

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Response to Scrutiny recommendations for traffic management on Plymouth Argyle match days

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 29 March 2011

Cabinet Member: Councillor Wiggins

CMT Member: Director for Development and Regeneration

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Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: Part I

Executive Summary:

The Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommended a review of the traffic management arrangements for Plymouth Argyle match days.

A full pre-season review of the traffic management arrangements was undertaken in July/August 2010, following notification from the police that they would no longer undertake traffic management duties on match days. Present at the review were council officers, as local highway authority representatives, Plymouth Argyle Football Club (PAFC) and the Police.

It was established that the arrangements existing at that time could not be continued without police support due to the safety and legal requirements for managing traffic on the highway. Consequently, an alternative traffic management plan was produced.

All parties agreed the traffic management arrangements which were subsequently adopted and implemented. Plymouth City Council's responsibilities extend only to the management of the public highway, whilst the PAFC manage the car park. Arrangements for the management of the car park perimeter road were decided between the police and PAFC.

The performance of the traffic management arrangements was monitored during the opening weeks of the 2010/11 football season and adjustments were made to the traffic signals during this time. In general, the plan was adjudged to have been successful, although the time to clear the car park had increased to approximately 30 minutes.

The current arrangement is due to be reviewed following the 2010/11 season and after the new car park junction is installed as part of the Life Centre works.

Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014:

Providing a safe and uncongested road network contributes to the economic well being of the City in support of the Growth priority.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

To accept the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee could incur additional costs on the Transport and Highways service through resourcing qualified personnel to manage the public highway.

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

The traffic management arrangements already in place reduce to an acceptable level any health and safety risks on the public highway.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that no further review of the traffic management arrangements be undertaken until the new car park junction, part of the Life Centre development, has been completed in 2011.

The existing arrangement was considered by all parties, i.e. Plymouth City Council, the police and PAFC, to be the only safe, and indeed legal, arrangement available without police support and no further options are available to improve on this. However, the new traffic signal junction planned for the Park & Ride car park as part of the Life Centre works will provide a 'fit for purpose' junction enabling the better traffic management.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Re-open the car park's bottom and/or central entrance – Whilst this would improve the time taken to disperse vehicles from the car park (including away supporters' coaches), it would require manual traffic management on the public highway to hold the traffic signals at 'red', whilst directing traffic from the car park onto Outland Road. This action cannot currently be legally undertaken without the support of the police.

Background papers:

None

Sign off: comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert initials of Finance and Legal reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):

Fin		Leg		HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in response to the Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's recommendation (Minute 59 – Review of Policing and Safety following Plymouth Argyle Football Match against Exeter City) that a review of the traffic management at the park and ride car park be undertaken on Plymouth Argyle match days and consideration be given to a proposal to open the bottom end of the car park on match days to relieve congestion.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The A/Deputy Chief Constable (Devon and Cornwall Constabulary) formally notified Plymouth City Council (PCC) of its intention to withdraw its traffic management support for pre-planned events on 26th March 2010. This had implications for Plymouth Argyle Football Club (PAFC) as, historically, police officers actively directed traffic entering and exiting the Park and Ride car park on match days.
- 2.2 In light of the notification, a meeting was convened between council officers, as local highway authority representatives, PAFC and the Police in July and August 2010, to review the traffic management arrangements for the coming season.
- 2.3 It was established at the meeting that, as highway authority, PCC was responsible only for maintaining the safe and efficient operation of the highway network and that it had no responsibility for managing the car park and its perimeter road. Indeed, whilst it was established that PAFC were responsible for the car park on match days, it was unclear who had responsibility for the management of the perimeter road.
- 2.4 It was further established that the procedure used to clear the car park of vehicles at the end of football matches in previous seasons, i.e. by using the car park's bottom and central exits, a role previously undertaken by the police, could no longer be safely, or indeed legally undertaken without appropriately accredited persons to direct traffic on the public highway.
- 2.5 PCC gave consideration to providing traffic management support to PAFC in lieu of the police, albeit to a lesser extent, however, it was unable to guarantee resources for every home match in the season. Notwithstanding this, PAFC was reluctant to incur PCC's costs for this support.
- 2.6 An alternative proposal satisfying the requirements of all affected parties was agreed and subsequently implemented for the 2010/11 season. It was further agreed that an additional review of the traffic management arrangements, as they affect the public highway, would be undertaken following the installation of the new traffic signal junction serving the car park.

3.0 Current Traffic Management Arrangements

- 3.1 The current traffic management arrangements allow vehicles to exit through the Outland Road/Mayflower Drive junction, as it normally does when operating as a Park & Ride car park. This was adjudged to:
- 1) be the safest method;
 - 2) have less impact on the A386 Outland Road than the previous arrangement, thus satisfying the council's Network Management Duty conveyed upon it under the Traffic

Management Act 2004, i.e. 'securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network'.

- 3.2 In adopting this approach, it was recognised that, prior to a match, there might be difficulties in letting drivers know when the car park became full which might in turn have led to tail-backs from the car park on to Outland Road.
- 3.3 In mitigation, it was agreed that, when appropriate, PAFC would place signs within the curtilage of the car park boundary, but still in full view of drivers on Outland Road (both east bound and west bound), to indicate this.
- 3.4 As an additional measure, PCC agreed to display an appropriate message on the relevant electronic messaging signs to indicate to drivers when the car park is full.
- 3.5 It was also clear that there might be delays to traffic exiting through the Mayflower Drive traffic signal junction as a result of these changes. Consequently, PCC agreed to monitor the junction from the Council's Network Control Centre (NCC) on the evening of the 11th August 2010, i.e. the first home game of the season, and then on the following two Saturday home matches, with a view to developing an optimised traffic signal timings plan.
- 3.6 In order to facilitate the new arrangement, PAFC would require that drivers park within the delineated bays; a situation difficult to enforce by their stewards. Whilst the car park does not form part of the public highway, PCC officers pursued the possibility of including the car park within the Authority's Off Street Parking Order to facilitate legal enforcement by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers in the future.
- 3.7 It was established that, in principle, PCC's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) could be used to undertake the enforcement duty. However, in order to ensure that tickets given to offending drivers would be lawful, the car park would first need to be included in the City's Off Street Parking Order and be appropriately signed on site.
- 3.8 As it is not public highway, it should be noted that the management arrangements for the Park and Ride perimeter road, i.e. maintaining emergency access, drop-off and pick-up for away support coaches etc., were agreed between the police and PAFC.

4.0 Performance of the Current Traffic Management Arrangements

- 4.1 Initial reports from the NCC and PAFC following the opening home games were largely optimistic; traffic flows on Outland Road after each match was considered to have improved although the car park took longer to clear (approximately 30 minutes).
- 4.2 Further adjustments were made to the traffic signal timings to ensure that junction was properly optimised to reflect a noticeable drop in attendance.
- 4.3 Whilst there is currently significant 'green time' afforded to the car park exit, through flow is ultimately restricted by the junction layout which was not designed to cater for Mayflower Drive and not the car park exit.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The existing traffic management arrangements have been developed after earnest consideration of all alternatives with PAFC and the police; however, given the limitations of

the existing site, and the requirement for suitably qualified personnel to direct traffic on the public highway, it is considered that the current arrangements are the only safe, and indeed legal, option for controlling traffic on match days at this moment in time.

- 5.2 However, an opportunity exists to improve the match day traffic management arrangements once the new car park junction is constructed in 2011, and it is recommended that a review be undertaken when this work has been completed.