

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Rugby Area Committee

**Date of Committee** 8th March 2006

**Report Title** Rugby Western Relief Road – Bilton Lane, Rugby

**Summary** Results of the consultation on the potential closure of Bilton Lane, Rugby.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** Yes/No

**Background Papers** None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** *Details to be specified*

- Other Committees  Rugby Area Committee 11th January 2006
- Local Member(s)  .....  
(With brief comments, if appropriate)
- Other Elected Members  .....
- Cabinet Member  Councillor M Heatley – for information  
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  I Marriott
- Finance  .....
- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....

- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION**                      **YES/NO**      (*If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps*)

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :**

*Details to be specified*

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

**Rugby Area Committee – 8th March 2006**

**Rugby Western Relief Road – Bilton Lane, Rugby**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Environment and  
Economy**

**Recommendation**

That Area Committee rejects the closure of Bilton Lane, Rugby.

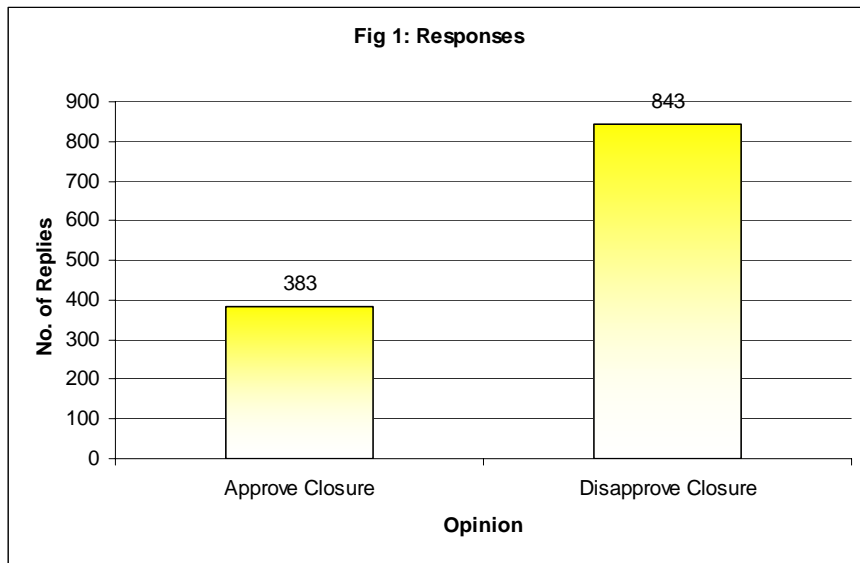
**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 A Public Inquiry into the Side Roads and Compulsory Purchase Orders for the Rugby Western Relief Road (RWRR) was held in April/May 2005. One of the matters raised at the Inquiry was the possible closure of Bilton Lane to motor traffic. The Inspector at the Inquiry concluded in his report that there may be safety benefits for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians if Bilton Lane was closed to through traffic at the junction with the relief road. The Inspector recommended that a public consultation should be carried out to gauge public opinion on this matter.
- 1.2 The Council has, therefore, carried out a consultation exercise which consisted of 3,500 questionnaires delivered to homes in Bilton and Long Lawford, has issued a press release and has given notification on the Council's website. Rugby Borough Council, Dunchurch Parish Council, Church Lawford Parish Council and Long Lawford Parish Council have also been consulted. The consultation closed on 20th February 2006 and the results are presented below.

**2. Analysis of the Responses**

- 2.1 3,500 questionnaires were delivered and a total of 1,226 responses were received.

Fig 1 shows the results of the survey.



2.2 383 of the returned questionnaires supported the closure of Bilton Lane, the remainder were against. 69% of those who returned the questionnaires were against closure.

2.3 A more detailed analysis of the response is given below.

#### **Responses in Favour of Closing Bilton Lane**

2.4 The responses in favour of closing Bilton Lane have been subdivided into categories to determine what people felt were the main benefits of the scheme. The following categories were adopted:

- (i) Weight Restriction – Less heavy vehicles travelling through Bilton.
- (ii) Quieter – Bilton Village will become quieter due to less traffic.
- (iii) Reduced Traffic - Fewer cars and heavy vehicles on roads through Bilton.
- (iv) Safer – Less traffic making Bilton safer for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.
- (v) No comment.

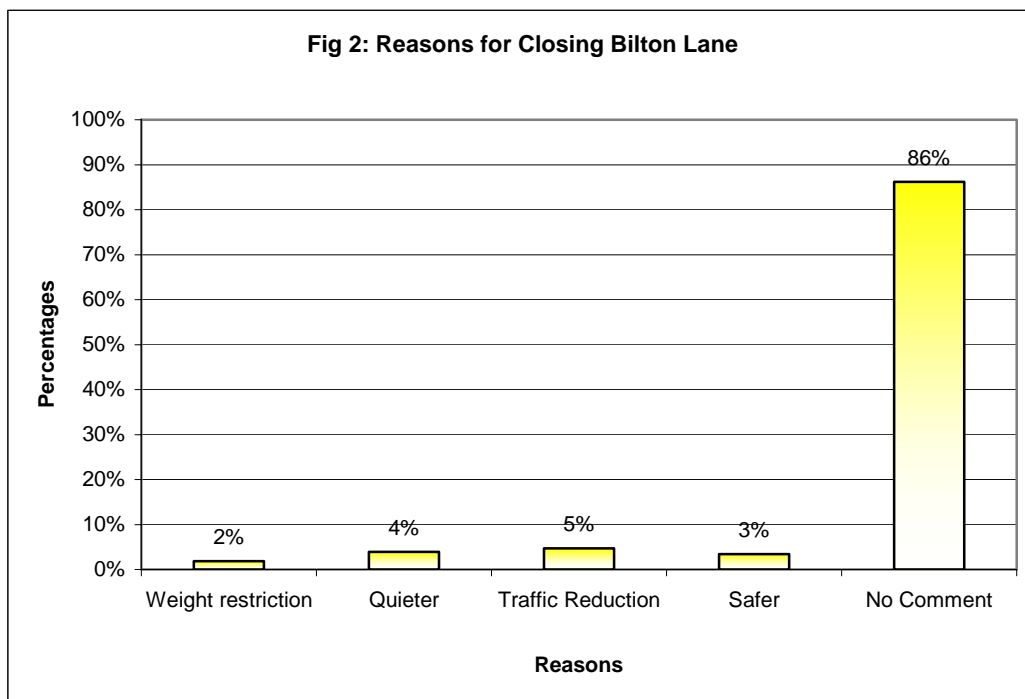


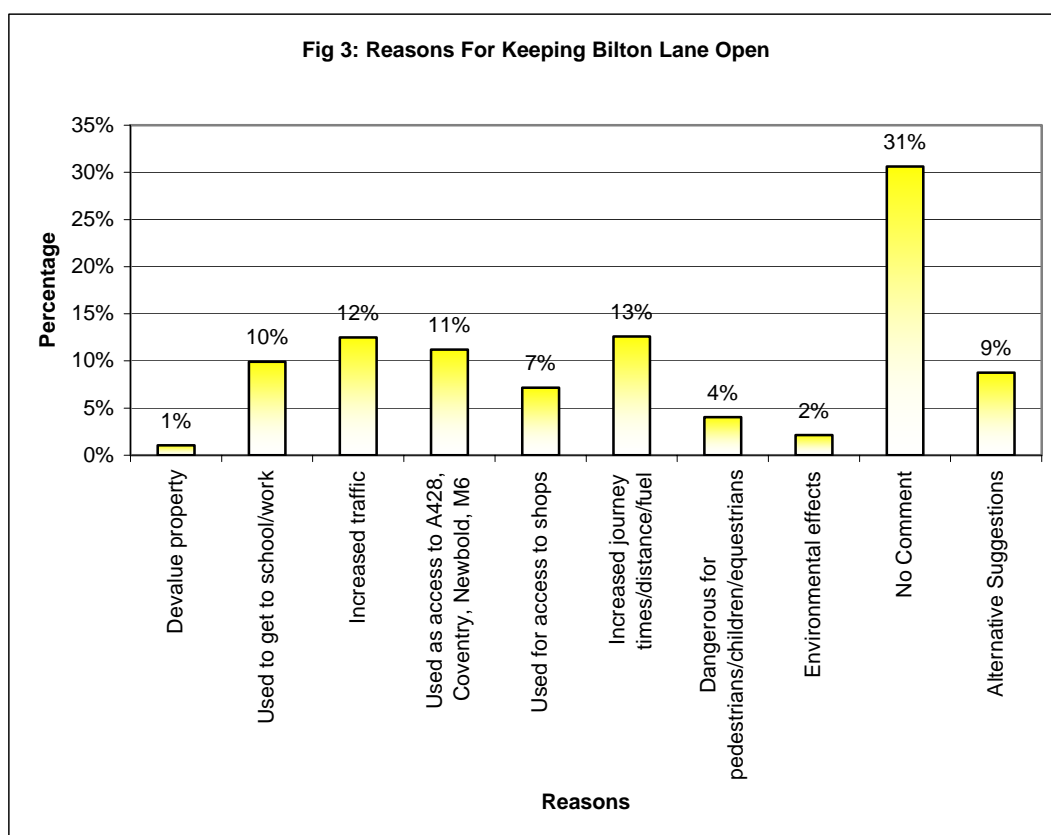
Fig 2 shows that most of the respondents who supported closure of Bilton Lane chose not to give a reason for their vote. There were a number of replies supporting closure in the hope it would speed up delivery of the Rugby Western Relief Road.

### **Responses in Favour of Keeping Bilton Lane Open**

2.5 The responses opposed to the closure of Bilton Lane were categorised as follows:

- (i) Devalue property.
- (ii) Used to get to work/school.
- (iii) Increased traffic.
- (iv) Used as access for A428, Coventry, Newbold and M6 Motorway.
- (v) Used for access to shops.
- (vi) Increased journey times/distance/fuel.
- (vii) Dangerous for pedestrians/equestrians/cyclists.
- (viii) Environmental effects.
- (ix) No comment.
- (x) Alternative suggestions.

Fig 3 illustrates the reasons given for objecting to closure of Bilton Lane. The principal reasons given for keeping Bilton lane open were that closure would increase journey time, increase traffic and that it was regularly used for work and school journeys.



### 3. Rugby Borough Council and Parish Council Responses

3.1 The following responses were received from Rugby Borough Council and three local Parish Councils.

#### Rugby Borough Council (RBC)

3.2 The RBC opposes the closure of Bilton Lane for the following reasons:

- (i) When the proposals to close Bilton Lane came before Warwickshire County Council Cabinet, about five years ago, there was widespread cross-party opposition to the idea and the proposal was rejected.
- (ii) The Lawford Lane/Bilton Lane is a well used route that provides an important social and commercial link between the Bilton area and the village of Long Lawford and other villages west of Rugby.

- (iii) Closure of Bilton Lane would mean a deviation of nearly 2 miles along the relief road for those wishing to drive to the western side of Rugby, and similarly for those travelling from Lawford to the Bilton area; and a diversion along Bilton Road and Addison Road, or Lawford Heath Lane for those who would not use the relief road.
- (iv) The closure of Bilton Lane would make the A428 impossible at peak times and absolutely impassable, should an accident occur, as there will be no alternative route in Rugby.
- (v) The highway authority should not be seeking to restrict road communications at a time when roads in this area are heavily loaded.

#### **Church Lawford Parish Council**

3.3 Church Lawford Parish Council disapproves of the closure of Bilton Lane for the following reasons:

- (i) Increased journey time for those travelling to schools in Bilton, Bilton village and Sainsbury's.

#### **Dunchurch Parish Council**

3.4 Dunchurch Parish Council disapproves of the closure of Bilton Lane as it would be detrimental to road users between Bilton and Long Lawford.

#### **Long Lawford Parish Council**

3.5 Long Lawford Parish Council disapproves closure of Bilton Lane and made the following comments:

- (i) Alternative route required into Rugby if the A428 Lawford Road should ever become blocked by roadworks or an accident.
- (ii) Extra distance will have a detrimental effect upon air pollution and environment.
- (iii) Bilton Lane should be kept open to all traffic under 7.5 tons.
- (iv) Bilton Lane should be improved with provision of footpath and A428 traffic signals, dangerous bends should be removed and road widened where necessary.
- (v) If Bilton Lane is closed then children attending Bilton School may lose their free transportation as this route will no longer be deemed 'dangerous'. Children walking to school will be vulnerable to attack or abduction if there is no traffic on Bilton Lane.

## **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 3,500 questionnaires were delivered to homes in Bilton and Long Lawford and 1226 replies were received of which 69% favoured keeping Bilton Lane open.
- 4.2 Of those in favour of closure, reduction in traffic was given as the main reason for supporting the suggestion, although 86% of those who were in favour chose not to comment.
- 4.3 Those opposed to the closure of Bilton Lane expressed their concern at increased traffic and increased journey times, distance and fuel as the main reasons. Devaluing of property, access to schools, work, shops and surrounding areas were some other points raised.
- 4.4 Responses were also received from Rugby Borough Council, Church Lawford Parish Council, Dunchurch Parish Council and Long Lawford Parish Council; all opposed the closure of Bilton Lane.
- 4.5 Some respondents referred to the public inquiry into the new housing development in Back Lane, Long Lawford at which objectors referred to the lack of shops and other facilities in the village to support the development. It was stated at the inquiry that residents would have access to shops and facilities in Bilton via Bilton Lane. Residents feel that it would be wrong to now close Bilton Lane.
- 4.6 At time of writing no responses had been received from the emergency services.
- 4.7 As the majority of respondents object to the closure of Bilton Lane it is recommended that the Lane be left open.

JOHN DEEGAN  
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28th February 2006