

## **DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL– 21 MARCH 2013**

### **PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES THORPE WAY/ALMA ROAD, BANBURY**

**Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)**

#### **Introduction**

1. This report considers objections to a formal consultation on a proposal to prevent cars, vans and lorries travelling between the residential area of Alma Road and the Thorpe Way industrial estate in Banbury.

#### **Background**

2. The original concept for the highway design of the Cattlemarket site was for all general traffic to be connected with the existing highway network only via Merton Street, supplemented with a bus-only link at Back Edward Street and an emergency link into Thorpe Way (see plan at Annex 1). As the site was being developed it became clear that a bus service through the estate was unlikely to be sustainable in the long-term. Therefore the bus-only link was deleted from the design.
3. A link was created from the established industrial area of Thorpe Way into the Cattlemarket site to allow construction traffic to avoid using Merton Street during the redevelopment. Whilst this has been closed by the developer from time to time, it has generally been open to traffic. As a result the eastern end of Alma Road is being used by greater numbers and much larger vehicles than it was designed to accommodate and there have been a number of complaints about the effect this is having on residents living in the area and requests that action is taken to close the route as originally intended.
4. Separately, a site adjacent to the Cattlemarket has been developed into flats and given Alma Road addresses. Consequently, the most appropriate location to close the route between the industrial and residential areas has changed to one which is on adopted highway (Alma Road is yet to be adopted as public highway). There is now therefore a requirement to formally advertise a Traffic Regulation Order to this effect.
5. The proposed closure would be achieved by the construction of a build-out reducing the width of the carriageway and the installation of bollards across the remainder, some of which will be lockable and thus capable of being removed in emergencies.

## **Formal Consultation**

6. In late January 2013 Oxfordshire County Council sent an explanatory letter and copy of the public notice containing the proposed changes to over 500 dwellings on the Cattlemarket site and to around 100 businesses along Thorpe Way. At the same time, notices were displayed on site and in the Oxford Times and supporting documentation and plans deposited for public inspection at County Hall, Cherwell District Council offices and Banbury Library. They are also available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.
7. A total of 30 responses were received regarding the proposals which are summarised at Annex 2. Of these, four were in favour of the proposals whilst the others – including a business on the industrial estate and a youth, community and homelessness charity based in the Cattlemarket estate – all objected. At the time of preparing this report, responses had yet to be received from the emergency services – these will be reported orally at the meeting.
8. The principle reason cited by objectors was the high level of congestion that already exists along Merton Street and which it is felt would be exacerbated by the removal of Thorpe Way as an alternative route out of the Cattlemarket estate. Further, for those travelling to and from the M40 and other key routes away from the town centre, Thorpe Way is a much more convenient and direct route. Other issues raised include doubts about the actual volume of traffic using Alma Road as a cut-through and suggestions that large vehicles could be prevented by using width or height restrictions rather than complete closure.
9. In response to the concerns about congestion on Merton Street and the difficulties that residents of the Cattlemarket estate would have in exiting from Alma Road if Thorpe Way was closed, this is clearly an issue that will need to be carefully monitored and early consideration given to possible remedial measures, which might include the removal of some daytime on-street parking, adjustment to signal timings and reinforcement of yellow-box markings. In addition it should be noted that as part of the forthcoming upgrading (and subsequent adoption) of Higham Way there will be an additional exit from the Cattlemarket estate created off Marshall Road. It is not intended to implement the closure of Thorpe Way until this new link is in place.

## **Conclusion**

10. Whilst it is recognised that most of the respondents to this consultation have objected to the proposed closure, this is by no means the majority of the residents of the Cattlemarket estate. Subject to receipt of the views of the emergency services, it is suggested that the closure proceeds and the effects on congestion along Merton Street be monitored and remedial measures considered as appropriate.

## **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

11. The cost of the advertising, consultation and subsequent works described in this report will be met from Section 106 funds relating to the Cattlemarket site.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

18. **The Deputy Leader of the Council is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed prohibition of motor vehicles in Thorpe Way/Alma Road, Banbury as advertised in the Oxfordshire County Council (Banbury, Thorpe Way) (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Except Motor Cycles) Order 20\*\*, to take affect once the new link provided by Higham Way was in place.**

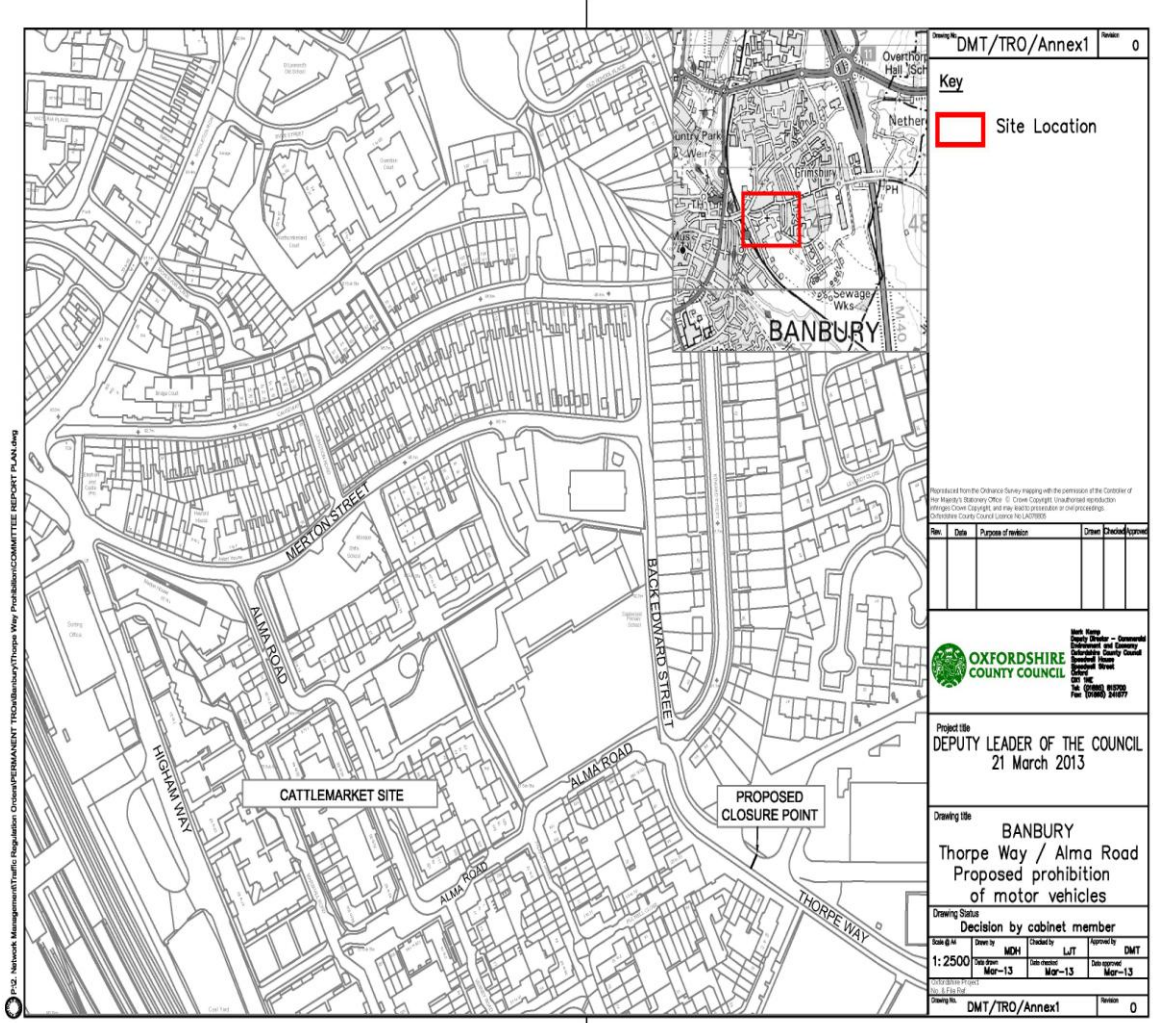
MARK KEMP

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Consultation documentation

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March 2013



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## RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
Resident of Alma Road	I think this is a brilliant proposal and we will very much welcome the closure of this link. At present it is very busy with all sorts of vehicle passing till very late in night.
Resident of Alma Road	We purchased the lease of a flat located on Alma Road some 5 years ago and our understanding at the time of the purchase from the developer was that this road would be restricted but, I guess, better late than never! You have my full support for this proposal and the sooner the better.
Resident of Alma Road	I am fully in favour of closing off the road as the traffic trying to get in and out of the estate during commuting times is ridiculous and I'm sure the volume of traffic is higher than anticipated and therefore now having a great effect on the area. There are also issues of parking on the estate with people using it for access to the Mosque, the station and the school. The road system on Merton Street has proved utterly ridiculous and has caused more problems than it has solved! It should have been made completely one way instead of only partially.
Resident of Verney Road	I am very pleased to learn about the proposal although I would like to know how exactly you intend to reinforce this proposal.
Auto Repairs Ltd Thorpe Way	I do not think it will be a good idea to close this access to all but cycles, motorcycles and emergency vehicles. Many people who visit Thorpe Way use this access and if restricted it will cause more traffic on the Middleton Road into town and this is congested enough at certain times of the day. I appreciate Thorpe Way/Alma Road is used as a "rat run" by certain drivers but instead of stopping cars and vans why not have a width and weight restriction which will stop heavy vehicles using it. Maybe it would be sensible to put a speed restriction on it and even speed bumps. I feel that reducing traffic flow especially at night will encourage burglars and vandals as they know no-one will be about to spot them. Possibly the reason why residents of Alma Road are complaining is because of the poor design and narrowness of the roads.
Chief Executive Officer, BYHP	BYHP runs youth and community work and homelessness services from 2 Chandos Close and we have a staff and volunteer team of 20. Our work also spans extensive work with families throughout northern Oxfordshire, many of whom access our site by car. Our Centre is extremely difficult to direct people to and from via the Merton Street entrance to the estate, which acts as a major hindrance to people being able to access our services. One way we have been able to overcome this has been to direct them through the industrial estate to us. A small number of our staff currently use this road to be able to get in and out of the area easily so that they can do outreach and in addition our clients use this access to get to our services.

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	<p>We are objecting to the proposed road closure on the grounds this would make our service even more difficult to access from the M40. As we are constantly out and about on the estate, none of our staff team have ever noticed HGV's using this route. We suggest the proposed reasons for the road closure are not adequate, as we feel that the problem could be addressed without cutting off one entrance to the estate and making it even more inaccessible.</p> <p>I would recommend that a simple solution would be to install a chicane that would prevent larger vehicles like HGV's passing through the link road, but allow residents access to the industrial estate.</p>
<p>Resident of Verney Road</p>	<p>Whilst I can understand the position of some of my neighbours surrounding the occasional heavy vehicles using this route via our estate (typically Grundon waste lorries, as a shortcut to their depot behind the Market Quarter estate), I think this closure may do more harm than good.</p> <p>During rush hour, the route via Thorpe Way is the only sane way to get to and from the Axis/Moo-ve estate. The extreme number of vehicles parked on Merton Street and on the parts of Alma Road nearest Banbury Mosque, combined with the terrible traffic situation at the Merton St/Bridge St junction (largely caused by traffic on the Bridge St/Concord Ave/Cherwell St crossroads), will only get worse if this proposal goes through. I expect it will add a good 10-20 minutes to my commute, each way, every time. Along with the increased risk of damage to property and people as the already choked Merton Street has even more cars trying to pass each other with only an inch or two of clearance, usually resulting in someone mounting the pavement.</p> <p>One juggernaut rolling through a residential estate every other day is unfortunate. Being choked by traffic multiple times a day is bad planning.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>Whilst I accept that the link was only ever a temporary one during the building works on the site of the Alma Road estate, I oppose any such proposal to permanently close it to cars, vans and lorries, whilst allowing it to remain open to motorcycles.</p> <p>My main reason for opposition to this proposal is that of access. The Thorpe Way route out of and into the estate eases access greatly, particularly at rush hour and peak times. The 'official' access route into the Alma Road estate is via Merton Street, which owing to 'on street' parking has become effectively a single carriageway road. Traffic can only move in one direction as there simply is not enough space for two vehicles to pass safely side by side. The result of this is that at peak times the flow of traffic is severely restricted and gridlocked along Merton Street into Alma Road. The situation is equally severe from the opposite direction; traffic cannot pass safely and this has the knock-on effect of stationary traffic spilling into (and obstructing) Bridge Street and obstructing entry into Marshall Road, the Royal Mail sorting office and the Waterperry Court office block. Cars regularly have to take to the pavement in Merton Street to be able to flow side by side, and it is frankly amazing that no pedestrians have been hurt by a car driving up the kerb. It is farcical that this narrow residential road was ever considered suitable as a main access route into a large and busy housing estate, as anyone who lives in Alma Road and has to access or exit the estate at busy times will testify</p>

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	<p>The access point at Thorpe Way provides relief for traffic exiting Alma Road, in particular traffic heading towards the M40, as well as the trading estates and industrial areas nearby. To close this point of access would exacerbate an already dire congestion problem on Merton Street. Instead of cutting access into Alma Road I would suggest the following measures which would greatly ease access and improve safety for road users and pedestrians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen Merton Street to allow the safe and easy passage of two way traffic.</li> <li>• Reinstate the double yellow lines and parking restrictions in Alma Road.</li> <li>• Install speed bumps on Alma Road.</li> </ul>
<p>Resident of Marshall Road Banbury</p>	<p>I would like to object to the proposal. The closure would mean that all traffic from the Alma Road and Marshall Road estates would have to use Merton Street and Higham Way as their only means of access and exit, these junctions are already extremely busy and on occasions gridlocked! There is also a proposal for a 700 space multi storey car park for the railway station that would be built on Higham Way with its only access via Merton Street meaning that this area would be at standstill for large parts of the day. I understand the concerns of residents of Alma Road as it is certainly not suitable as a through road especially as children play in the area, but if the multi storey is built this may be the only way off the estates.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>I have the following objections to this proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Closing the road will mean there is only one access route into and out of what is quite a large estate. This is the junction of Alma Road and Merton Street. The problem here is that Merton Street gets very congested and there is only one lane for both directions of traffic due to one side of the road being lined with cars from residents of Merton Street. There is also a lot of regularly parked cars for users of the mosque. It would be chaotic forcing all the estate traffic onto that single-lane road. I am aware that on previous communications it has been stated that the Marshall Road/Merton Street junction comprises the second access point to the estate; this is not fit for purpose since Marshall Road is not actually a road but a glorified car park with blind corners and pedestrians (including children) walking everywhere. That route is simply not safe, leaving only the Alma Road/Merton Street junction, which is also not adequate for the volume of traffic.</li> <li>2. The proposed closure point on the map does not leave turning space for cars that travel from Alma Road onto the small stretch of Thorpe Way. A lot of cars park along that stretch of road.</li> </ol>
<p>Resident of Marshall Road</p>	<p>I am afraid if the proposal goes ahead I will be forced to move off the estate. Getting out of the west side of the estate (via Merton St) is almost impossible between 8:30am and 9:30am due to traffic at the Bridge St lights, queuing traffic on Merton St westbound, queuing traffic west bound on Bridge St and traffic from the post office. As such setting off for work I have to drive down Thorpe Way, Ermont Way to turn west on the A422, then north up the A423 to Southam. Closing Thorpe Way will not only make it harder to get out of the estate, the traffic will increase on Merton St.</p> <p>Also in slippery weather it is impossible for normal cars to get up the small hill just before the traffic lights. I am all for closing the throughway to heavy goods vehicles, perhaps with weight or height restriction (with a max height barrier). But the only exits left for the estate is onto Merton St that is already overloaded.</p>
<p>Resident of Fulwell Close</p>	<p>As a nearby resident who frequently uses the route proposed to be closed, I understand why the proposal has been put forward, but I would like to still see cars permitted to use the road, with only vans and lorries banned.</p>

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	<p>The only reason I use that route is to avoid having to drive down Merton Street (where it joins Alma Road). This road in my opinion is much more of a hazard, with cars parked all along one side, sometimes illegally, and only room for one car to drive through. Many taxis speed through that road as well. If the proposed road closure goes ahead there will be multiple problems instead on Merton Street.</p>
<p>Residents of Padbury Drive</p>	<p>We would like to raise a few points for consideration -</p> <p>Whilst we understand that this road being open has led to some traffic cutting through the estate to get out onto the industrial estate and vice versa it has also allowed us residents to also exit that way and avoid the constant congestion found on Merton Street.</p> <p>The junction from Alma Road onto Merton Street is horrendous and no matter what day or time of day it is, there is constant congestion and traffic flow issues due to the sheer volume of traffic and parked cars trying to get around that area, especially now the Mosque has also been expanded. By closing the exit onto Thorpe Way it will significantly increase the traffic there and will be impossible to access the housing estate without major delays as it all becomes gridlocked and it also backs onto Middleton Road.</p> <p>This is particularly a problem in the area by the Royal Mail Sorting office and the development of flats there and the constant cars parking on double yellow lines that make a congested area even more difficult to travel through.</p> <p>It is also worth considering that if other proposed planning applications such as the proposed Merton Street car park are approved there will be even more traffic in this area and making it even more impossible to enter the housing estates.</p> <p>I would suggest that perhaps it is worth investigating to see if there is a way of slowing and limiting traffic that use the road from Alma Road onto Thorpe Way such as speed bumps and maybe a form of height/weight restriction so that general cars can still use it but not lorries and commercial traffic?</p>
<p>Resident of Fulwell Close</p>	<p>I have no objections to the proposals, as a resident on this estate for the past 5 years, I was under the impression that this part of the road was to be blocked off for traffic on the completion of the build. I am surprised that the Council have taken so long to implement the original plans. The present system is dangerous not only for drivers on this estate, but more importantly, it is dangerous for pedestrians and especially children walking to the local school. As there are no proper pavements for pedestrians on this part of the estate there is a particular danger on the corner of Thorpe Way and Alma Road.</p> <p>Currently, drivers from other parts of town are using this estate as a 'rat-run', making it a very busy thorough-fare, especially during peak times.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>With regards the proposed closure, I believe that it will compound an already problematic congestion on Merton Road. This is a real problem and I have witnessed arguments between drivers that try to use this route, part of the problem being that the residents of Merton mostly park on the main road outside their homes, this reduces it to single lane, added to this the visitors to the mosque that park anywhere on this route that they can find a space. A lot of the residents on Alma and the surrounding Closes use the Thorpe Way as an alternative, even when needing to go in the other direction as it is much simpler and congestion free.</p> <p>I do not see any hgv's on Alma Road as it is too narrow for most, we do get vans, but this is acceptable and a lot of them are actually visiting residents anyway.</p>



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<p>Resident of Verney Road</p>	<p>I do not object to the road closer per se (as I witness dangerous driving on a daily basis and fear for the safety of local residents and my own family due to taxi's, vans, lorries etc) but I have some concerns/queries with regards to existing road issues which I believe will be exacerbated by this course of action.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sensible access to housing estate - Congestion on both Merton Street and Alma Road, which is exacerbated by Mosque traffic/parking and lack of parking restriction on both roads (I am aware of a 'planned' opening of an additional access road to the Cattlemarket housing estate but timing is paramount to this being relevant) at the present time there are no parking restrictions in place on the Cattlemarket housing estate (Alma Rd etc) which means you get cars parked all the way down the left side of the road (when entering the estate) and sometime the right as well) this makes access/exit extremely difficult and creates a bottle next back the Bridge St traffic lights.</li> <li>2. Will emergency vehicles be able to access via the industrial estate via a drop barrier? I am the mother of a toddler as well as being pregnant and planning a home birth, I like to think that the emergency services/my midwife could actually get to us as and when required and of not this creates a real health &amp; safety issue for your risk assessment of this planned road closure</li> </ol>
<p>Resident of Fulwell Close</p>	<p>I appreciate the intention of the proposals but think the solution will cause terrible traffic along Merton Street. Assuming the proposal goes ahead there will be only two remaining routes to leave our estate. One route will be to turn right onto Merton Street – a narrow road with only on road parking and home to Banbury's only mosque. Traffic along this road is already difficult due to on-road parking it is almost impossible to see from the sorting office end if it is safe to travel along the road. Frequently two cars will meet halfway along the road, the only solution being for one to reverse the length of the road. If there is a big event at Banbury Mosque buses and cars can make it impossible to use this exit; in fact before the Marshall Road exit was available residents would have been trapped on our estate on a number of occasions were it not for the Thorpe Road exit. This is not the fault of the Mosque but we have a lot of people trying to use a tiny road.</p> <p>The alternative exit is to cut through the parking area of the flats on Marshall Road. This route is also narrow, again with poor visibility and there are no pavements for residents. I believe forcing more traffic through this route is an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>Have the council considered putting a height restriction on the link between the industrial and residential areas so that lorries (which I'm assuming are the cause of the complaints) cannot reach Alma Road but other traffic can? This would stop lorries using a road that hasn't been designed with them in mind without forcing other traffic that is trying to leave Banbury to travel along the already busy roads.</p> <p>The only other sensible alternative that I can see would be to re-open Causeway and make Merton Street one-way in one direction and Causeway one-way in the opposite direction.</p> <p>I'd strongly suggest that the Thorpe Way / Alma Road link should be left open. Given a choice I'd much rather suffer the lorries through the estate than the chaos that will ensue forcing additional traffic along Merton Street, Bridge Street, Middleton Road and Marshall Way.</p>
<p>Resident of Verney Road</p>	<p>Currently most the traffic coming out of the development and going towards M40, A422 and A361 is using Thorpe Way route avoiding Merton Street access. Merton Street and Middleton Road junction in already very congested at peak</p>

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	<p>times and can add extra 15 minutes when coming out of the development and joining Middleton Road.          If Thorpe Way access is blocked then all the traffic will be diverted towards Merton Street and Middleton Road junction which will add to the existing problem and also will leave only one entrance and exit for this big development.          Is it possible to not to close but put height barriers so only cars, motorcycles and emergency vehicles can go past not the big lorries to stop them coming into the development?</p>
<p>Resident of Padbury Drive</p>	<p>I object to this proposal due the poor traffic flow along Merton Street, which is the only route out of this development.           Merton Street has residents cars parked permanently, so theoretically making it a one way street, there is heavy traffic along this road and at peak times you can be waiting over twenty minutes to exit from the Alma Road junction or from the Marshall Road Junction. Cars are always forced into the kerb, therefore potentially endangering pedestrians.          As you can imagine closing the access via Thorpe Way will only move the congestion towards the Middleton Road, which directly junctions with Merton Street.</p>
<p>Resident of Marshall Road</p>	<p>I object to this proposal due the poor traffic flow along Merton Street, which is the only route out of this development.          Merton Street has residents cars parked permanently, so theoretically making it a one way street, there is heavy traffic along this road and at peak times you can be waiting over twenty minutes to exit from the Alma Road junction or from the Marshall Road Junction. Cars are always forced into the kerb, therefore potentially endangering pedestrians.          As you can imagine closing the access via Thorpe Way will only move the congestion towards the Middleton Road, which directly junctions with Merton Street.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>If all residents only have access to and from the Alma Road estate via Middleton Road/Merton Street this will increase congestion which, along with the issue that residents park along Merton Street and Alma Road (effectively making them a single lane), would make entering and exiting the estate extremely difficult. Furthermore, because vehicles are parked along Merton Street and Alma Road, we often witness vehicles, especially vans and lorry's mounting the pavement to get past, which is a danger to pedestrians. If these larger vehicles could no longer exit from the estate via Thorpe Road they would have no choice but to use the narrow roads at the front of the estate which would surely be a health and safety issue.          Secondly, we are concerned that with this amount of congestion, this would delay the time it would take for an emergency vehicle to access the estate. Even though you have stated that they would still be able to access the estate via Thorpe Way, it would take them longer to get to this access point as they would still need to drive through the congestion at the front of the estate to get to the Thorpe Way entrance point.          If you are going to prevent vehicles from entering and exiting the estate via the Thorpe Way entrance, then surely the only thing that you can do to resolve the problem of congestion and prevent these large vehicles from mounting the pavements to get passed the parked cars is to paint double yellow lines along Merton Street and Alma Road. Or perhaps a height barrier at the Thorpe Way Entrance so that smaller vehicles can still use this access point to at least reduce some of the congestion from the front of the estate?          Finally, I do ask that you at least monitor the congestion that we already have at the Merton Street/Middleton Road entrance during busy times so that you understand our concerns and will hopefully see that this proposal will only exasperate this problem.</p>

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<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>I wonder, would it be possible/feasible to keep the access open for both motor cars and motor cycles. I totally agree there is a problem with larger and heavier vehicles cutting through the development and this does need to be stopped as soon as possible.</p> <p>I do hope that if the closure as outlined in your letter goes ahead, it will not pave the way to propose opening up any other access onto the development, in particular I am thinking from the railway station side of the development. There was a proposal to do this some time ago which would prove hugely detrimental to residents on the development. We are aware that non-residents drive onto the development to park up for the day in visitor parking areas free of charge while they go off to work. If another access way were to be opened up it would draw in people using the rail services taking full advantage of parking that was not intended for that purpose.</p>
<p>Resident of Verney Road</p>	<p>I currently use the access to get to work in Adderbury. I do understand the need to close this road as I have noticed a large amount of traffic using this as a through road but I do have concerns due to the difficulty getting in and out of the estate at peak times. If you try to get out on to Middleton Road after 8am in the morning, it can take a very long time, due to cars coming from Grimsbury blocking the junction. Something would need to be done to address this, such as hatching or enforcement. It's very busy as it is and with the additional traffic coming out I feel it would make it considerably worse.</p> <p>Access in and out of the estate is already difficult, due to cars parking along Alma Road and Merton Street and I think that with the closure of this access and no other measures in place, it would only deteriorate.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>I think that it would be a bad mistake to close off this road. Yes I agree that we shouldn't have large lorries trying to get through it. I know for sure that a lot of people use this way through to our homes, as trying to get up Merton Street, then right into Alma Road by the Mosque is absolutely a nightmare. Being able to get home via Thorpe Way when Merton Street is blocked with traffic and parked cars, is a godsend.</p> <p>This is a big estate in which there is a lot of vehicles using it, by closing off Thorpe Way will cause more congestion at Alma Road/Merton Street.</p> <p>I myself have had 3 wing mirrors hit, because cars racing up Merton Street, to get passed the parked vehicles, which has cost me every time because people don't stop.</p> <p>I have seen many a bump from other vehicles trying to run gauntlet of Merton Street/Alma Road.</p> <p>Please put up signs so that the lorries cannot get through, but leave it free for cars, motorbikes and bicycles.</p>
<p>Resident of Alma Road</p>	<p>The main entrance to Alma Road used to have double yellow lines but since it was re-surfaced some time ago, the yellow lines have not been re-applied. Although the signs are still in place regarding clamping vehicles, there continues to be constant parking of vehicles along both sides of the road and even on the grass areas. Can you please tell me when the double yellow lines will be re-applied and the clamping re-instated.</p> <p>The side entrance to Dashwood Primary School is accessible from Alma Road and is constantly used to drop pupils off by car causing a major traffic headache for any resident wanting to enter or exit Alma Road. I have already witnessed one pupil being hit by a car as there are limited pavements and no parking spaces for school drop off. There needs to be something done about this urgently before a pupil is seriously injured or worse by the irresponsible behaviour of both the school and the parents.</p>

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<p>Resident of Marshall Road</p>	<p>I would like to note my objection to closing the road between Thorpe Way/Alma Road, Banbury. Living not far from this road I believe that it is not used heavily and provides an vital link to the M40 when the Middleton Road is gridlocked at rush hour.</p> <p>I believe it will become even more vital for residents living in Alma Road / Marshall Road to be able to leave the estate if planning permission goes ahead for the new railway 707 space multi story car park on Higham Way.</p>
<p>Resident of Fulwell Close</p>	<p>I strongly object the plan. I don't see any big problems causing by the traffic through Alma Road so far, instead, it gives huge convenience to people locally to access to the main road etc. M40. Our bedroom is actually facing the Thorpe Way, don't hear any noise during the night, and cannot see any problems causing by the traffic.</p> <p>The only alternative once the road close to access to the main road is through the other side of Alma Road and Merton Street which has lots of car parked on the road side. The street is very narrow, only can have one car drive through at one time, cannot cope with traffic, and also the Middleton Road is already very busy during the peak hours. It will make it worse if Thorpe Way is closed. It just solves one problem but creates another which is even bigger.</p> <p>We do agree there should be some kind of traffic control in the Thorpe Way, e.g. stopping big vehicles, putting speed control, but definitely not to close the road for all vehicles.</p>
<p>Identical letters sent by three residents</p>	<p>I am against the closure of the road to all vehicles for the following reasons.</p> <p>By closing the Thorpe Road access, the housing estate traffic will have no option but to use Merton Street by either travelling along Alma Road or Marshall Road.</p> <p>Merton St is a street which is already almost impossible to navigate as a result of permanently parked cars which effectively creates a single lane in a very congested area. When the Thorpe Road access from the estate was temporarily closed some months ago I regularly sat for 15 minutes and more in a line of cars which were unable to travel from the town centre towards Alma Road as the single lane of Merton Street was totally congested with standstill traffic attempting to travel towards the town centre. I have witnessed cars mounting the pavement in order to try and squeeze down the street. From a pedestrian point of view this is totally unacceptable and highly concerning from a safety point of view.</p> <p>The traffic lights on Merton Street are an added issue which creates queuing and hold ups and prevents free flow of traffic.</p> <p>Merton Street is a feeder road to the Banbury train station which is exceedingly busy much of the time and as I understand that there are plans to extend the parking facilities at the station – the number of vehicles travelling to and from the station can only increase with the obvious effect.</p> <p>For as long as residential traffic from the estate has used the Thorpe Way link – this has had the effect of reducing congestion in the Merton Street area. Closing the link will hugely exacerbate the problem.</p> <p>You state that the reason for closure is to prevent larger heavier vehicles using Alma Road. I have lived on the estate for two years and not seen any abnormally large vehicles using the road. Thorpe Way is an industrial estate that has quite a few very large HGV lorries daily. I have never seen these vehicles enter the estate so cannot understand the reasoning for the closure. If you are referring to delivery vans then these are an essential part of today's society and no street is exempt from them.</p>

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	<p>I would suggest that the erection of a Regulatory sign restricting vehicles of a certain weight/width would solve the problem of larger and heavier vehicles using the road.</p> <p>I can see no benefit by the closure other than to a few homes at the edge of Alma Road. Overall, the closure will cause a greater amount of traffic and a larger amount of complaints from disgruntled residents.</p> <p>For many people a major factor to moving to the estate was the ease of access to the motorway via Thorpe Way. If we decide to sell our properties, we will not be able to use the selling point 'easy access to the motorway', as was used when selling the property to us. Will this result in loss in value in property?</p> <p>You mention that the road will be closed to all vehicles other than emergency vehicles. I would be interested to know how these vehicles will access a closed road.</p> <p>If this is anticipated to be by way of gated entry/security fob it would make sense to allow residents of the estate similar access. This would resolve the added congestion onto Merton Street and prevent the alleged use by larger heavier vehicles.</p> <p>The closure of the Thorpe Way link would have a disastrous effect on an already congested Merton Street and Bridge Street and not least on the safety of pedestrians using that road.</p>
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