



Fulford Parish Council

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FULFORD PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF MARCH 2021 WITH REGARD TO FULFORD SCHOOL ACCESS AND EXPANSION PROPOSALS

Background:

At the Planning Inquiry for the Germany Beck Development in 2005, the Government's Planning Inspector made it a condition of the planning permission that there should be an access point from Germany Beck to the southern boundary of Fulford School in order to alleviate traffic congestion along Fulfordgate, Heslington Lane and Main Street. Fulford Parish Council supported this condition and the reasons for it.

It was also accepted that full details of the access arrangements within the school grounds would be considered at a later date through the submission of a separate planning application.

In the meantime, a new sports hall and tennis courts have been constructed by Fulford School adjacent to the access point, which has restricted the space available for buses to turn or park within the school grounds. The Parish Council, ward councillor and local residents stressed this point during the planning process but permission was granted nevertheless.

Part of the land to the west of Fulford School is owned by the Parish Council but is public open space for wider community, sports and leisure use.

Current Situation:

Persimmon Homes has provided a road leading to the school boundary but until it is adopted by City of York Council, it cannot be guaranteed that any rights of access for buses or other vehicles will be granted over land in Persimmon's ownership. The process of highways adoption is currently progressing.

The school's planning application for expansion and access proposals is currently awaited.

In October 2019, Fulford Parish Council was presented with a Draft Fulford School Access Feasibility Study from City of York Council which outlined a number of options for changes to traffic access to and from the school. The Parish Council had not been consulted in the course of the drafting of the study and this was the first opportunity the Parish Council had to consider any options for potential access arrangements. The ward councillor had ensured that this initial consultation was undertaken on the feasibility study.

Of the Options presented, Option 2 was preferred by the Parish Council. It was not considered an ideal solution but it was the only option of those presented that would guarantee some benefit to the residents of Fulfordgate in accordance with the recommendations of the Government's Planning Inspector. It was noted at that time that the feasibility study had taken into account the new restraints of the site (such as the recently constructed tennis courts) and that none of the options on offer provided for traffic to enter and leave via the Germany Beck access, despite the understanding of everyone concerned at the time of the Inquiry that this solution would be delivered.

In September 2020 the presented options were further considered and the minutes of that meeting recorded:

20134.e.iii) Fulford school access options

(1) Explore the access improvement options presented by Council officers and provide feedback.

Councillors commented that other options had not been fully explored but it was resolved to agree Option 2 as the preferred option from those provided. It was agreed that the Chairs of the Planning working group and Open Spaces working group would meet to collate the response to send to Cllr. Aspden.

(2) Explore willingness to give up a section of Parish Council land for Fulford School access improvements.

Following consideration, it was agreed that proposals could be put forward for consideration by the Parish Council, provided they were compatible with the Open Space/recreational use. It was further agreed that improvements to connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists should be included in any proposals to be considered.

No further proposals or options have been put forward for the Parish Council to consider since that meeting.

Since the above options for access were first drafted, residents have moved in at the Germany Beck site without prior knowledge of the potential for access to the school to be created from the site.

The Parish Council represents the interests of the residents at both sides of the Fulford School site, at Germany Beck, Fulfordgate and all other areas within the parish affected by school traffic. The Parish Council has therefore written to the school to express its hope that before a planning application is submitted, a full pre-application process will be followed that will include all affected residents and will demonstrate that all options for access improvements will be considered at a time when they are still at a formative stage. The Parish Council has also stressed the importance of a sustainable traffic management plan prioritising cyclists, pedestrians and local transport and strongly discouraging car use.

The Parish Council has confirmed that it would be pleased to be fully involved in any future consultation and hopes that a solution will be put forward that satisfies all stakeholders.