
- A member of Hillcross Primary staff or governor _____
- A local resident (not in one of the above three categories) _____
- Other e.g. representing an institution please state _____

Signed

Date

Responses to be returned by: Friday 26 October 2012

Hillcross Primary School Proposed Expansion Consultation Responses

Responses:

- 8 x Parent & resident**
- 6 x Parent**
- 1 x Parent & pre-school parent**
- 13 x Resident**
- 1 x Parent & Staff or Governor**
- 1 x Staff or Governor**
- 4 x Other**

Parent & resident

1. Strongly object as school is already very big. School will lose family feel and traffic, parking and congestion problems will increase. Change admission criteria so only local children attend.
2. Strongly object due to loss of play space and increased traffic. House values will drop due to parking problems.
3. Strongly opposed as school is already experiencing parking problems. Concerned about school dinner logistics; loss of open space; and changes in schools character and atmosphere. Expand somewhere else or build a new school.
4. Oppose the expansion as traffic congestion and parking is already very heavy. Council should not have sold off school sites for housing estates.
5. Fully appreciate the need for additional places but as a resident don't know how the local area will cope with additional cars. School hall would need to be bigger to avoid an upper and lower school situation. Better toilet facilities etc.
6. Hope school retains its strong leadership to take it through these changes and huge development and to retain its family values. Parents will need reassurances about educational standards and funding. Concerned about current and future parking and traffic issues – these are not just school related – people park irresponsibly at other times too. Need yellow lines and not just on weekdays.
7. Against expansion plans as school will lose its community feel and for safety reasons. Concerned about loss of whole school assemblies, reduced playground space in the winter and increased traffic and parking problems.

8. Asks for parking problems caused by parents to be resolved before expanding the school.

Parent

1. Against expansion due to impact of extra pupils on local community, disruption to pupils (no whole school assemblies / events etc); and question local need. Suggests Hatfield as it has more available open space. What is local authority doing for secondary school provision?
2. Understand and support the need for expansion. Concerned that facilities are expanded accordingly as to the level and quality of staff.
3. Do not wish expansion to go ahead as traffic is already heavy.
4. Prefer school to stay the same. It will lose its 'personal' feel which will be detrimental to the children's wellbeing and education.
5. Extremely concerned that the excellent school standards and fantastic atmosphere will suffer. Local roads cannot cope with any increase in traffic. Need a larger hall for lunchtime. Build a new school instead.
6. Against the proposal. Already seeing the effects of 2 bulge classes with shorter and staggered lunchtimes and the nursery starting earlier to relieve congestion. Outside hard surface play space is insufficient in the winter. Concerned about safety during the construction period and school standards dropping.

Parent & Pre-School Parent

1. Concerned about increased traffic – suggests a lollipop lady. School should be closed during the construction work for safety reasons with a community police officer outside to intervene with traffic problems. Do not want yellow lines on local roads. Staggered start and finish times to alleviate congestion. Extra school funding should be put on outdoor play equipment.

Resident

1. Should not expand as parking is already very busy during school times.
2. Only concern is increased traffic and parents' inconsiderate parking. Yellow lines needed on the corners of all surrounding roads.
3. Do not agree with the expansion as house will be directly effected by the construction noise, dust and strange workers. Parking is already a problem. School should have own parking or there should be residents only parking.

4. Unhappy about the proposal due to increased car parking problems. Have been many near accidents at junction of Ashridge Way and Leamington Ave by parents rushing to the school
5. Will be an upheaval for local residents. Inconsiderate parking by parents will increase. Suggests building on the old playing fields that are not in use.
6. Existing buildings are not designed for additional accommodation so would have to build on the playing field which would have a negative impact on both pupils and neighbouring properties. Also concerned about increased inconsiderate parking by parents. Thinks additional places will go to children living outside the borough.
7. Oppose the proposal. Concerned about the local need and the increased traffic and parking by parents. Larger vehicles including ambulances have difficulty driving along local roads already. Also concerned about construction vehicle access and damage to local road surfaces. Would like similar signs and a designated access route as with the Eastway development.
8. Will there be a car park within the school grounds as there is already a big problem with parents driving to school and inconsiderate parking? How will council deal with this for with increased pupil numbers?
9. Opposed due to traffic and changes of the school outlook.
10. All Merton schools should expand and we should be building in the capacity now whilst materials and labour are cheaper. Opportunity to build a coherent single structure, Think about how to discourage parents using their cars.
11. Object to the proposal unless measures are taken to reduce inconsiderate parking by parents e.g. resident only permits.
12. Concerned only expanding to 630 as seems you are catching up with past increases and not addressing future increases. Better to build now before costs increase.
13. Fully support the right for all children to be educated reasonably close to their home. However concerned about inconsiderate parking by parents and difficulties faced by emergency vehicles in the surrounding narrow roads.

Parent & Staff or Governor

1. Pros and cons to the expansion. Seems natural progression from the bulge class. Concerned about: loss of family/community feeling; financial implications; ICT infrastructure; additional rooms/hall space for interventions, confidential meetings, assistant head, teaching school accommodation,

gym/PE, whole school assemblies, staff room, resource storage etc; on-site car parking.

Staff or Governor

1. Happy with the expansion but questions impact on pupils and whether adequate accommodation and play space can be provided

Other

1. LB Sutton – no comment other than to hope the re-organisation of the primary schools is eminently successful.
2. Central Ward Residents & Sports Club – Asks how the council proposes to deal with the increase in parents driving and confirmation there will be no loss of playing field or open space.
3. Morden Primary Governors – Dismayed Hillcross has been considered for 3FE over Morden becoming 2FE – contrary to previous statements made by the council. Morden has a good Ofsted rating and is oversubscribed. Many advantages to expanding Morden rather than Hillcross including: less traffic congestion, location in regards to bus routes and Morden Town Centre, support from staff, and existing plans for 2FE.
4. Not stated – Following the public consultation meetings questions were left unanswered with regards to impact of additional traffic and inconsiderate parking. Emergency vehicles have problems in the narrow roads. Suggests a drop off point in the school grounds, accessed from Monkleigh Road and exiting into Ashridge Way.

Parents School Expansion Consultation

Held at Hillcross Primary School

On 9 October 2012 at 6.30 pm

Panel

Paul Ballatt (Chair), LB Merton
Rachel Jacobs, Head teacher at Hillcross
Julie Hyam, Chair of governors
Giles Rothwell, Vice Chair of governors
Tom Procter, LB Merton

Rachel Jacobs welcomed everyone to the consultation and introduced Paul Ballatt as the chair of the meeting. Tom Procter presented the criteria for the selection of Hillcross Primary School as an ideal school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the preferred option for expanding Hillcross Primary School.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Rachel Jacobs presented the educational benefits of the proposed expansion for Hillcross Primary School.

Questions/Comments/ Observations

- 1 Will parents have an opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion option?

Answer – The presentation together with the preferred option for the expansion are available on the LB Merton website. Any concerns can also be noted on the feedback form that was distributed to all neighbouring residents and parents. The school can also hold informal feedback meetings with the parents.

2. Is there a possibility of increasing access points during drop of and pick up times? Could you consider making a deal so that parents can park in the nearby car park on Ashridge Way? Or could we have a lollipop lady? Or could the school have staggered times?

Answer- A detailed traffic impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning application process and sustainable measures will be included in the report to mitigate the potential traffic impact. Sustainable travel patterns will be promoted. Interested parties will also be in a position to comment and provide input.

3 When does this consultation period end?

Answer – 26 October 2012

4 How will safe access be managed during the construction works? There will be an increase in staff and children and contractors will also be accessing through one of the entrances. There are only 2 entrances to the school and it has been very difficult when the Monkleigh Road access was closed for a while.

Answer- During the design process the details will be considered in partnership with the school. There will be disruption during the construction period, which will be managed as we have on other school building projects. Some of the best schemes have standing groups that address arising issues in a timely way.

5 Are children going to be moved into temporary classrooms?

Answer- An additional classroom will be required by September 2013. Details will be worked out by using a phased approach.

6 Additional children will have a knock on effect on the day to day running of the school such as school lunches, play times, etc. How will the school manage this?

Answer (Rachel Jacobs) The school has a gym area in addition to the main hall. We already are staggering the lunch times over a 2-hour period. This is really working well and is more efficient than previous lunch times.

7 What will be the educational and physical benefits to the children?

Although the building project is mostly about more accommodation for more pupils there will be some improvement in the quality of the school accommodation, although it would be wrong to say that we will meet every aspiration as the council does have budgetary constraints. Bigger schools have bigger budgets and have greater economies of scale.

8 How long will the construction take?

Answer- It is expected that that there will be a phased completion. The duration of the main phase is expected to be 12 months. Depending on the legal processes the construction works should start during the 2013 summer holidays. The exact timeline will be confirmed once the Contractor has been appointed.

9 How will the safety of the children be ensured? Will there be more teaching staff supplied during the construction to safeguard the children?

Answer- The contractors will be separated from the rest of the school and strict CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks will be in place. For this reason there is no need to provide additional staff during construction.

10 Will there be additional resources for staff after the school has expanded?

Answer- There is a per pupil funding formula so there would be an increase in the budget of the school. Schools are not worse off post expansions, and generally have greater flexibility in their budget with greater economies of scale.

11 I am concerned about the construction close to the nursery.

Answer- The project will be managed in phases to minimise the disturbance to the school so that both entrance are not closed off at the same time. This will be agreed in conjunction with the school.

12 Could a short-term additional entry point during construction be considered?

Answer- Yes, we can consider this

13 There is a car park on Ashridge Way that could be used by the parents.

Answer- Thank you – we will look into this.

15 LB Merton has encouraged school to embrace expansion. Does LB Merton have enough staff resources to maintain the school estate after all the redundancies?

Answer- The day to day maintenance is the responsibility of the school, and most of their funding is pupil led and the new building will have less maintenance requirements compared to an old building. We would not need to spend capital (the responsibility of the council) on the building for many years.

16 Are their stats that expanded schools can maintain their standards post expansion.

Answer- Experience with other school expansions, and any national and international research has shown no correlation between size and pupil achievements.

Rachel Jacobs - The school has an experienced senior leadership. What matters to us is that every child is given an opportunity to be the best they can be. The standards of our reception classes have increased whilst taking in an additional class in September 2011.

Residents School Expansion Consultation

held at Hillcross Primary School

on 9 October 2012 at 8.00 pm

Panel

Paul Ballatt (Chair), LB Merton
Rachel Jacobs, Headteacher at Hillcross
Julie Hyam, Chair of governors
Giles Rothwell, Vice Chair of governors
Tom Procter, LB Merton
Clr Martin Whelton, Cabinet member for Education

Rachel Jacobs welcomed everyone to the consultation and introduced Paul Ballatt as the chair of the meeting. The school requested 2 consultation meetings to be held on the same night. The meeting for the parents would be an opportunity for parents to focus and comment on the educational issues. Residents would be more interested in the impact of the expansion on the community and therefore a separate meeting would be held with them.

Tom Procter presented the criteria for the selection of Hillcross Primary School as an ideal school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the preferred option for expanding Hillcross Primary School.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Rachel Jacobs presented the educational perspective and benefits of the proposed expansion for Hillcross Primary School. The school wants to maintain and further develop itself as a centre of excellence in partnership with all stakeholders, including the community

Questions/Comments/ Observations

- 1 I have been living in this area for 50 years and have a high opinion of the school. What would be the catchment area?

Answer – The admissions policy after special cases is siblings and then nearest to the school. The aim of the expansion is to provide local places for local schools. The vast majority of children live within 1.5 miles to 2 miles of the school and as overall demand for places and the popularity of the school increases it is hoped it will become more local.

2. No new houses have been built in the area over the past 20 years. How is there an increase in children numbers in this area?

Answer- Existing houses have been expanded and extended and more people of child bearing age have moved into Merton. The occupancy rate per dwelling has increased as well. The evidence of the increase in demand is clear by the fact the birth rate in LB Merton has gone up by 39 % despite relatively limited new development. (a local councillor helpfully pointed out that the average age in this ward is now 35 years, which has become a key child bearing age).

- 3 Our main concern is parking. Parents are parking where they shouldn't and it is extremely difficult to get out of the driveway during drop off and pick up times. Parents are parking in the driveways and then get out of their cars to talk to other parents.

Safety aspects are ignored during these times.

The roads are not wide enough. Can we have a tidal flow system?

What measures have been taken in other schools to reduce the traffic impact?

There has been a noticeable increase of traffic problems since the additional pupil intake in September 2012.

I am concerned that the fire engine will not be able to access the site in case of an emergency during these times.

Can they have volunteers as marshals to help with the children?

Can the council put yellow or white lines on the road in these problem areas?

These measures can only legally be enforced.

Answer- A detailed traffic impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning application process and any appropriate sustainable measures will be included in the report to mitigate the potential traffic impact. Sustainable travel patterns will be promoted. Interested parties will also be in a position to comment and provide input. Some schools are successful in developing and implementing sustainable transport measures. The risk of timely arrival of emergency vehicles is part of the transport impact assessment.

Rachel Jacobs - We try to encourage parents and children to walk to school. About 75% of our children do walk to school with their parents. We do have regular such requests in our newspaper. The school cannot enforce the measures and would want to look together with residents on how mitigation measures can be achieved.

- 4 Can you not reduce the catchment area for Hillcross, as 1.5 to 2 miles are too wide? You will create traffic chaos if the catchment area increased.

There is no actual “catchment area” but the most popular schools in a residential area will provide for the most local children. As the school becomes more popular the expectation is that the catchment will decrease. It is expected that the demand in the local catchment area will increase.

- 5 What about construction vehicles that will arrive at the same time as the parents? This would create further traffic problems.

Answer- The contractor will not be able to start until 8 am in the morning to reduce disturbance to residents, in accordance with planning requirements. We will seek to ensure that there is no movement of contractor vehicles at parental drop off times e.g. between 8.30 and 9.15am in the morning

- 6 Will walking busses and staggered times be considered?

Answer - Rachel Jacobs – Yes, the school will consider this

- 7 How will the community benefit from the expansion?

Answer - Many schools are offering the use of a multi-functional area in the school as a community resource. Schools need to make these decisions.

Rachel Jacobs - We would be talking to local community providers where access to the school building is required. We are working closely with a number of community providers such as Merton Sports Partnership who uses our sports field on a regular basis.

- 8 What impact will expanding Hillcross have on neighbouring schools that are currently small?

Answer- Expansions are only considered where there is an actual or forecast lack of supply of school places compared to demand. We will only be meeting the demand and not create additional empty places.

- 9 Will there be any floodlights on the field?

Answer- No.

- 10 Do we know what the buildings will look like?

Answer- There will be a double storey extension but no decision has been made on what the building will look like yet.

- 11 More teachers will be travelling to the school because this is a teaching school. The school will therefore become more popular and bring more children.

Answer- Rachel Jacobs- The teaching school will train teachers and not children. A lot of training would take place away from the school and at the University of Roehampton.

- 12 Are you increasing the teachers’ car park area?

Answer- No

13 Are there regulations that dictate how/where the children should be picked up?

Answer- The schools are responsible to regulate parents behaviour.
There are no such regulations.

Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet member for Education closed the meeting
with some concluding comments

From:
Sent: 07 June 2013 11:56
To: SchConsult
Subject: Proposed expansion of Hillcross Primary School

Dear Sir

Thank you for the notice dropped through the post this morning on the above. We did attend the open meeting in the school some weeks ago, so are aware of the scheme.

As we back onto the school, our main concern is visual and other impact from the rear of our property, in particular our garden. As such, what is key to giving any feedback is some form of sketch, if formal plans are not available, of what the proposed extensions will look like. Presumably these are available, given that initial planning permission has been granted?

Could you please advice on how or where we can view some visualisations/plans of the proposed extension - ideally on-line?

Many thanks and kind regards.

From:
Sent: 17 June 2013 20:26
To: SchConsult
Subject: Expansion of Hillcross school

Further to your recent letter drop I would like to register my opposition to the needless expansion of the school and raise the following points;

1. The traffic is already bad in the morning and afternoon when the school opens and closes and will be made a great deal worse by the expansion. Your Merton website states that the intake will be up to 2 miles in radius . I doubt that many of the kids will be walking to school from this sort of distance.
2. Contrary to the Merton website, places do not always go to local residents. If being local is considered 1.5-2 miles radius. How was this not deemed local when I tried to gain a place at Secondary school for my children. It is either local or not and Merton Council need to stop twisting words and start being consistent in what the term local actually means.
3. The Merton Council website states that it is due to increase in child birth rates that have caused the need for the expansion, it fails to mention the effect that uncontrolled immigration has had on the surge in school places.
4. Hillcross is an example of a good functioning school and the expansion would be detrimental to the school, pupils and the surrounding residents.

Regards,

Marina Bowyer

From:
Sent: 18 June 2013 14:22
To: SchConsult
Subject: Hillcross Primary school

Hello,

i am writing to you to enquire about the parking situation on Ashridge Way and how it will be affected or improved under the new expansion plans?

At the moment its a constant battle with parents parking across driveways and stopping in the middle of the road blocking the service entrance to the ashridge club and residents garages. Also the delivery trucks to the club can not turn up the entrance.

My suggestion would be to make 150 meters either side of the school and in front of the school on Ashridge way double yellow/zigzag.

Therefor pupils and parents with buggys can cross safely to the school entrance without playing cat and mouse behind parked cars.t

As it is, the condtions are a pain and will only get worse with the expansion. I really hope you have looked or will look into resolving this problem before the expansion is started as the school are unable to resolve this matter as its not on school property.

My main annoyance is that parents block my driveway so i an unable to enter or leave my driveway until they get back.

Kind regards,

From:
Sent: 18 June 2013 19:51
To: SchConsult
Subject: Propose expansion of Hillcross Primary School

I oppose to the expansion because:

1. There will be more traffic on Monkleigh and Ashridge Way
2. Residents will have problems with parents parking on my driveway
3. Consultation is only a process it seems we as residents will not be heard as this is going ahead.

From:
Sent: 19 June 2013 21:18
To: SchConsult
Subject: Expansion of Hillcross

Dear Sir/ Madam

HILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSION

I appreciate the need for expansion of Primary Schools in the Borough but I feel there is a need to address the Parking issues in Ashridge Way. Parents park both side of this narrow road three times a day and at these times it is impossible for Refuse Collection vehicles or large delivery vehicles to get through but just sit in their vehicles sounding their horns or come knocking on your door asking if you know who owns the vehicles but my main concern it would be impossible for an Emergency Service vehicle to get through where time is often critical.

Parents do not seem to care where they park and often park across the drives blocking access in or out plus there has been several instances of them actually parking on peoples drives. When you do try to get out you have to come out blind and it causes great difficulty to turn with cars parked both sides in this narrow road. This situation can only get worse with a 50% increase in Pupils, I appreciate this doesn't mean a 50% increase in traffic as no doubt some will have siblings already at the school. However, this does mean an increase in staff and already there are a few members of staff who park in the road all day.

We do also experience problems with parking on Sunday mornings, especially if it is a Festival with people attending the church adjacent to the Endeavour Club.

Hoping you take the residents concern regarding the increased Parking and traffic into consideration, in particular the effect on Ashridge Way.

MERTON COUNCIL

Merton Abbey Primary School

Consultation on proposed permanent
expansion of the school from 1FE to
2FE (30 to 60 pupil places per year)

***Responses to be returned by
Thursday 8 November 2012***

***Consultation meeting at the school on
Tuesday 23 October 2012 at 9am***

What is proposed?

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to meet that need through expanding our best schools and the ones which parents most wish to access.

Merton Abbey Primary School is currently a one-form entry (1FE) school, admitting up to 30 pupils in one class per year, providing education for 210 pupils across the School excluding the nursery. As an exception, the school has taken an extra class in reception year in September 2011 and September 2012, accommodated through a two-classroom temporary unit.

The Council wishes to permanently expand the school from September 2013 to be a two-form entry (2FE) school, admitting up to 60 pupils per year in two classes. This will mean it would eventually have up to 420 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but the expansion of the places would be gradual until reaching all year groups in 2017/18.

A drawing of the area showing the location of the proposed additional buildings will be available for discussion at the public consultation meeting and then on the LB Merton website <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Why is the Council proposing a change?

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children reaching school age, fuelled by a 39% increase in the number of births in the last eight years. Our population forecasts indicate that demand will continue to rise for at least the next five years and this rise will then be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Merton Abbey Primary School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012 LB Merton schools have provided for an increase of 21 additional reception classes to ensure sufficient places are provided. A report to the Council's cabinet in February 2012 outlined the extent of the increased demand and the overall strategy to provide the additional places. The report can be accessed on the LB Merton website through the following link:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/w-agendas/w-fpreports/1124.pdf

Merton Abbey Primary has largely filled its temporary 60 reception year places in both September 2011 and 2012. With demand for places forecast to further increase over the next few years the expansion of the school is considered essential for the council to provide sufficient local school places.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

The purpose of this consultation is to allow anyone, and especially parents with an interest, to raise questions or concerns regarding the proposal so that the council can decide whether to publish a formal statutory proposal to expand the school to provide 420 permanent places.

It also forms a consultation with local residents prior to the council submitting a formal planning application in early 2013 for the building works.

Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting has been organised, to be held at Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path, SW19 2JY on Tuesday 23 October at 9am

Representatives from the council and school will be at this meeting.

What is the next stage?

Following this consultation the Authority will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal and to submit a planning application for the building works. During the statutory proposal process there would then be a further four-week period for anyone to raise an objection before the decision maker (normally the Council) makes a formal decision on the proposal.

The consultation will also inform the council for a planning application for the building, should it decide to proceed with the proposal

Please provide comments or on a separate sheet by Thursday 8 November 2012

Post to: Contracts and School Organisation, Children, Schools and Families Department, London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

Or: Completed responses can be given by hand to the main office at Merton Abbey Primary School, and these will be forwarded to the Council

Alternatively, an electronic version of the response sheet will be available on <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>
Responses can be e-mailed to: schconsult@merton.gov.uk

Comments on the proposed expansion Merton Abbey Primary School to provide 420 places

(You may continue on a separate sheet)

Are you:

A parent with a pupil currently at Merton Abbey Primary School	___
A parent with pre-school children	___
A member of Merton Abbey Primary staff or governor	___
A local resident (not in one of the above three categories)	___
Other e.g. representing an institution please state	___

Signed

Date

Responses to be returned by: Thursday 8 November 2012

Merton Abbey Primary School Proposed Expansion Consultation Responses

Responses: 3 x Residents
 1 x Parent
 1 x Parent & resident
 1 x Parent & staff or governor
 2 x Other

Resident

1. All Merton schools should expand now and include capacity for future growth whilst labour and materials are cheaper. Need to discourage parents from using cars for the school run.
2. Concerned about construction vehicle access, particularly children's safety if they drive across the field from High Path. Agree a 2-storey building should be erected in a safe and convenient position
3. Only concern is parking – already at capacity and residents have to pay.

Parent

1. Great idea as population is increasing. However not sure where expansion would take place as current classrooms are quite small.

Parent & Resident

1. No issues concerning construction but following points should be observed: temporary construction vehicle entrance from Meratun Way (school should petition for this); a new pedestrian crossing on High Path before construction begins; consider special provisions for children with SENs or School Action Plans as 2 current schools (Cricket Green & West Wimbledon) are oversubscribed; no room in current school for additional Y2 class in September 2013. Suggest moving Childrens Centre into High Path Community centre and using this instead.

Parent & Staff or Governor

1. Was happy when school took bulge classes in 2011 and 2012. Content with full expansion and understand the necessity of it.

Other

1. SS Peter & Paul Primary School – In agreement with the expansion.
2. LB Sutton – no comment at this stage but hope the re-organisation of the primary schools is eminently successful.

Parents & residents School Expansion Consultation

held at Merton Abbey Primary School

on 23 October 2012 at 9.00 am

Panel

Paul Ballatt (Chair), LB Merton
Stella Fry, Headteacher at Hillcross
Tom Procter, LB Merton

Stella Fry welcomed everyone to the consultation and introduced Paul Ballatt as the chair of the meeting.

Tom Procter presented the criteria for the selection of Merton Abbey Primary School as a priority school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the proposed building plans.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Stella Fry presented the educational perspective and benefits of the proposed expansion for Merton Abbey Primary School. She outlined the positive aspects of the expansion and stated that Merton Abbey is a popular community school that people want to get their children into.

Questions/Comments/ Observations

1. How long will it take to complete the expansion?

Answer – the construction time is expected to be one year on site from Summer 2013. The council is committed to minimising disruption during construction by adopting a phased approach to ensure the school remains operational. Part of the reason for the location of the proposed new building is to keep disruption to an absolute minimum. The design of the new school will be an ongoing relationship between the local authority, the school and the local community. A building project will also provide an exciting learning opportunity for the children.

2. Health and Safety is a real concern on building projects. How will the local authority avoid issues that building work cause problems in a highly residential area? Where will construction access come from?

Answer- The contractor will provide a traffic management plan that will set out how deliveries will access and egress to and from the site. The contractor will appoint banks men to ensure that all deliveries enter and exit the site safely.

Answer – A number of options are being considered for construction access. One option could be via the field – there will be minimum impact on existing play space.

We will also look at access from Merantun Way. It is a TfL road, a meeting has been arranged by Merton's Transport Officers to persuade TfL for construction access via Merantun Way. However we cannot guarantee at this stage that access will be granted.

3 Can a petition be organised by the school?

Answer- If discussions with TfL are not successful it could help in presenting a stronger case to TfL, but it is suggested initial discussions take place first.

4 Have Merton conducted any studies that demonstrate the effect on pupil's final year results from expansion schemes?

Answer – We have looked at this for our previous expansions and there is no correlation between lower attainment statistics and building works. In fact some of the schools we have expanded to date have shown an improvement in results: For example, Wimbledon Chase has gone from good to outstanding Ofsted and Holy Trinity showed the greatest improvement in Key Stage 2 SATs during their building works. The key factor for attainment is good leadership. A school increasing in size provides financial benefits and benefits specialist teaching.

5 If birth rates are increasing, does that mean that the school will expand again in the future? Can Merton provide some assurance that the school's fields will not be taken up by further development?

Answer- There are no plans to make Merton Abbey a 3 FE school.

6 Are we looking for a new site in Merton for a Primary School?

Answer- Merton has commissioned a report that looked at possible areas for a new school in the Wimbledon area. This report will be made available in due course.

7 What is the school's current budget and what will it be after expansion?

Answer- Exact budget projection figures can be provided, but the school's funding is mostly driven by pupil number on roll so the budget will increase substantial. The funding per child is greater than the pure cost of a teacher for 30 children, hence the school should also be able to add management capacity.

8 Have we considered additional parking that will be required as a result of expanding the school – where will this be sited? It is already squeezed and very congested.

Answer – We accept that there are concerns over travel, traffic, congestion and parking. We work with schools on producing effective travel plans. The overall policy is to reduce the traffic and on site parking as Merton Abbey is a local school serving the local community. Part of the works will review the school's existing car park including vehicle and pedestrian entry and exits. We will also commission a traffic impact assessment that will assess current traffic issues and the potential impact on traffic and parking as a result of the expansion.

9 How many Primary Schools out of the 43 have we expanded?

Answer - we were up to 21 forms of entry in reception year as of September 2012, compared to July 2008. This includes Merton Abbey. Currently projections are that we will need to expand to 25 forms of entry.

10 Has the Council considered going back to a 3-tier system?

Answer - the 3-tier system was proven to be unsuccessful, especially as it does not lend itself to key stages of educational learning, and it allowed parents to choose secondary schools outside the borough a year before Merton's secondary school transfer.

11 With the increase in the number of children attending Merton Abbey, what provision will be made for an SEN unit?

Answer – Merton has a strong inclusion policy. There are already a number of Additional Resource Provision bases (ARP bases) in schools across the borough. There are no plans for an ARP base at Merton Abbey.

12 When will we see elevations for the new build?

Answer - the design of the new building has not been sufficiently progressed at this stage. The architects are currently developing the new design with the school. We should have something in the public domain just after Christmas. The school are very keen to retain the windows at the back of the building as a feature.

13 Do we instruct an architect to develop a contemporary design or a traditional design?

Answer – we have to take into account a number of planning policy guidelines when developing a design. We will listen to all stakeholders in developing a design.

14 Access in and out of the school is a real health and safety concern for many parents. Can the Council consider putting in some further traffic calming measures such as a traffic crossing? There is also a cycle path on High Path that allows cyclists to cycle in the opposite direction to vehicles – this already causes no end of confrontation with cyclists, drivers and pedestrians, as it is not clear who has right of way. Its not about incidents occurring as we've only

had 2 accidents in the last 6 years – it's more about the potential for incidents / accidents to occur during construction.

As part of the traffic survey work referred to earlier we will look at this.

- 15 Has the Council considered using other spaces for the expansion of Merton Abbey such as the Sure Start Children's Centre and other community buildings in the surrounding area (the Day Centre)? Could we not create a drive through for drop off and pick up? How much is the local church community hall used? Can usage be changed and activities relocated elsewhere as was the case with All Saints School.

Answer - we understand these buildings are currently being well used but we can review this.

Pelham Primary School

Consultation on proposed permanent expansion of the school from 1FE to 2FE (30 to 60 pupil places per year)

***Responses to be returned by
Friday 14 December 2012***

***Consultation meeting at the school on
Thursday 29 November 2012 at 7pm***

What is proposed?

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to meet that need through expanding our best schools and the ones which parents most wish to access.

Pelham Primary School is currently a one-form entry (1FE) school, admitting up to 30 pupils in one class per year, providing education for 210 pupils across the School excluding the nursery. As an exception, the school has taken an extra class in reception year in September 2012, accommodated within the existing school building. The school will also provide an additional class in September 2013.

The Council wishes to permanently expand the school from September 2014 to be a two-form entry (2FE) school, admitting up to 60 pupils per year in two classes. This will mean it would eventually have up to 420 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but the expansion of the places would be gradual until reaching all year groups in 2018/19.

A drawing of the area showing the location of the proposed additional buildings will be available for discussion at the public consultation meeting and then on the LB Merton website <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Why is the Council proposing a change?

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children reaching school age, fuelled by a 39% increase in the number of births in the last eight years. Our population forecasts indicate that demand will continue to rise for at least the next five years and this rise will then be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Pelham Primary School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012 LB Merton schools have provided for an increase of 21 additional reception classes to ensure sufficient places are provided. A report to the Council's cabinet in February 2012 outlined the extent of the increased demand and the overall strategy to provide the additional places. The report can be accessed on the LB Merton website through the following link: http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/w-agendas/w-fpreports/1124.pdf

Pelham Primary is a popular and successful school. The school's interim assessment from Ofsted in April 2011 confirmed that it is a good school. The school has filled its temporary 60 reception year places in 2012 and still has a waiting list. With demand for places forecast to further increase over the next few years the expansion of the school is considered essential for the council to provide sufficient local school places.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

The purpose of this consultation is to allow anyone, and especially parents with an interest, to raise questions or concerns regarding the proposal so that the council can decide whether to publish a formal statutory proposal to expand the school to provide 420 permanent places.

It also forms a consultation with local residents prior to the council submitting a formal planning application in early 2013 for the building works.

Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting has been organised, to be held at Pelham Primary School, Southey Road, London, SW19 1NU on Thursday 29 November at 7pm

Representatives from the council and school will be at this meeting.

What is the next stage?

Following this consultation the Authority will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal and to submit a planning application for the building works. During the statutory proposal process there would then be a further four-week period for anyone to raise an objection before the decision maker (normally the Council) makes a formal decision on the proposal.

The consultation will also inform the council for a planning application for the building, should it decide to proceed with the proposal

Please provide comments or on a separate sheet by Friday 14 December 2012

Post to: Contracts and School Organisation, Children, Schools and Families
Department, London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre, London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX

Or: Completed responses can be given by hand to the main office at Pelham Primary
School, Southey Road, Wimbledon, SW19 1NU and these will be forwarded to the
Council

Alternatively, an electronic version of the response sheet will be available on
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>
Responses can be e-mailed to: schconsult@merton.gov.uk

**Comments on the proposed expansion Pelham Primary School to
provide 420 places**

(You may continue on a separate sheet)

Are you:

- A parent with a pupil currently at Pelham Primary School _____
- A parent with pre-school children _____
- A member of Pelham Primary staff or governor _____
- A local resident (not in one of the above three categories) _____
- Other e.g. representing an institution please state _____

Signed

Date

Responses to be returned by: Friday 14 December 2012

Pelham Primary School Proposed Expansion Consultation Responses

December 2012

Responses	Parent	15
	Resident	8
	Pre-school parent	11
	Parent & resident	1

Parent

1. Concerned about lack of quality outdoor space.
2. Strongly disagree due to size of site and disruption to pupils from the construction work. Suggests expanding other schools which are next to ample space (e.g. Dundonald) or a new school.
3. Strongly disagree due to size of site and disruption to pupils from the construction work. Suggests building a new school or expanding other schools which are next to ample space.
4. Welcome the expansion as it is important for children to go to a local school
5. Really good for the children as long as there is a good teaching team.
6. Before a decision is made asks that the local authority works out with the governors regarding the logistics of staggered lunchtimes and the school functioning during the construction period. Prioritise needs of pupils and staff with regard to safety and educational standards.
7. Plans look OK but concerned about adequate hall space, library space and breakfast/after school clubs. Good to see most of outdoor play space is preserved (although double the children).
8. Prefer a new school to be built in Wimbledon. Concerned about: loss of intimate nature of school; size of outdoor play space; pressure on existing facilities; and disruption from the construction work. Asks: why not chose poorer performing schools with more space for expansion; what is plan B; what research is there to review impact on standards following expansion; and what about the new school site identified by the Conservatives in 2010?
9. Applaud the efforts to expand the school, however are concerned about the welfare and education standards of existing pupils. Overall design comments include: surrender of the staff car park (and staff 'parking permits' issued); and the re-design of playground entrance to ensure safety of pupils at the end of the day. Asks about logistics of the school operating during the construction

work (e.g. no kitchen?) and will there be adequate outdoor play space after the expansion?

10. Concerned about: disruption to pupils welfare and educational standards; lack of outdoor play space (especially during the construction work); logistics of serving lunch; inadequate staff car park (and possible surrender of it); overcrowding at school gate at home time; and general safety of pupils. More detailed designs are needed. Asks why not move the Fire Station along the road and then use this area. Cheaper to build a new school than do a 'bodge' job.
11. Prefer a new school to be built in Wimbledon. Concerned about: loss of intimate nature of school; size of outdoor play space; pressure on existing facilities; and disruption from the construction work. Asks: why not chose poorer performing schools with more space for expansion; what is plan B; what research is there to review impact on standards following expansion; and what about the new school site identified by the Conservatives in 2010?
12. Concerned about the welfare and education standards of existing pupils. Overall design comments include: surrender of the staff car park (and staff 'parking permits' issued); and the re-design of playground entrance to ensure safety of pupils at the end of the day. Asks about logistics of the school operating during the construction work (e.g. no kitchen?) and will there be adequate outdoor play space after the expansion?
13. Concerned about overcrowding at the gates and Southey Road; road safety and adequate outdoor play space. Suggests an entrance from Kingston Road; traffic calming; wider pavements; extending above current building to minimise footprint; moving kitchen to end of the hall ; off-site pre-construction; and re-greening to make up for loss.
14. Expansion within current perimeters is lunacy. Concerned about overcrowding; drops in educational standards; and health and safety. Should only be done with additional Fire Station land.
15. Opposed to the expansion due to insufficient outside playing space; build disruption; build safety; logistics of running a larger school; road safety; changing nature of school; vacancies from Year 2 upwards; and previous assurances from Merton Council that Pelham would not be expanded due to the size of its site.

Resident

1. Strongly support the expansion. Prefer permanent rather than temporary expansion.

2. Very supportive of the proposal and strongly encourage LB Merton to go ahead with it. The community needs the extra places. Pelham is a really good school and more children should benefit from it.
3. Not in favour due to negative impact on local residents parking. Current parking restrictions finish at 6.30pm so often difficult to find a place to park if there is an evening event on at the school.
4. Object as the proposed outdoor play space will not comply with Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 Schedule 2.
5. Duplicate of no. 4.
6. Support the expansion as it will be valuable to the neighbourhood and provide urgently needed school places.
7. Only a short term solution and will need to expand again in 10 years' time. Need a new school outside the town centre. Construction work will be detrimental to local residents.
8. Support the expansion. Can only see benefits to local community and residents.

Pre-school parent

1. Welcome the expansion of a valued primary school.
2. Expansion is long overdue. Fully support the plans as there is a significant lack of school places in Wimbledon.
3. Very much in favour. Children should be able to walk to their local school and integrate with their local community.
4. Very much in favour as it is important for children to attend their local school and mix with local children.
5. Do not agree as it would impair the quality of teaching. However understand the need and necessity.
6. Good idea but school must ensure it maintains or improves its Ofsted rating. Consideration to ensure no loss of trees, it remains green and appropriate parking traffic and parking measures are introduced.
7. Fantastic news.
8. Fully support the much needed expansion. Live 5 minute walk away and son didn't get into the nursery.
9. Support the expansion. Understand the struggle to get a local school place.

10. Overwhelmingly in favour of expansion. More school places are needed in this area. Live very local and child has not got in.
11. Support the expansion – it provides an opportunity for better facilities, recruitment, equipment and environment. Prefer a permanent expansion rather than 'bulge' classes.

Parent and resident

1. Concerned about increase in parking.

Pelham Primary School Expansion Consultation

Held at Pelham Primary School

On 29 November 2012

Panel

Paul Ballatt (Chair), LB Merton
Maria Keenan, head teacher at Pelham Primary School
Graham Kellas, Chair of governors
Cllr Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Education
Tom Procter, LB Merton
Tom Gibb, Haverstock Architects

Paul Ballatt introduced the panel and explained the need for school expansions in the London Borough of Merton.

Tom Procter presented the criteria for the selection of Pelham Primary School as an ideal school to expand and the legal processes that has to be followed during a school expansion project.

Maria Keenan presented the school's perspective on expansion and what could be gained from an expansion. At the same time it was clarified what the school would not want to lose as a result of an expansion.

Cllr Martin Whelton discussed the need for additional pupil places in LB Merton due to a dramatic rise in the birth rate and added that the exchange of views at other consultations has been worthwhile.

Tom Gibb presented early building plans of a proposed expansion at Pelham Primary School.

Graham Kellas explained the perspective of the governors and made it clear that the benefit to the children as a whole would be the key objective.

Cllr Judge introduced himself as the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration and informed the audience that he was there to hear their views.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Questions/Comments/ Observations

1 Is there a change to the roof height of the existing school building?

Answer - No.

- 2 What would be the duration of the build project? Could it be done over the Summer holidays?

Answer- The construction period would be at least one year. There would be a need to provide a double temporary classroom for September 2013.

- 3 What would be the impact on the school during the construction works?

Answer- We will look at phasing and how the most disruptive works could be accommodated during holiday periods. We are building at the front of the school and not right next to the classrooms as with some other school projects.

We have developed a lot of skill in working with schools and school communities. It is important that channels of communications exist so that issues can be addressed. We work with schools in a planned way so that the impact on children is minimised.

- 4 What is the timeline if we assume that the expansion would proceed?

Answer- We are still at an early stage of the design. The aim is that the planning application would be submitted in spring and that next summer holidays are utilised to start with some enabling works. We will look at whether it would be possible to perform some of the demolition. Average time periods for construction of this size of expansion is approximately one year. It may be a bit longer, especially if the scheme needs to be phased. We will have greater certainty at the stage when a contractor has provided input.

- 5 Is the funding ring-fenced?

Answer- Expansion projects are funded through government grants and council capital and funding is in place for the project.

- 6 You said that the building process would be at least one year. How are you going to maintain the educational learning experience during the building process?

Answer - There will be challenges. We will work in partnership with the school. Our experience is that we can deliver the scheme without impacting negatively on the educational quality.

There will be further opportunities for people to have their say based on more detailed plans. There is a planning consultation period whereby comments are invited by the council on the building design. Elsewhere some of the other schools have had informal dialogue with parent during coffee mornings.

- 7 How do you maintain the safe operation of the school during building works?

Answer- You start of by identifying restrictions and risks so that it can be managed. Two temporary classrooms are required. Separate safe and secure hoarding is required for the contractor's compound. Additional hard play area is

required to maximise play space. Separate access points for parents and children, staff, visitors and contractors are required throughout the school day. Contractor access will be confined to particular times of the day.

8 Will the kitchen be maintained throughout the building period?

Answer- It is envisaged that there will be a period of time when the kitchen will be unavailable and food brought in. As for other schools, we will need to discuss in detail the best means to maintain a school meals service.

9 Will the school hall be restricted during construction?

Answer- It is likely we would acoustically hoard off the hall during the extension building works to maintain the integrity of the school.

10 Will you consider off site modular construction?

Answer- We are considering all options.

11 I am a deputy head at a secondary school and we have just put up a 6 classroom building in 6 months.

Answer- The length of a building project can depend on complexity. Standalone modular buildings are quicker to build but not always possible. These are early thoughts and I caution you to recognise these as such. We are in the early stages of design development and there will be no fully formed plans at this stage.

12 When you move the pedestrian gate along Southey Road during construction can this gate become a permanent gate for additional access?

Answer – We will certainly look to ensure that there are sufficient access gates and we will look at ensuring temporary and permanent access gates are the same where practical.

13 Why do you not build another school?

Answer- This has been considered and at Haydon's Road we brought a former school back into use. The current administration has commissioned a report to look again at all possible sites, but we have to be aware of the capital cost involved in purchasing a property.

14 What about inefficient existing spaces within the school. Will you look at the betterment of the existing fabric?

Answer- We are all in a period of financial constraints and scrutiny. We sometimes do look at enhancements, but there are budgetary constraints, and the primary purpose of this scheme is to expand the school. We have to be mindful that most schools in the borough have building fabric needs.

15 You shelved the Dundonald additional intake for September 2013. Why do we have to take a bulge year and a permanent expansion? It seems unfair.

Answer – The places are required in September 2013 and 2014 and it is difficult to see where the pupils could go in the meantime. The approach proposed has been used in all our schools except Dundonald where any expansion requires modification of a covenant.

16 It seems that a lot of initial thought has gone into this project. When will you have an operational plan to share with parents?

Answer- We aim to submit the planning application by April 2013. The design should be frozen by then. Schools often have coffee mornings with their parents to obtain their views and keep them up to date with what is going on.

17 I am surprised to hear that the outside space is sufficient for a 2FE school.

Answer (Council) The space is similar to some other schools we have expanded on small sites. The available area will be increased throughout the year by more hard play area.

Answer (Headteacher) - We would have to look at how we stagger lunch times. We will have a hall, studio hall and outdoor spaces for PE.

Answer- (Cllr Andrew Judge)- I am happy to look at how access could be arranged by the school to nearby playing fields.

18 What is the process from here onwards?

Answer- This statutory consultation ends on 14 December 2012. We will then consider the responses and decide whether to go to the next stage of submitting the statutory notice to expand the school. We are aiming for the planning application to be submitted by April 2013.

19 Has there been a pre-planning meeting with the planners?

Answer- Yes. The risk is reasonably low as there are no planning policy reasons why expansion should not be undertaken on this site.

20 If we want to attract additional staff will we get additional car park spaces?

Answer- As a temporary measure during construction we have asked St Mary's RC Primary School for 6 parking bays. We have no intention to encroach on the existing parking bays and will not be building in the car park.

Answer- Cllr Andrew Judge- There is a teacher permit scheme in place. If there are parking bays in local roads that are not being used during the day we will look at that. If applications are successful we would issue permits and the cost to the school would be minimal.

21 Has any work been done about the increase in road traffic? As a resident this is a concern.

Answer- A transport impact assessment will be carried out and will be submitted together with the planning application.

22 Southey Road is a dangerous road. Will a pedestrian crossing be considered?
There is a serious concern about the busy pavements on Kingston Road and Southey Road during pick up and drop off times.

Answer- Cllr Andrew Judge - Where there is a real need I will be happy to look at the feasibility for the installation of a zebra crossing.

23 Have you considered pupil access from the rear of the school?

Answer- The traffic impact study will look at access to the school.

24 Will the contractor be working in the evenings or over weekends as you want to minimise the disruption to the school?

Answer- The planning conditions will restrict working hours, generally restriction to daytime use and Saturday mornings, to avoid disruption to residents.

Paul Ballatt ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and asked the audience to provide their comments on the leaflet.

Poplar Primary School and Mostyn Gardens

1. Consultation on proposed permanent expansion of the school from 2FE to 3FE (60 to 90 pupil places per year)
2. Consultation on shared external area for Mostyn Gardens

***Responses to be returned by
Friday 14 December 2012***

***Consultation meetings at the school on
Thursday 22 November 2012:
Parents 6.30pm
Local residents 8.00pm***

What is proposed?

Expansion of Poplar Primary School

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to meet that need through expanding our best schools and the ones which parents most wish to access.

Poplar Primary School is currently a two-form entry (2FE) school, admitting up to 60 pupils in two classes per year, providing education for 420 pupils across the School excluding the nursery.

Following the agreement of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, the school has taken an extra class in reception year in September 2012, with the 30 additional places allocated on the basis of an Admissions Priority Area (APA). A two classroom temporary unit has been installed, enabling this arrangement to continue for September 2013.

The APA was agreed to ensure that there are sufficient primary school places in the Merton Park area, complementing the expansion of Hillcross Primary School, Morden. A map of the APA is available on this link:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/changingschool/admissions/poplar_priority_area.htm

The Council wishes to permanently expand the school from September 2014 to be a three-form entry (3FE) school, admitting up to 90 pupils per year in three classes. This will mean it would eventually have up to 630 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but the expansion of the places would be gradual until reaching all year groups in 2018/19.

It is proposed that under the permanent expansion the extra 30 places will be allocated on the same basis as for September 2012 i.e. with an APA for the extra places only.

A drawing of the area showing the location of the proposed additional buildings will be available for discussion at the public consultation meeting on 22 November 2012 and will then be on the LB Merton website

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Proposed shared external area for Mostyn Gardens

The school site with existing shared games court will provide for above the minimum recommended space for the expanded school, so additional site space is not a requirement.

However, some of the school site contains an area of importance for nature conservation. While it is an attractive feature for the school it has some restriction for learning and play. The school is adjacent to Mostyn Gardens, which includes a corner adjacent to Martin Way that receives little use, and an additional secure

space will provide a benefit to the school children.

The council is therefore interested in residents' views of whether it would be beneficial to develop this area as a stimulating children's play space. It would be available for the exclusive use of the school during school hours but would remain part of the park for all other hours that the park is open. It would offer the opportunity for investment to improve the facilities for children and families in the community attending the school during the day, and for all members of the community out of school hours. A similar arrangement is being successfully developed at Wimbledon Park Primary School/Durnsford Recreation Ground.

A drawing of the area indicating the location of the shared area is available on <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm> and will be on display on a recreation ground noticeboard.

It should be noted that the expansion of Poplar Primary School is not dependent on use of the shared area.

Why is the Council proposing the expansion of the school?

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children reaching school age, fuelled by a 39% increase in the number of births in the last eight years. Our population forecasts indicate that demand will continue to rise for at least the next five years and this rise will then be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Poplar Primary School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012 LB Merton schools have provided for an increase of 21 additional reception classes to ensure sufficient places are provided. A report to the Council's cabinet in February 2012 outlined the extent of the increased demand and the overall strategy to provide the additional places. The report can be accessed on the LB Merton website through the following link:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/w-agendas/w-fpreports/1124.pdf

Poplar Primary is a popular and successful school. In its last Ofsted report in 2010 the school was judged to be good with some aspects of its work outstanding. The school has filled its temporary 90 reception places in September 2012, with a waiting list. With demand for places forecast to further increase over the next few years the expansion of the school is considered essential for the council to provide sufficient local school places.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

The purpose of the school expansion consultation is to allow anyone, and especially parents with an interest, to raise questions or concerns regarding the proposal so that the council can decide whether to publish a formal statutory proposal to expand the school to provide 630 permanent places.

It also forms a consultation with local residents prior to the council submitting a formal planning application in early 2013 for the building works.

The purpose of the consultation on the shared parks area is for the council to consider whether it will develop proposals for the park area shared with Poplar Primary School.

Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting has been organised, to be held at Poplar Primary School, Poplar Road South, London, SW19 3JZ, on Thursday 22 November

at 6.30pm for parents to attend to raise any questions, concerns or ideas for the development of Poplar Primary School and primary education in LB Merton generally

at 8pm for local residents to attend to raise any planning application related matters

Representatives from the council and school will be at both meetings.

What is the next stage?

Following this consultation the Authority will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal for the significant enlargement of the school. During the statutory proposal process there would then be a further four-week period for anyone to raise an objection before the decision maker (normally the Council) makes a formal decision on the proposal.

Should it decide to proceed with the proposal, the council will submit a planning application, and this consultation will also inform the application.

Based on the result of the consultation the council will also consider whether it will develop proposals for the park area shared with Poplar Primary School. It should be noted that the expansion of Poplar Primary School is not dependent on use of the shared area and the shared area will not form part of the council's planning application for the expansion of the school. Funding for its development will also need to be identified.

Please provide comments below or on a separate sheet by Friday 14 December 2012

Post to: Contracts and School Organisation, Children, Schools and Families
Department, London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre, London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX

Or: Completed responses can be given by hand to the main office at Poplar Primary
School, Poplar Road South, London, SW19 3JZ and these will be forwarded to the
Council.

Alternatively, an electronic version of the response sheet will be available on

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Responses can be e-mailed to: schconsult@merton.gov.uk

**1. Comments on the proposed expansion Poplar Primary School to provide
630 places**

(You may continue on a separate sheet)

2. Comments on merits of a shared external area for Mostyn Gardens
(You may continue on a separate sheet)

Are you:

A parent with a pupil currently at Poplar Primary School

A parent with pre-school children

A member of Poplar Primary staff or governor

A local resident (not in one of the above three categories)

Other e.g. representing an institution please state

—
—
—
—
—

Signed

Date

Responses to be returned by: Friday 14 December 2012

Poplar Primary School Proposed Expansion Consultation Responses

December 2012

Responses:	Parents	18
	Residents	16
	Parent & Staff/Governor	3
	Resident & Staff/Governor	2
	Staff or Governor	1
	Parent & Pre-school parent	4
	Other	3

Note: This consultation was on:

1. Consultation on proposed permanent expansion of the school from 2FE to 3FE (60 to 90 pupil places per year)
2. Consultation on shared external area for Mostyn Gardens

The consultation leaflet clarified that the expansion of Poplar Primary School is not dependent on use of the shared area

Parent

1. Broadly in agreement subject to: improvements to current grass areas to enable year-round use (previous expansion has caused flooding & poor drainage); no loss of 'wild area', allotments or pavilions; and that the shared use area with Mostyn Gardens goes ahead.
Shared area - should be larger with the boundary formed by the natural curve of the path and Martin Way gate.
2. Understand the need for additional places but concerned about: effects on current pupils including safety of entrance/exits; existing drainage issues that make the field unusable; purpose of shared space and responsibility for its rubbish clearance; and viability of site access from Martin Way.
Shared area - vital for school to have the extra space as the new extension will reduce their outdoor space. Area should remain as natural as possible (no concrete or tarmac), very secure during school hours and checked before their use.
3. Welcome the expansion as too few local primary school places.
Shared area - welcome the shared use of Mostyn Gardens as the new extension will reduce the school's outdoor space. No adverse affects as the area is not currently used.

4. Not in favour as current size is well-balanced. Concerned about impact of building work on current pupils and impact of extra children with reduced play space.
Shared area - imperative school has use of this under-used area. It will benefit both pupils and park users. Hopefully this will ensure the survival of the school's wild area.
5. Very happy with the proposal.
Shared area – support this idea.
6. Shared area - support this proposal. Am also a founder member of the Friends of Mostyn Gardens and feel both pupils and park users will benefit from the regeneration of this under-used area. Suggests using current path as the boundary. However concerned about safety if current layout remains.
7. Support expansion due to the need however must not negatively impact the education of current pupils. Concerned about: lack of usable outdoor space (build up not out); impact on current staff e.g. resources; and impact of building work on existing pupils e.g. physical safety, security etc.
Shared area - fully support use of Mostyn Gardens by the school. Suggests school takes over this under-used area completely for safety reasons.
8. Concerned about size of site. Asks if current school site is above minimum recommended space for 3FE if nature conservation area is discounted?
Drainage issues with playing field reduces its usage. School should only be expanded if shared area with Mostyn Gardens is guaranteed. Have you considered expanding Merton Park Primary – many children in the APA will have to walk past this school to get to Poplar. Need a managed crossing in Kenley Road to ensure safety of additional pupils walking from the APA.
9. Live only 7 min walk away and without the bulge class our second child would have no chance of a place for 2013. Very happy with school.
Shared area - school would benefit hugely from this under-used and overgrown space. Trees would provide shade in the summer and grassed area has better drainage than school playing field. Suggests a natural play area similar to Morden Hall Park. Current shared space already works well.
10. Happy with proposal. School is excellent and more children should benefit.
Shared area - school should be able to build a bigger hall and additional classrooms on this area.
11. No particular views but Poplar is a good choice for the extra places as it is already well established.
Shared area - an excellent idea as it benefits both the school and local community. Consider an area for ball games for older children.

12. Only doubt is effect on teachers of handling large numbers of pupils in a class. Would like a limited number of pupils so they get more attention from the teachers.
Shared area - I agree to an extent for the development but concerned about the area being looked after during the public times.
13. No comments on the expansion.
Shared area - approve of this idea.
14. No comments.
15. Current expansion has proceeded well to date.
Shared area – fully support this development as area is currently under-used. Suggest increasing area up to the path.
16. Fully appreciate the need for additional places. Project needs to be managed well from within the school to retain its community feel. Main concern is lack of outdoor play space in the winter – field needs a drainage solution or replaced with a different surface. Will the hall size and other facilities (eg scooter storage) be increased?
Shared area – agree with the proposal but believe the boundary should be increased in line with the current shared MUGA.
17. Concerned about: lack of outdoor play space as the field is often unusable due to flooding throughout the year; displacement of classes and loss of library during the build; and construction vehicle access.
Shared area – agree but believe the area should be increased.
18. Agree with the proposal as more children will benefit from a very good school. Playing field drainage needs to be improved so it can actually be used, especially with more children.
Shared area – suggests using the entire area to the right of the Martin Way entrance gate. Asks about security

Resident

1. Concerned regarding parents' inconsiderate parking when dropping off and collecting their children, e.g. blocking driveway.
Shared area – not a problem as long as Mostyn Gardens remains open to local residents at all times.
2. Acknowledge more school places are needed but what are the plans to deal with inconsiderate and increased car parking? Walking buses were promised before the previous extension but this has not relieved the parking problem. Suggest a 'drop-off' point, perhaps in the current staff car park.

3. Agree to the expansion.
Shared area - disagree with shared use of Mostyn Gardens as would be dangerous to the school pupils due to vandalism (this has increased since no on-site warden). If the school needs more space, appropriate it from the park at the outset.
4. Concerned about vehicle movements and car parking. Own road (Cranleigh) already suffers from parent and staff parking and hinders workmen, deliveries and council staff. Devise a school transport plan to minimise disruption to neighbours. (Also responded electronically)
5. Shared area - needs careful defining, i.e. landscaping, equipment, fencing, hours of access and responsibility. (Also responded electronically.)
6. More loss of privacy due to 2-storey extension. Previous frosted glass has been replaced with clear glass. Continued disruption due to building work – suggest construction access via Mostyn Gardens. Increased traffic and car parking issues. Current zig zags prevent me parking outside my own home.
7. Understands the need for expansion. An increase in pupils of 50% requires 50% more space so fully supports shared external area of Mostyn Gardens. Benefits include: utilising a current 'wasted' space; upgraded facilities; sharing some of the 'park' costs with the school; and more space for the pupils. The current shared use area is very successful.
8. In favour of the expansion and shared use area in Mostyn Gardens. This area is underused. Current shared area works brilliantly. Suggest it is dog free, perhaps with picnic areas.
9. No objection to the school expansion but object to construction traffic using Poplar Road South due to current congestion. Also suggests a 'drop-off' area for parents to alleviate the current inconsiderate parking of parents.
Shared area – no objection as it seems an unused area of the park.
10. Happy to agree with the proposal as it is essential for the education of Merton children.
Shared area – no loss to the park but gain for children's education.
11. Agree the expansion is necessary due to the increased population. Mentions various construction access routes and their advantages and disadvantages. Shared area – Mostyn Gardens is a garden/park and not a recreation ground. It does not need any more facilities or play areas. Are already disturbed by their misuse at night so do not this to increase. Hypercritical that school are planning a new area for nature conservation but proposing to destruct another well established one. Area adjacent to Martin Way provides shelter for many birds.

12. Poplar is a very good school so it makes sense to expand it and it will accept mainly local children.
Shared area – children need plenty of outdoor space so makes sense to make use of this under-used area. Improvements will benefit the local community outside of school hours.
13. Do not like or support the plan. Do not want local park to become a playground.
Shared area – no merits whatsoever. Keep it for recreation. Merton is a concrete jungle already.
14. Agree with the proposal.
Shared area – excellent way of bringing neglected and under-used part of the park into beneficial use.
15. Shared area – support the proposal. The area is under-used. The school is an integral and positive part of the community too so their use of the space is not a loss to the community. The current shared area arrangement works well.
16. Asks about the details and design of the area including hours of usage, any loss of mature trees etc. Requests a protection (covenant) is put in place.
Shared area - do not see any merits in this – a park is as important as a school. Build or expand somewhere less important.
17. Site is too small for further expansion and adjoining residents will be overlooked by the two storey extension. No provision for offstreet parking for thoughtless parents parking illegally and blocking roads.
Shared area – don't know the merits, that's the problem.
18. Do not approve of a shared area. Want to continue using the park. Will make the park less attractive.
Shared area – no comment.
19. No objection to the expansion if the places are needed. Only concern is the volume of parents parking in surrounding roads (especially Cranleigh Road). Would welcome a strategy from the school on how this can be solved.
Shared area – safe, outdoor space is important for children. Agree with proposal.
20. Important to provide both school places and green quite places. However this will be an encroachment onto a green space to the detriment of local residents. Would request shared area proposal is rejected.
Shared area – Loss of open space very important. Should use brown sites rather than recreational grounds.

21. Concerned about construction traffic and access. Suggest site access via Martin Way.

Parent & Staff or Governor

1. More places are required. Expanding Poplar will benefit the community. The leadership is more than capable and experienced in dealing with building works plus maintaining the caring/homely ethos of the school.
Shared area – Area is currently under-used. Both pupils and the local community will benefit from the proposal.
2. Understand the need for the expansion. It is important that the new extension is attached to the school and a large space provided for play and PE/assemblies. Construction access to be via Martin Way for safety and traffic reasons.
Shared area – extra space would be essential for the increased numbers. Would benefit both pupils and the community.
3. Fully support the expansion. It will address the increasing demand for school places for residents of Merton Park ward.
Shared area – support this proposal as it will benefit both pupils and the local community. It is currently under-used and attracts unwanted behaviour by local youths and drug addicts.

Resident & Staff or Governor

1. Shared area – Currently under-used and unattractive. Support the development as it will enhance the area and improve opportunity for play and learning for the pupils.
2. Should go ahead.
Shared area – it would be a valuable area for both the school and the community.

Staff or Governor

1. School will need a larger hall to accommodate all school assemblies and events.

Shared area – will improve the area and benefit the pupils.

2. Support expansion due to local need. Must ensure standard of education or lives of residents is not adversely affected. Phasing of work important in order to retain all facilities. Construction access to be via Martin Way. Building design – ensure privacy of neighbouring houses.
3. Happy for expansion as long as a larger hall is provided and the new build is good quality and well planned.

Parent & pre-school parent

1. Aware of the need for additional places and would prefer a new school to be built rather than expansions. However, if that is not an option I support the expansion of Poplar as long as the additional play space is provided. Essential construction works are not detrimental to the children and that they are 'fit for purpose. Concerned about: lack of usable outdoor play space (build up rather than out); impact on current staff (including parking issues); and impact on the children.

Shared area – fully support the proposal and suggest school is given sole use of the area.

2. No objection to the expansion as long as it is thoughtfully managed and school ethos is maintained. Main concerns are lack of usable play space (major drainage problem with the playing field) and traffic and accessibility (suggests school drop-off zones, satellite drop-off zones, lift clubs, car clubs (for staff), dedicated school bus, alternative free parking for teachers (Kenley Road car park) and incentives for parents/staff not to drive. Asks when temporary classroom will be removed.

Shared area – strongly support the proposal. Area is under-used and neglected. Will benefit everyone.

3. Same as above.

4. Not a good idea to have shared playground. The park is lovely as it is.
Shared area – no merits.

Other

1. Merton Park Ward Independent Residents

Accept the need for expansion and are fully supportive of proposal for an APA (Admissions Priority Area) that will favour Merton Park ward and will go some way to redress the reach of the catchment area towards those homes currently excluded from either school but within walking distance.

Shared area – Done with sensitivity, converting and refurbishing this little-used and dilapidated area of the Gardens would benefit pupils and residents alike.

2. Morden Primary School Governors

Morden Primary Governors – Dismayed Poplar has been considered for 3FE over Morden becoming 2FE – contrary to previous statements made by the council. Morden has a good Ofsted rating and is oversubscribed. It meets all the criteria applied to Poplar plus it has the following advantages: it is on a major bus route; has support from staff; existing plans for 2FE; potentially only a 10 min walk from Poplar; and has none of its traffic congestion.

3. Expansion is the only option as no suitable funding or location for a new school.

Parents - School Expansion Consultation

held at Poplar Primary School

On 22 November 2012 at 6.30 pm

Panel

Jan Martin (Chair), LB Merton (Head of Education)
Tom Procter, LB Merton (Service Manager, Contracts & School Organisation)
Katharine Davies (Headteacher)
Andrew Foster (Chair of Governors)
Martin Whelton (Cabinet Member for Education)

Jan Martin welcomed everyone to the meeting for the proposals to expand Poplar Primary School.

TP presented the criteria for the selection of Poplar Primary School as a priority school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the proposed building plans.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

The proposals to develop a part of Mostyn Gardens under a shared use arrangement were also presented. TP stated that any such arrangement for shared use would mean that the school would have exclusive use during school hours. During non school hours, the parks area would revert back to community use. The school site with existing shared games court will provide the minimum recommended space for the expanded school, so additional site space is not a requirement. It was therefore noted that the proposals to expand Poplar Primary School were not dependant on the shared use of Mostyn Gardens.

Katharine Davies (KD) stated that developing a section of Mostyn Gardens would benefit the school and local community. Expansion to 3 form entry presents a really good opportunity for the school to invest in staff and resources. This will undoubtedly bring better learning opportunities for the children that attend Poplar Primary.

Questions/Comments/ Observations

1. If the shared external area got rejected, how would it affect the expansion of the school?

Answer – proposal for Mostyn Gardens is not dependant on the expansion. The school already has sufficient capacity in terms of

external play space, but the area would be an excellent enhancement for the school.

2. How much play space is going to be lost as a result of the building – where will children play during construction?

Answer – the site will have to be hoarded so there is complete separation from the contractor and the school. An element of playground will be lost. However, there are plans to provide a temporary hard standing area on the schools existing playing field. The school will need to manage the number of children outside during playtime by introducing staggered play times.

3. The playing field tends to get very boggy and is prone to flooding even in the summer months. If the Local Authority is expanding the school, then there should be plans to ensure that the external areas are in good condition as there will eventually be over 600 children at the school.

Answer – we will look at drainage and problems with flooding as part of site investigation works.

4. Are there any restrictions on age and usage of the proposed shared area?

Answer – children aged 3-11 will be using the area during school hours. Any design will reflect this age group. No design of the shared use has taken place to date. During the day i.e. school hours, the parks area will only be used by the school as per the same arrangement at Wimbledon Park Primary School. During non school hours, the area becomes the area would be open for full public access as the rest of the park.

5. Management of the shared use – is it the school's responsibility or open spaces?

Answer – the detail would be open to discussion – one way forward used in other schools is for the school would maintain any play equipment that is installed and the council's Greenspaces team would maintain the grounds.

6. Friends of Mostyn Gardens – we support the principle of the shared area and would like to see the detailed plans for this area. Why haven't the Local Authority considered developing the whole area at the back of the school site? It is quite clear that the area is not maintained, it's overgrown and it is hardly ever used.

Answer- we were conscious that we shouldn't reserve too much of the park for school's use but can certainly review this if the community

would support it.

7. When will the new building be in place?

Answer – Depending on when we submit planning and obtain approval the build programme it is likely to be nearly a year before we start construction. We expect to have completed construction by the end of 2014.

8. If we displace the nursery, where will the children go? Where will these 'bulge' classes go?

Answer – the school will give up some spaces to enable rooms to be decanted and to facilitate the phased expansion of the school. This is to avoid further temporary buildings being brought onto the site.

Residents - School Expansion Consultation

held at Poplar Primary School

On 22 November 2012 at 8.00 pm

Panel

Jan Martin (Chair), LB Merton (Head of Education)
Tom Procter, LB Merton (Service Manager, Contracts & School Organisation)
Katharine Davies (Headteacher)
Andrew Foster (Chair of Governors)
Martin Whelton (Cabinet Member for Education)

JM welcomed everyone to the meeting for the proposals to expand Poplar Primary School.

KD discussed the positive aspects of expanding the school for the local community.

TP presented the criteria for the selection of Poplar Primary School as a priority school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the proposed building plans.

Questions/Comments/ Observations

1. Resident concerned with the view into their property that a double storey extension could have from her property. The resident also raised concern at having parking restrictions outside her property.

Answer – a traffic and transport survey will be commissioned that will assess parking. The building will be designed to ensure privacy is maintained.

2. What is the waiting list of the school – what is the level of oversubscription?

Answer – the school has taken the 30 extra places this year which the expansion would make permanent - there is still currently a waiting list for reception which is currently at 9 -10 places.

3. Resident who lives near the park from Martin Way has lived in the area for over 45 years. He accepts that there will be noise when living in close proximity to a school. He stated that Mostyn Gardens is a quiet and tranquil area that has wildlife. He raised concern with this area changing its use and the level of noise that will be generated if the school has use of this area during school hours. There is already a children's play area near the school. The reason adults like Mostyn Gardens is because the parks area offers peace and quiet.

4. Will access from Martin Way be dangerous? There is a traffic island near the parks entrance and it already presents a menace on Martin Way with traffic congestion.

Answer – a construction access review will be commissioned which will look at how construction vehicles will enter and egress from the site. There are currently two options for consideration – access from Martin Way or access from Poplar Road South.

5. Will the shared use area be tarmac?

Answer – the shared use area will remain as a natural area for children to play in. There are no plans to create a substantial hard standing play area.

6. Residents raised concern with the potential of vandalism in the shared use area. How will the local authority maintain a safe environment for children?

Answer – a shared use agreement will be in place with Open Spaces and the school defining roles and responsibilities. The area will be appropriately fenced and will be secure.

7. Why is Poplar Primary being expanded from 420 to 630 when Morden Primary is a big site only offering 210 places? Why not expand Morden Primary?

Answer – Morden Primary may well form part of expansion proposals in subsequent years. Morden Primary does have the site to expand but a key factor is parental preference. Poplar school is currently over subscribed for its 60 places so there is demand in the local area around Merton Park for expansion which is not currently apparent in south Morden/St. Helier.

8. Friends of Mostyn Gardens – the area is currently under used and is full of overgrown shrubs. Unfortunately due to budget cuts the Council does very little to maintain this area. There is a dis-used toilet block. Surely if the area is developed for school and community use, it will enhance what is currently there.

9. There is an eco-system – why would we want to disturb the wildlife. The trees need to be cared for properly and maintained.

10. Resident concerned with the level of parking outside her home on Poplar Road South during school drop off and pick up times. On many occasions, taxis and utility companies have not been able to park outside her home. Surely if the school is doubling in size, the issue of parking will become worse.

Answer – the vast majority of pupils attending the school will be local

and will therefore walk to the school. The school also actively encourage more sustainable travel methods as part of the school travel plan.

11. Peter Southgate (ward councillor) stated there is an absolute need for expansion with the increase in birth rates in this area. He stated that it was important to maintain Mostyn Gardens as a natural grassed area and that it was not appropriate to have tarmac in this area due to wildlife and the existing surroundings. It would also deter teenagers from congregating in the area. He urged the public to respond to the consultation particularly on the use of Mostyn Gardens. He was in favour of dual use.

12. Who would be responsible for keeping the school area clean and tidy?

Answer – there would be a legal agreement between Open Spaces and the School. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined. The shared use space will be a dog free zone.

13. There is a pathway around Mostyn Gardens which is not maintained very well. There are several mature trees and the area is not really usable. Would children be using the shared use first thing in the morning? Concern was expressed at what could be left in an open parks area from the night before.

Answer – the school's site manager would be responsible for checking the area every morning before children have access.

14. If access is going to be across the parks – how many trees will need to be removed for construction access?

Answer – an independent arboricultural assessment will be commissioned that will assess the impact on the parks area.

Singlegate Primary School

Consultation on proposed permanent expansion of the school to 3FE (90 pupil places per year), utilising the former Jamia School building, and shared landscaped area for Colliers Wood Recreation Ground

***Responses to be returned by
Thursday 20 December 2012***

***Consultation meetings at Singlegate School on
Tuesday 27 November 2012 at 7pm***

Background

In autumn 2011 the council consulted on a proposal to permanently expand Singlegate Primary School from 210 permanent places (plus nursery) to 420 places. Due to the restricted school site, the consultation also proposed that a small area of the recreation ground adjacent to the school should be available for the exclusive use of the school during school hours.

The scheme was to be implemented in two phases, with the first phase providing two classrooms and group rooms adjacent to the main school hall that would be converted to be an additional hall and a kitchen after phase 2. Phase 2 was planned to be a two-storey extension on the other side of the school.

There was a positive response to the consultation and the council implemented phase 1, which was completed for September 2012, allowing space for the school to provide 60 reception places for the second consecutive year. The school will also provide 60 reception places in September 2013.

In spring 2012 the opportunity presented itself for the council to purchase the adjacent Jamia School building, and the council completed its purchase in August 2012.

What is now proposed?

By utilising the Jamia School building, and through a minor extension, the Council wishes to permanently expand Singlegate Primary School from September 2014 to be a three-form entry (3FE) school, admitting up to 90 pupils per year in three classes. This means it would eventually have up to 630 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but the expansion of the places would be gradual. The school will have at least two forms of entry in all year groups in 2017/18, and will not be 3 forms of entry in all year groups until 2020/21. It is expected there will be a separate infants and junior block.

With 630 pupils plus 52 place (26 full time equivalent) nursery on site, and only some additional external space with the Jamia site, there will be as much pressure on play space as the previous proposal. Therefore it is still proposed that a small area of the recreation ground adjacent to the school is enhanced to provide creative children's play facilities that will be available for the exclusive use of the school during school hours, but will be fully open for the benefit of the general community for all other hours that the recreation ground is open.

A drawing of the area showing the configuration of the buildings and the shared landscape area will be available for discussion at the public consultation meeting on 27 November 2012, and will then be on the LB Merton website <http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Why is the Council proposing the expansion of the school?

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to meet that need through expanding our best schools and the ones which parents most wish to access.

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children reaching school age, fuelled by a 39% increase in the number of births in the last eight years. Our population forecasts indicate that demand will continue to rise for

at least the next five years and this rise will then be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Singlegate Primary School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2012 LB Merton schools have provided for an increase of 21 additional reception classes to ensure sufficient places are provided. A report to the Council's cabinet in February 2012 outlined the extent of the increased demand and the overall strategy to provide the additional places. The report can be accessed on the LB Merton website through the following link:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/democratic_services/w-agendas/w-fpreports/1124.pdf

Singlegate Primary is a popular and successful school. In its most recent Ofsted inspection, it was judged to be "outstanding". The school was still heavily subscribed even when providing the additional 30 places in reception year in September 2011 and 2012, and was only able to provide places to some 525 metres under the distance criteria. With demand for places forecast to increase further, even if 60 places continue to be provided, the distance offered is likely to be less in the future. With demand for places forecast to increase further over the next few years the provision of 90 places will allow the council to provide sufficient local school places.

The changes to the recreation ground, as well as benefiting the school, will provide improved play facilities for children in the community at the time they are most needed i.e. outside school hours.

What is the purpose of this consultation?

The purpose of the school expansion consultation is to allow anyone, and especially parents with an interest, to raise questions or concerns regarding the proposal so that the council can decide whether to publish a formal statutory proposal to expand the school to provide 630 permanent places.

It also forms a consultation with local residents prior to the council submitting a formal planning application in early 2013 for the building works.

Consultation meeting

A consultation meeting has been organised, to be held at Singlegate Primary School, South Gardens, London SW19 2NT on Tuesday 27 November at 7.00pm

Representatives from the council and school will attend the meeting.

What is the next stage?

Following this consultation the Authority will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal for the significant enlargement of the school. During the statutory proposal process there would then be a further four-week period for anyone to raise an objection before the decision maker (normally the Council) makes a formal decision on the proposal.

Should it decide to proceed with the proposal, the council will submit a planning application, and this consultation will also inform the application.

Please provide comments below or on a separate sheet by Thursday 20 December 2012

Post to: Contracts and School Organisation, Children, Schools and Families Department,
London Borough of Merton, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

Or: Completed responses can be given by hand to the main office at Singlegate Primary
School, South Gardens, London SW19 2NT and these will be forwarded to the Council.

Alternatively, an electronic version of the response sheet will be available on
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Responses can be e-mailed to: schconsult@merton.gov.uk

**1. Comments on the proposed expansion Singlegate Primary School to
provide 630 places**

(You may continue on a separate sheet)

Are you:

A parent with a pupil currently at Singlegate Primary School

A parent with pre-school children

A member of Singlegate Primary staff or governor

A local resident (not in one of the above three categories)

Other e.g. representing an institution please state

Signed

Date

Responses to be returned by: Thursday 20 December 2012

Singlegate Primary School Proposed Expansion Consultation Responses

December 2012

Responses	Residents	10
	Pre-school parent	2
	Not stated	1
	Parent and pre-school parent	2
	Parents	8

Residents

1. Proposed shared use area under-used. Makes sense for school to have sole-use during term time – simpler, cheaper and no complicated arrangements for cleaning and locking the area each day. Suggest additional access gate to school from Christchurch Road.
2. Area already overdeveloped with traffic congestion and no parking spaces. Parents already park inconsiderately and illegally. Will increase noise and pollution.
3. Very important and necessary to increase school places. Totally support the expansion. Current lack of school places in that area.
4. Leave the park as it is - proposed shared use area of park has hedgehogs in it – do not disturb them. (2 x responses from same person) Reconsider shared use proposal as this area has hedgehogs living in it – they are an endangered species.
5. Support the expansion.
6. Not a parent so unqualified to comment on proposed expansion. However would like to see the bell tower restored to a style more in keeping with the original architecture.
7. Concerned about loss of the gated public area which is very important for the community and used regularly. Resent the continual reduction of places to enjoy, walk dogs or play football.
8. Main concern is impact on parking problems. Parents already use the local roads to park in then commute to work on the Underground. Residents are already in dialogue with LBM with regards to this problem.
9. The expansion will be a good thing as it will attract more families to the area who tend to be less transitory than single people. However, the school must

have permanent access to outside play space (current car park used to be a playground) and traffic must never be re-routed in front of the school again (this has caused extremely high levels of pollution in the classrooms in the past).

10. Very concerned about loss of the gated off public area during school hours as it is used regularly throughout the school day. It would be a terrible loss to the community.

Pre-school Parent

1. Extremely supportive of expansion. – Singlegate is closest school (live behind park) but daughter still didn't get into the nursery.
2. Fully supportive. Live in the neighbourhood yet child didn't get a place at the school. We believe every child should go to a local school.

Not stated

1. Two main concerns are: inadequate outside play area for a 3FE school; and additional traffic congestion.

Parent & Pre-School Parent

1. Concerned whether the local authority will provide sufficient resources for a larger school, e.g. teaching staff. Budget constraints could cause teaching quality to suffer.
2. School will be too large and intimidating – community aspect will be lost. Would like 2 schools - an infants and a junior school. Infant school pupils should have priority for a place at the junior school. Suggests staggered start and finish times to alleviate traffic congestion and overcrowding. Will funding levels remain the same? Definitely need the shared area of the park plus use of the football field opposite.

Parent

1. Do not agree with expansion, better to create new schools. School is successful because it is small. Many advantages associated with small schools and quotes various research that shows small schools are best.
2. Agree with expansion. Suggests the Jamia building becomes a secondary school.
3. A good plan. Singlegate is oversubscribed due to its 'outstanding' status and more places are needed.

4. Providing sufficient playground space is a priority. However strongly object to shared use of the Rec due to safety and the logistics. School must have sole use of this area or not use it at all.
5. Wish for the expansion to go ahead. Many children are on the waiting list for a place.
6. Really happy for the permanent expansion. All the teachers work hard to maintain the school's outstanding standards.
7. Not against the expansion as long as the school maintains its standards and the After School Club provision is increased. The introduction of holiday schemes would also be appreciated for working parents.
8. Understand the need but do not feel Singlegate should be expanded. Asks when was the statutory notice for the expansion from 1FE to 2FE as have not seen it. Proposal appears rushed due to the availability of the Jamia building. Concerned about lack of space, the adverse affects to both the school and local community. Suggests bulge years plus an APA for specific addresses in Colliers Wood. Query's LBM's decision making and strategy – why are Wimbledon schools only 2FE and the rest of the borough expanding to 3FE? Concerned about security and safety of a shared play area and that the nursery does not increase in size. Consultation appears flawed and a fait accompli as Jamia building has already been purchased. LBM and my local Councillor have not answered my written questions. Would also have liked more input from parents of younger pupils who will be most affected by the change rather than the parent governors have mostly older children. However, I continue to support the school wholeheartedly.

Parents & Residents School Expansion Consultation Meeting

held at Singlegate Primary School

on 27th November 2012 at 7pm

Panel

Paul Ballatt (Chair, LB Merton)
Tom Procter, LB Merton
Cllr Martin Whelton (Cabinet Member for Education)

Also present:

Cllr Nick Draper
Nathalie Bull, Headteacher, Singlegate Primary School

Paul Ballatt welcomed everyone to the consultation.

Tom Procter presented the criteria for the selection of Singlegate Primary School as a priority school to expand, the legal process for an expansion and the proposed building plans including the dual use play area.

All presentations are available on the LB Merton website at
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/schoolsconsultations.htm>

Questions/Comments/Observations from the audience with answers from the council officials (unless stated otherwise)

1. What is the increase in play space per child? Concerned about 630 children playing

Answer – We haven't calculated the play space per child but given the increase in pupil numbers it will be a decrease, though the new site will provide some additional external space. The school will be able to be flexible with play times to ensure there is sufficient space for play and PE.

2. Some local residents are concerned regarding the shared play area which is good and used all year round. However others think the dual use is a brilliant idea – it is an asset that will improve the area.

3. Enquiry regarding 'the dog area'.

Answer by member of the community – this is a dog free zone and was never intended to be used as a dog area.

4. Very supportive – lives only 500m away and daughter did not get a place

5. Asks if school has considered staggered finish times.

Answer – this can be considered but would need to be mindful of the length of time between the finish times especially for parents with children in different year groups. It can also prolong the time period of disruption to residents.

6. There will be a significant increase in numbers but not necessarily more traffic. It is a very local school for local families. The opportunity to purchase the Jamia building is very good.
7. Who will be responsible for the upkeep of the shared space?

Answer – the area needs to be protected and a draft management agreement has been produced with a division of responsibility between the council's Greenspaces team and school. School staff would inspect at the start of the school day and then the area would be locked during the school day but available to the public in summer evenings and weekends. Idea is for there to be mostly grass and some all weather surface but would be kept natural with no trees planned to be removed.

8. Where does the data on births come from and difference between actual and forecast.

Answer – The table in the presentation was explained. These were live birth figures by academic year for the LB Merton from the Office for National Statistics. The years were five years after birth for the start of school i.e. children born in 2010/11 start school in 2015/16. We do not have live birth figures for 2011/12 (starting in 2016/17) or 2012/13 (starting in 2017/18) but we do have birth forecasts from the GLA who undertaken population forecasts for London.

9. Are you expanding secondary schools?

Answer – The rise in demand will reach the start of secondary sector in 2015/16 and gradually increase. We will need to undertake an extensive expansion programme and are currently working on this

10. What are the plans for the tower?

Answer for a local councillor – 150 1 & 2 bedroom flats, rented, not affordable. Car free. Aimed at people commuting into the City.

11. Is the school expansion going to be enough?

Answer – It should be enough to meet demand for the forthcoming years but we will need to review to see whether further expansion in the area is necessary.

12. Comment from chair of governors of Singlegate and William Morris school: Governors welcomed the opportunity to use the Jamia building as it will be less disruptive for the school. Want to be able to offer local children places at the school.

13. Are you going to increase the nursery places?

Answer – It is not part of this proposal. There is an issue that the current nursery and reception (“foundation stage”) is in an ideal purpose built area and changing it due to nursery expansion would be problematic.

14. Are there any plans to expand even more?

Answer- the site wouldn't be able to provide for 4 forms of entry so further expansion would need to be on other sites.

15. Concerned about number of extensions (already had 3) and glare from external lighting.

Answer – endeavouring to be as sensitive as possible to local surroundings. With the use of the Jamia building there should be no need for a further major extension as the building is sufficient for 15 classrooms – it will be mostly adaptation although there will be a small extension housing a lift and staircase.. Need to balance the interests of pupils and residents.

16. Where is the catchment area measured from?

Answer – after special cases and siblings, admissions are prioritised on straight line distance from the school gate. We can look at seeing whether we should consider using gates at both Jamia end and existing school entrance gate in the criteria.

17. What are the next steps?

Answer – After this consultation the council will decide whether to publish a statutory notice after which the expansion can be legally approved subject to planning permission. We will be working in detail on the building scheme. There is a significant amount of work to be done in this area.

Cllr Martin Whelton closed the meeting thanking everyone for their attendance.

Marina Bowyer

From:
Sent: 05 June 2013 14:01
To: SchConsult
Subject: Singlegate Expansion Consulation

Dear Sir,

We live in Colliers Wood for last 7 years. We love the local area, goto the local church. We bought our house in 2007 and my kids were born there.

My daughter goes to nursery in Singlegate and she has not been able to find a reception place this year. The catchment has shrunk significantly since last year to go below 450m. We missed the place under distance criteria by a single metre. Worse, still she is now 9th on the waiting list when we expected her to be the 1st or 2nd.

The Singlegate expansion cannot come soon enough and the school should take a bulge class this year to accommodate local children.

Thanks,

THIS MESSAGE, AND ANY ATTACHMENTS, IS FOR THE INTENDED RECIPIENT(S) ONLY, MAY CONTAIN INFORMATION THAT IS PRIVILEGED, CONFIDENTIAL AND/OR PROPRIETARY AND SUBJECT TO IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS AVAILABLE AT <http://www.bankofamerica.com/emaildisclaimer>. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE DELETE THIS MESSAGE.

From:
Sent: 20 June 2013 17:30
To: SchConsult
Subject: Singlegate Primary School expansion proposals - objection

Attn:

Director of Children Schools and Families
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre,
Morden,
SM4 5DX.
Signed: Yvette Stanley, Director

Re: Singlegate Primary School: The London Borough of Merton intends to permanently expand the school from one form of entry to three forms of entry. Excluding the nursery class the current permanent capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 630. The current number of pupils registered at the school is 266. The current permanent published admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 90...Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on any of the proposals.

Dear Director,

Whilst understanding the need for additional school places within the borough, after careful consideration I do not feel it is in the best interests of Singlegate School or the local community for the school to be permanently expanded to 630 permanent places and am therefore writing to object to the proposal.

The rapid nature of the expansion is my main cause for concern. It seems too rapid and rushed a process and the driver seems to be the availability of the adjoining property rather than strategic, Borough-wide planning to ensure an equitable, community- and site-sensitive approach to the primary school expansion programme.

Singlegate is an excellent school and is effectively embedded within the local community. Rushing to turn it from 1 to 3 forms could adversely affect both the school and wider local community and will create risk in terms of the sustainability of educational standards. The Head and Governing Body are obviously exemplary now, but the larger the school becomes the greater the management responsibility and the greater the challenge of securing effective leaders in the future. There are additional risks to staff-retention, particularly of staff who have strong links to the immediate community. A much larger school is highly likely to become much more remote from the community than is the case presently, with implications for everyone who lives in the local area.

Two other significant issues which I believe an over-expansion will have repercussions for are:
the behaviour-management of the children;
school – parent communication.

As a parent I have seen instances of bullying and anti-social behaviour which will become more difficult to keep in check in a larger school. At the very least the anti-bullying policy will

need to be updated and embedded in the minds of the children in any expanded school. Plans for this have not been communicated to parents, as far as I am aware. There is already a concern amongst parents that the effectiveness of school-parent communication is not as good as it could be. It should be recognised that this challenge will only become harder in 3- form entry school. I would be interested to know what strategy will be put in place to ensure an improvement in this area, especially where there are child-protection implications (e.g. communication for changes to the timings of after-school clubs).

Additionally the site is simply too small to support this volume of children, and there is a question over the viability of the infrastructure in the immediate vicinity to support increased volume.

An alternative option may be for bulge years to be used, (as in other LBM primary schools e.g. The Priory) to ensure as many local children as possible can attend Singlegate, on a year-to-year basis, but without committing to a permanent expansion to 3 form entry that cannot be supported due to the limitations of the site and may create a management headache for the future. Coupled with this, I would also continue to argue that the council should seriously consider an APA for Singlegate to alleviate the problem of children from specific addresses within Colliers Wood Ward not securing a space at any of their nearest primary schools.

I would also like to query LBM's decision-making process over the distribution of schools of varying forms-of-entry across the borough. It seems at present that the Wimbledon schools are all remaining 2 form, whereas schools in other areas are being permanently expanded to 3 form. I would like to ask what the strategic basis for this is, as it seems to risk resulting in a two-tier primary sector. Smaller schools are generally preferred by parents who perceive education standards in these school to be higher and the holistic school experience to be better for their children. This is not a recipe for borough-wide community cohesion or a more harmonious sense of identity for Merton residents.

Finally, I would like to note that I would raise no objection to permanent expansion to 2 form entry, should this be consulted on, as I consider the community, physical and social context of Singlegate to be best suited to a 2 form entry school.

Other specific points I would like to raise are:

Security and safety

The dual use nature of the proposed additional play-space represents a significant risk to children. In the time since I responded to last year's consultation to expand to 2 forms I have personally cleared away a number of condoms from the children's play area and the paddling pool area in Colliers Wood Recreation Ground. The risk presented by waste such as this potentially being present within a school context speaks for itself. I have therefore changed my view that a shared space is a workable proposition I would also question the viability in terms of the cost of joint management, at a time when the parks budget is, I understand, under substantial pressure. A safer, more cost-effective option may be for the school to have sole use of any new play area during term-time, with the wider community having use during school holidays.

Play-space

As noted, the current site does not allow for adequate play-space for the numbers proposed. Neither is the area in front of the Jamia building a viable play-space option due to proximity to Christchurch Road. Use of this space would create risk to the children both in terms of visibility and access from the road and negative health-effects of playing near a main road,

especially if the proposed changes to make Christchurch Road Colliers Wood's new high street are realised.

Nursery

I am adamantly opposed to any expansion to the nursery as this would disrupt the education of the children currently in the nursery at a critical time in their development as well as creating an impersonal and chaotic learning environment for the future intake. Play-space for this specific age-group is of course of particular importance and insufficient to support additional numbers.

I would also like to note here that the consultation process itself seems a little flawed. The meeting on 27 November presented the expansion as a fait accompli and it appears the only genuine opportunity to feed into the decision-making process was in the summer, whilst the sale of the Jamia building was being negotiated. On several occasions during this period I requested information in writing from LBM and received no reply. I also tried to discuss the matter with my local Councillor. Neither response (or lack thereof) enhances the local democratic process or fosters trust and mutual respect between school, LBM and the local community.

It should also be noted that the main interlocutor in this process on parents' behalf is the Governing Body, the parent section of which is made up by those with children in the upper years of Singlegate school. It may have been beneficial to elicit input at an earlier stage, in order that it could have been material to the consultation, from parents with children in the foundation stage and those with children of pre-school age who stand to be most affected by the proposed expansion.

Despite these reservations I will of course continue to support the school whole-heartedly.

Yours sincerely,

Local resident and parent of two children currently attending Singlegate Primary School.