

Name: Paul St. John Turner

Email address: paul.turner2015@outlook.com

Phone no: 01534873356

Details:

P167/2020 proposes a major widening and re-routing programme for Westmount Road in order for it to serve as the preferred primary access for a new hospital at Overdale. Whilst I support the use of Westmount Road as primary access to this hospital, I believe that this proposition should be rejected as it stands.

Such works would be complex and expensive, due in part to the topography involved. They would also carry considerable collateral costs, likely to include obliterating the historic bowling green and Gallows Hill, a children's playground, a large area on the western edge of People's Park and with other encroachments there (including the loss of up to 50 trees), and a number of homes. I think these consequences would be tragic for the area. Further, at some points along the route there are likely to be issues and costs in connection with retaining walls, cliff reinforcements and the like.

In addition, of course, such a major project (which indeed seems also to carry risks and unknowns at present - very little detail on it has been published) is likely to extend the timeline for construction of the new hospital.

Westmount Road is already two-way throughout its length, and currently carries relatively little traffic. In its present form, it would seem fully adequate to take normal hospital traffic in addition. I understand, anecdotally, that the "Blue Light" services would be quite happy with the road as it is, as primary access for the new hospital.

The only real issue with this road, in its present form, would be for the construction phase of the hospital. But there seem to me to be other and better solutions for this. Either Westmount Road could be made temporarily one-way at certain points in the construction programme, or smaller heavy goods vehicles could be used which are suitable for negotiating the existing road. In exceptional circumstances, there would also be other access routes available for heavy goods vehicles during the construction.

I am aware that a group titled "Guardians of Westmount Road and Peoples Park" has been formed in recent weeks in response to such concerns, and fully support them in respect of the issues I have outlined above.

I therefore believe that Westmount Road should, in serving as a primary access route to the new Overdale Hospital, be kept in its present form, without widening or re-routing, and remaining on a two-way basis except for any temporary one-way use as may be appropriate during the hospital's construction.