

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 21 NOVEMBER 2013

CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER – BANNED TURNS ON A40, RISINGHURST

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. This report considers objections to the consultation following the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which closed the gap in the central reservation of A40 London Road at the Collinwood Road junction in Risinghurst.

Background

2. In response to numerous requests over many years for action to be taken to improve road safety at the London Road/Collinwood Road junction, the gap in the central reservation at this location was closed on a temporary basis in May 2012. The legal process for this was to publish an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which allows a restriction to be put in place without prior consultation for a maximum of 18 months, during which time any objections must be considered before a decision is made to either retain or remove the restriction. The location of the closure is shown in Annex 1.
3. Over the 5 years prior to the introduction of the closure there were 11 reported injury accidents at this location 4 involving vehicles turning right into Collinwood Road and 5 involving vehicles turning right out of Collinwood Road; no accidents have been reported since the closure.
4. In addition to concerns about safety of road users, there have long been requests for a formal crossing in this vicinity. A recent survey counted just over 200 pedestrians and cyclists crossing A40 in this location in a 12-hour period. In the last 10 years there have been no recorded accidents involving pedestrians.

Consultation responses

5. There were a small number of complaints about the effect of the closure when it was first introduced, particularly from businesses concerned that customers were having difficulties accessing their premises. In response, additional signing was erected on the approaches to Green Road roundabout.
6. In September this year letters were sent to the emergency services, local councillors, the Parish Council, local businesses and organisations to gather views on whether the closure should remain or alternatively be removed and

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reopened to traffic as before. In addition, County Councillor Phillips distributed questionnaires to local residents seeking views on the closure.

7. A total of 30 responses were received which are summarised in Annex 2. Both the Police and Parish Council are in favour of retaining the closure, whilst the 3 local businesses who responded wished to see it removed because of the effect on trade. County Councillor Phillips (representing the area) is opposed to closing the gap permanently but would only support its reopening if traffic signals were in place to make it safe for pedestrians to cross the road and for road users to turn right into Risinghurst. Analysis of the 24 responses from residents shows that there is no clear majority in favour of either retaining the closure or removing it and many respondents requested additional measures to assist pedestrians and/or right-turners.

Conclusion

8. The introduction of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order has been successful in reducing accidents at this location and does have local support. However, local businesses and some residents have objected to the Order due to the effect on trade and the increase in delays and journey length for those wishing to access the Risinghurst area. In addition, many respondents have raised the need for traffic signals to assist pedestrians wishing to cross A40 and/or drivers wishing to turn right at the junction.
9. Previous outline feasibility work looking at the introduction of signals at this location has suggested that full signalisation could risk eastbound traffic blocking back to Green Road roundabout however it would enable the introduction of improved pedestrian crossing facilities to replace the current uncontrolled crossing.
10. In view of the clear road safety benefits arising from the introduction of the closure of the gap in the central reservation it is proposed that the current Order be made permanent, but that that officers be instructed to review the traffic management measures between Green Road roundabout and the Risinghurst junction on A40 (including the possible introduction of pedestrian phases into any potential changes) at the earliest opportunity. As a consequence, no works will be undertaken to effect the permanent closure at this stage.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

11. The cost of making the current Experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent will be met from the revenue budget for general traffic management matters.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to:-**
- (a) approve the making of a permanent traffic regulation order prohibiting right turns into and out of Collinwood Road; and**
 - (b) instruct officers to review the traffic management along this section of A40 (including the possible introduction of pedestrian facilities) at the earliest opportunity**

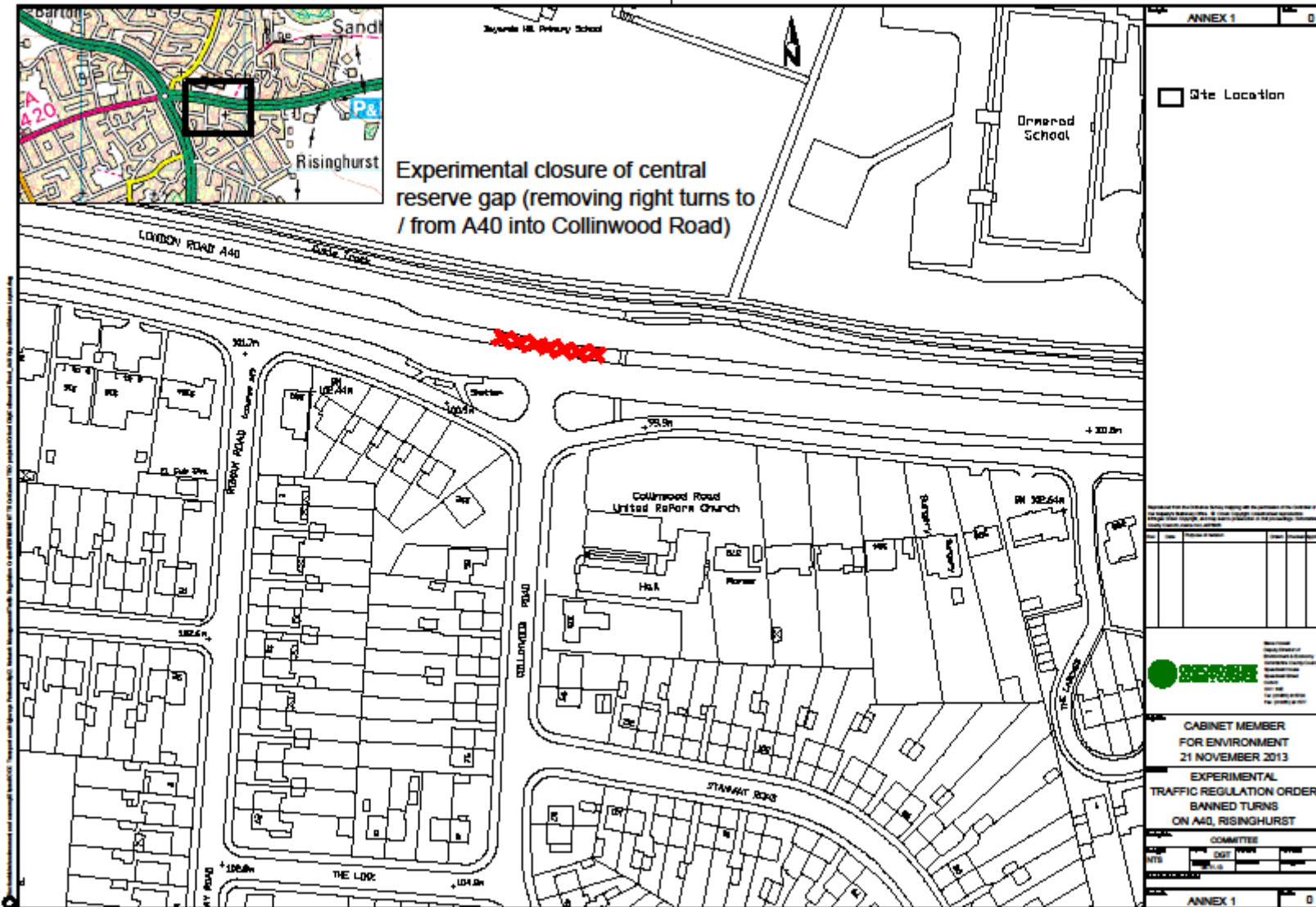
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Background papers: Consultation documentation

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RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
Thames Valley Police	<p>Since its closure in 2012 I understand there has been clear casualty saving benefit. I therefore support that the closure is made permanent.</p> <p>I am however conscious that the closure may be impacting on an increase in drivers making illegal turning manoeuvres on the Headington Roundabout and ask if further measures could be investigated to improve this situation should the gap be permanently closed.</p>
Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Council	<p>This letter was discussed at the last Parish Council Meeting. It was decided that the Parish Council would like it to stay closed as it is.</p>
Carphone Warehouse	<p>We would really appreciate it if the gap was reopened. It has caused a great loss of footfall since it closed. The road being opened makes for a better traffic flow and convenience for everyone and I'm sure we are not the only ones who are unhappy with the decision to close it initially. Our opinion is for it to be reopened</p>
McDonalds	<p>The closure has had quite a dramatic effect on the business. We have seen lost sales in excess of 10%. This inevitably has a knock on effect, being the reduction in the number of staff we employ. This is evidently going to affect the local economy in which we trade as these people will be added to the already long list of un-employed within oxford.</p> <p>Aside from the effect the closure has had on my business, I have also seen issues elsewhere. There is now a distinct increase in congestion for people trying to get out of Risinghurst. The traffic lights at the Green Road roundabout can sometimes take up to 15 minutes to get through.</p> <p>Due to the massive effect the closure has had on my business and other local businesses, plus the knock on effect that has had on the local economy I strongly feel that the Gap should be re-opened.</p>
Headington Superstore	<p>The closure of the access has affected my business a lot. The Council needs to do more for small business in order for them to survive. I have a grocery shop and would never know when one day a small Tesco or Sainsbury store suddenly open around me and then I will be closed because I cannot compete them</p> <p>I hope that you will understand my concerns and would put traffic lights rather than a pedestrian crossing.</p>

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<p>County Councillor Glynis Phillips</p>	<p>I am opposed to closing the gap on a permanent basis for the following reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - residents need another exit onto the A40 London Road from Risinghurst and need to avoid the busy Green Road roundabout - the Barton West development will increase traffic in the whole area but especially on the Green Road roundabout and it make sense to allow some of the current traffic to exit right from Collinwood Road to reduce the queues at the roundabout - it is not sensible to look at the issue of opening/closing the gap without making crossing the 2 dual carriageways safe for pedestrians. <p>I would support opening the gap but only if traffic lights/pedestrian crossings are in place to make it safe for pedestrians to cross the road and for road users to turn right into Risinghurst.</p>
<p>County Councillor David Williams (resident of Risinghurst)</p>	<p>I object to the idea of closing the gap on the A40 opposite Collingwood Road as it joins London Road in Oxford.</p> <p>The obvious solution to this very dangerous junction is to move the bus separation lights (200 yards further on towards Oxford) down to the intersection and have lights installed that would allow exit from the Risinghurst estate onto the London bound A40 and at the same time give safe passage to pedestrians across this extremely busy road.</p>
<p>City Councillor Dee Sinclair</p>	<p>I am dismayed that having been promised a full consultation before the decisions around the A40 gap are taken, that this is not going to be the case.</p>
<p>Support Co-ordinator Southern Health NHS</p>	<p>As far as I am concerned the safety of pedestrians and motorist is paramount whichever decision is made.</p>
<p>Resident of Collinwood Road</p>	<p>I have to travel by car to Wycombe and London on a regular basis. I have to waste valuable time and money at the moment by turning left and joining the traffic and it takes several minutes to get to the Green Road roundabout. I then have to negotiate the roundabout and finally drive back down the other carriageway passing my road on my right hand side. What a waste of time and money!</p> <p>I often have to pick my daughter up from the city centre when her shift ends late at night. Again, instead of just turning right into Collinwood Road, I have to turn right towards Cowley and then use the exit onto Kiln Lane. Another waste of time and valuable petrol.</p>

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	<p>With the closure, there is often a large backlog of traffic trying to get out of Risinghurst at the Kiln Lane exit. This often backs all the way down the slip road into Green Road and Kiln lane - quite unacceptable! Please get our junction reopened and ideally it should be protected by traffic lights. The important thing however is to get it reopened quickly - PLEASE!!!!</p>
Two residents of Collinwood Road.	<p>We recognise the genuine concerns about safety at the reservation and would hope that the council will provide a solution, which is both safe and reasonably convenient.</p> <p>We use the crossing as pedestrians and as car drivers. As pedestrians, we find that the crossing is dangerous even for us as relatively agile people.</p> <p>As drivers, we find that being unable to turn right out of Collinwood Road is very inconvenient. The only two options for us now involve approaching and rounding the Green Road roundabout, where we are delayed by varying amounts according to the traffic conditions and we are then, of course, adding to the traffic congestion. In the event that the roundabout is badly congested, we do not have any reasonable alternative route.</p> <p>We would prefer that the junction is open, with either traffic lights or a pedestrian crossing.</p>
Two residents of Collinwood Road	<p>Our view is that an open junction (as was the case previously) is inevitably going to be dangerous given the speeds that people drive in both directions on the A40 between the roundabout and Thornhill P&R. However, it is quite a long way round for us when we want to get to the M40, which we do quite regularly. Furthermore, I know that some people do cross over the two parts of the A40 on foot, which seems very dangerous.</p> <p>As a result, the best option would be to reopen the junction, but to install sensor-controlled traffic lights which would allow both the movement of traffic to and from Collinwood Road, and pedestrians between Risinghurst and Barton. There are, of course, some traffic lights already installed between Collinwood Road and the Green Road roundabout to allow the flow of buses. Would it be possible to shift these traffic lights away from the roundabout to allow the same lights to fulfil all three functions?</p>
Resident of Colwell Drive	<p>I would wish to see this turning fully open with a pedestrian bridge similar to the Cutteslowe area. I believe it is quite feasible to build a disabled friendly bridge in this area, as there should be sufficient space for a disabled ramp instead of stairs.</p>
Resident of Ridgeway Rd	<p>I have watched keenly the traffic volumes and routes through Risinghurst since the inclusion of the changes. There has been a change in traffic patterns because of these changes and they have been positive. "Rat run" volumes have reduced significantly</p> <p>I think that fast traffic from either direction in to and from London should not have access through Risinghurst.</p>

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	<p>This is a residential area, the huge majority of volume traffic is going to some other destination and yet without this measure anyone who knows about it can cut through the estate.</p> <p>All traffic NOT destined for Risinghurst should be unable to enter the estate. Under the present road system if the temporary closure was made permanent and stopped all traffic entering the estate it would make for a safer place for us all to live.</p>
Two residents of Ridgeway Road	My husband and I both support the closure of the central reservation to the A40 although there is still a rat run through the estate in the morning it is much better at night.
Resident of Risinghurst	<p>The closure of the reservation has impacted considerably on my day. On mornings when I have to drop off my children by car at school it can easily take 20 minutes (as opposed to previous 5 minutes) to get from my home to Sandhills School. Sandhills is the catchment school used by children in Risinghurst and I cannot be alone in finding this journey time frustrating. I am not able to walk as I need my car to go straight on to work afterwards.</p> <p>I would favour the reservation being open with traffic lights. If traffic lights would be a problem then it would be great just to open it up again.</p>
Resident of Downside End	<p>I fully support the re-opening of the A40 gap at Collinwood Road Risinghurst Oxford, but with Traffic Lights, like the Kiln Lane / Green Road Junction with the Eastern By Pass.</p> <p>It has been extremely inconvenient having to leave the Estate by Green Road and down to the Hamburger Roundabout or go West along the A40 to the Roundabout and having to go all the way back round to make off for Wheatley, Thame and London, where I work.</p> <p>It is not worth just putting a Pedestrian crossing across the A40 as the cars need to have more than one exit from Risinghurst Estate.</p> <p>I know there was a safety worry about the old gap and a few accidents but its dreadful trying to queue up round the Roundabout to get to London at busy times.</p> <p>My suggestion is also to do away with the Bus Lane traffic lights just before the roundabout and use them at the Collinwood Road Gap – that way the traffic won` t be held up too long at Risinghurst.</p>
Two residents of Risinghurst	We agree with the call for the gap to be re-opened with pedestrian crossing / traffic lights as a common sense 'win-win' solution addressing both safety and accessibility issues at the same time. To attempt to deal with traffic safety issues in an over simplistic manner by just closing the gap merely creates other problems and does not represent Best Value.

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	<p>The temporary experimental closure of the gap has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - led to an increase in traffic speeds approaching the Green Road roundabout and this combined with the lack of an adequate crossing is an accident waiting to happen. People will cross there whether there is a crossing or not, it just makes sense to make it safe to do so. - increased congestion at the Green Road-Kiln Lane mini roundabout to the point that it has ceased to function at rush hours - as motorists (including 'rat runners') desperate to exit/enter the estate now simply disregard traffic priorities. Again it is only a matter of time before a significant accident occurs. - led to a decline in local business due to the restricted access. Most worryingly is the impact on the local Post Office which has a vital social/community function and value beyond commercial considerations.
<p>Resident of Risinghurst (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>My preferred ranking for the best solution to the A40 central reservation is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Open with traffic lights 2 - Open with pedestrian crossing 3 - Closed with pedestrian crossing 4 - Fully open 5 - Fully closed <p>If the decision is to keep this junction closed then measures must be taken to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Vehicles travelling from the roundabout towards London are enforced to obey the 30 mph speed limit 2 - There is some way for pedestrians to cross the road safely at the present location. 3 - Measures are taken to improve the Kiln Lane access. Often cars and buses have difficulty getting onto / out of the estate due to poor parking / and or queuing behaviour. 4 - Measures are taken to deter the "rat-running" through the estate that often occurs and therefore compounds the issue in the Kiln Lane area.
<p>Resident of Netherwoods Road (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>I have the following suggestion which I think would allow flexibility of access and improve safety; allow right turns out of Collinwood Road but not right turns into Collinwood Road. Right turns into Collinwood Road can be very dangerous if there is queuing traffic blocking visibility into the bus lane. This arrangement works well for the Nielson building which is on the same stretch of road.</p> <p>If other options must be chosen, this my order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Open with traffic lights

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	<p>2 Open with pedestrian crossing 3 Fully open 4 Closed with pedestrian crossing 5 Fully closed</p>
Resident of Lewis Close	<p>The central reservation should be re-opened for traffic into and out of Risinghurst. The junction should have a pedestrian crossing. The pedestrian crossing and the turning traffic should be controlled by traffic lights.</p> <p>My reasons are these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-opening the junction to traffic both ways will reduce local traffic flow through the residential area as people have a choice of access points. - It will relieve the current congestion in Green Road and the slip road at the bottom of Kiln Lane especially during peak periods. - There are both functional and social needs for people living in Risinghurst to cross the A40 to the Barton side, and vice versa, as the facilities each side of the main road are not duplicated eg schools, leisure centre, post office etc. Currently, crossing the dual carriageway on foot is a risky business - and that's for someone who is fit and healthy; for those who are less mobile or are crossing with children or pushchairs it is a significantly perilous undertaking.
Two residents of Risinghurst	<p>Our view regarding the closure of central reservation on A40 at the junction with Collinwood Road should be that it is either fully closed. If it opens it should have a pedestrian crossing and traffic lights placed just before Collinwood Rd junction coming from London.</p>
Resident of Delbush Avenue (Sandhills)	<p>If the only options are to open or keep closed the gap without additional lights or crossings I would be very much in favour of letting it stay as it is i.e. closed. I use that stretch of road several times a day and when the gap was open people took such ridiculous risks to get across either by foot or vehicle.</p> <p>If the gap by Collinwood Road is re-opened it should only be done when there is a budget to install traffic lights (not just a marked pedestrian crossing)</p>
Resident of Green Ridges (Barton)	<p>One thing is clear: the junction needs a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights for two reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As you probably already know, many people cross the road, and it seems to me a large number of those people are children. As the Barton Leisure Centre on one side, and the church on the other, many go to activities run at both venues. I've seen countless and harrowing close calls then children have crossed on their own or with ignorant adults. 2) Motorists coming out of the roundabout and driving east frequently speed. I see this every time I cross (several times per week). My impression is that many drivers believe they are on the M40 or close enough.

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<p>Two residents of Stanway Road</p>	<p>We feel the turning should remain closed, as any car wishing to access Risinghurst has two other points of access e.g. off the ring road; or up to Thornhill and back down the westerly A40. Having lived in Risinghurst for a year I can't say I've missed the closed section at all.</p> <p>Also, a pedestrian crossing with traffic light to allow safe access to Barton Leisure Centre, the Children's Centre and primary school would be of great value. It can be a perilous crossing for a patient adult, but watching some of the kids charge across looking like an accident waiting to happen, if it hasn't already done so.</p>
<p>Resident of Collinwood Road (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>As a resident of Collinwood Rd my preference, in order of priority, would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Closed with pedestrian crossing 2) Open with traffic lights (with pedestrian crossing?) 3) Fully closed 4) Open with pedestrian crossing 5) Fully open
<p>Two residents of Ringwood Road (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>Our preferences for the A40 gap are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Closed with pedestrian crossing (2) Fully Closed (3) Open with traffic lights (4) Open with pedestrian crossing (5) Fully open <p>We feel that the central reservation should remain closed. The road is very fast road it has been a good decision to close the road and force people up to the roundabout to the other exit out of Risinghurst. We don't feel that there has been a build of traffic at the Risinghurst traffic lights as a result of the Collinwood Road/A40 closure.</p> <p>I would not contemplate crossing the road to get to Barton Leisure Centre or the Roundabout Centre as it is unsafe due to the fast flowing traffic. It is also a long walk to the subways at Barton or the one at Sandhills. Whether the central reservation remains closed or is re-opened then there definitely needs to be a safer way for pedestrians to cross.</p>
<p>Resident of Risinghurst</p>	<p>For the options presented, my preferred ranking is as follows:</p>

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<p>(questionnaire response)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Closed with pedestrian crossing 2. Open with pedestrian crossing 3. Open with traffic lights 4. Fully closed 5. Fully open
<p>Resident of Risinghurst (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>For the options presented, my preferred ranking is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fully closed 2. Closed with pedestrian crossing 3. Open with pedestrian crossing 4. Open with traffic lights 5. Fully open
<p>Residents of Collinwood Road (questionnaire response)</p>	<p>We live in Collinwood Road and our son attends Wheatley Park School and we shop at Asda, Wheatley so we are all affected by the closure. However, we appreciate the increased safety to road users since the closure. Our ranking options as follows</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Closed with pedestrian crossing 2-Open with traffic lights 3-Open with pedestrian crossing 4-Fully open 5-Fully closed.