

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 77  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND)  
RULES 2000**

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF: APP/C2471/V/05/1189972  
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REF: 04/01700/OUT  
AUTHOR'S REF: JRF Proof 5 Summary

**PLANNING APPLICATION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNIVERSITY CAMPUS  
LAND AT FIELD LANE, LOW LANE, A64 TRUNK ROAD AND HULL ROAD,  
GRIMSTON, YORK**

**PUBLIC INQUIRY: 25 APRIL 2006**

**5. Direct and Indirect Social Impact  
of the University**

**SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE BY:  
PROFESSOR JANET FORD  
PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR**

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
HESLINGTON  
YORK  
YO10 5DD**

## **Summary of Proof of Evidence**

S1 My name is Janet Ford and I am a Pro Vice-Chancellor for Estates and Strategic Projects at the University of York. My evidence addresses the direct and indirect social impacts of the University of York. It considers the social and cultural contribution of the University, the impact of students in the community currently and in relation to the expansion. My evidence documents the University's current approach to housing students on the campus and its approach to housing students associated with the proposed planned expansion. Finally, my evidence discusses the impact of students and staff on the local housing market.

S2 The University makes a significant social and cultural contribution to the local community through open access concerts, public lectures, and shared activities with schools including music activities and science trails. About 10 % of students act as volunteers and the contribution of 500 York Students in Schools have been recognised by the receipt of the Queen's Jubilee Award. The University shares sporting facilities with the community, and has a Sports Volunteer programme that provides coaches to schools or assist schools when they come to use the campus sports facilities. Staff also act as volunteers.

S3 The development of Heslington East will provide additional social and cultural facilities in the form of a Performing Arts Centre that will compliment other theatres in the York, a leisure and recreation parkland including walking and fitness trails, rowing and canoeing, lakeside viewing and seating areas, and a community archaeology project. Additional sporting facilities will provide for community access including a fitness suite and dance studio, a competition standard swimming pool and, in time, an indoor stadium.

S4 York students (from all three HEIs) comprise 9.4% of the 183,000 resident population in York, a lower percentage of students than in many university towns and cities. There is growing emphasis on how student populations interact with the communities in which they are based and a recent publication by Universities UK and the Local Government Association (UCD19)

has recognised that there are both positive and negative dimensions, but that experience varies across the country. Some of the positive social and cultural impacts have been discussed above, for example volunteering, but in addition students contribute £22 million per annum to the local economy and support a wide range of local services.

S5 Concerns have been expressed about the impact of students in the local housing market, namely that there is noisy and unneighbourly behaviour, that the character of areas can change, that the provision of student housing contributes to rising house prices, prevents access by local people to affordable housing, and occupies housing in the private rented sector (PRS) that would otherwise be available to other client groups.

S6 The University currently houses 43% of its full time students (3996), largely on campus, and between 2004 and 2006 will add a further 390 study bedrooms. Rents for University accommodation are below the average for universities as a whole, first year students are guaranteed accommodation and second and third years are encouraged to stay on campus where capacity permits. There is excess demand but no further scope to build accommodation.

S7 Currently 5152 full-time University students live in the community including 9% who live at home. Thus under 3% of the population of York are University students typically renting in the community. Taking all HEIs in York only 5% of York residents are full time students living in the community.

S8 There is an adequate supply of private rented accommodation in the city at about 11 per cent of all properties. The sector has grown as a result of investor activity in student provision through buy-to-let and the competition amongst landlords for students has led to an improvement in standards in the sector.

S9 It is University policy to support students and landlords in the PRS through a registration scheme for landlords, a voluntary code of practice for landlords and students (put together by all HEIs in York, the City Council, York

Residential Landlords Association and other organisations), a Student Guide to the PRS, assistance with tenancy agreements and assistance with the resolution of disputes between landlords and tenants.

S10 The University monitors complaints most of which are by students about other students and often about noise. In 2004/5 only 12 complaints were made by members of the public, with a further 28 since October 2005 as the system has become more centralised. The University has a Good Neighbours group to which issues about noise, unneighbourly behaviour etc can be brought. The Accommodation Office in the University investigates any complaints received.

S11 The University now monitors where its students live in York. The highest percentage of student households in any ward is 20% of all households in Hull Road ward followed by 19.4 % in Heslington, 16.5% in Fishergate and 12 % in Heworth. No other ward has more than 6 % of student households. These figures may overstate the number of student households in any ward as the size of student household has been set at 3 persons which the University Accommodation Office and letting agents regard as low.

S12 The University has undertaken to provide housing for all students associated with the expansion who wish to be housed. The University cannot compel residence but will make the accommodation as attractive and cost effective as it can. There will be 3700 full time students associated with the expansion (9% of whom are likely to live at home) and the University plans include provision for an additional 3,300 bed spaces.

S13 Students make only a marginal contribution to rising house prices which are driven by a wide range of demand factors as well as supply issues. Their effect on affordable housing is limited as only a proportion of the property they occupy is entry level property. Their absence from the market would only have a marginal effect although longer term might contribute to easing entry at the bottom of the market through a filtering down process. The process of landlords buying property in particular areas and the resultant clustering of students will

however bring some changes in the nature of those areas, although this has to be set in the context of the relatively small proportion of housing taken by students.

S14 Students occupy under half of the available private rented accommodation in York. There is no evidence to support the view that they limit access of other groups. Student housing is primarily a niche market and landlords indicate that they would be unlikely to substitute other client groups in the event of a student shortfall.

S15 Staff associated with the expansion of the University will be appointed over a period of time. About half will already live locally while others will commute in from elsewhere. The demand from staff is estimated at between 140-160 per year.

S16 I conclude that the social benefits to the community associated with the University are very special circumstances that warrant development in green belt. The impact of students in the York housing market is small and the University has in place structures and processes which support the private sector and mitigate any negative impacts. Because the University will house all students associated with the expansion that wish to be housed, and the accommodation will be attractive, I conclude the expansion of the University will have only a marginal impact on the local market.

