

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Task and Finish Group
Scrutiny Review – Report
October 2010**



Review of Community Events and Road Closure Policy

Plymouth City Council

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board approved in principle, on 28 July 2010, the establishment of a Task and Finish group to review the Community Events and Road Closure Policy with membership to be drawn from the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Task and Finish Group will submit its findings for approval to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 27 October 2010.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Growth and Prosperity Panel established a Task and Finish Group to review the Community Events and Road Closure Policy.

- 2.2 The Group received representations from Plymouth City Council Officers.

- 2.3 Key issues and findings included that –

- road closures for community events require traffic regulation orders; temporary traffic regulation orders (tro's) can be made by the council;
- the authority dealt with 15-20 events throughout the year that require traffic regulation orders. It was considered that double the number of event requests made were not continued for various reasons, one being that the system was too bureaucratic;
- there was a wide range of events – charitable, community, commercial and civic;
- it was the duty of the council to co-ordinate its traffic regulation orders with the fire brigade and the police in the case of an emergency;
- all scale events, ranging from two day events to 10 minute events, were required to follow the same process and administrative procedure;
- officers were working on developing several marching and carnival routes to alleviate problems linked with road closures;
- two elements were involved in processing temporary traffic regulation orders, administration costs and advertisement costs;
- temporary traffic regulation orders had to be advertised in a local newspaper that covered a specific percentage of the city's residents;
- the Council charged £1000 for a temporary traffic regulation order which would take into account administration and advertisement costs;

- in the past the Council had not charged for road closures for charitable events however this was down to the discretion of council officers;
- officers had looked at the current charging policy and decided there were three possible options for the future. The first option was to continue to charge £1000 – this meant that organisers would know in advance how much they would be required to pay however the Highways Department would absorb anything over and above £1000. The second option was to have a fixed charging scheme with a sliding scale – this would keep the costs down. The third option was to charge actual costs of the event to the organiser. This would be the most equitable approach however organisers would not know in advance the fee.
- there could be extra costs for some event organisers; for example if the desired event resulted in the closure of a road with a car park there would be loss of revenue – this would be at the discretion of the Park Manager;
- temporary traffic regulation orders were currently subsidised by the Highways Department – a sum of money was currently put aside to deal with events;
- an Events Safety Group was formed and held quarterly to discuss up and coming events;
- Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, recently wrote a letter to local authorities encouraging them to make it easier for local residents and event organisers to hold local events without having to plough through mountains of forms and red tape;
- Street parties should be encouraged but the use of traffic sensitive roads or distributor roads should be discouraged

3 The Panel

3.1 The Task and Finish group had a cross party membership comprising the following Councillors -

- Councillor Nicholson (Chair)
- Councillor K Foster (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Berrow
- Councillor Wright

For the purposes of the review, the Task and Finish Group was supported by –

- Gill Peele, Business Manager for Development and Regeneration

- Ian Ellis, Assistant Network Manager
- Duncan Malloch, AMEY Network Manager
- Helen Rickman, Democratic Support Officer

4 Scrutiny Approach

4.1 The Task and Finish Group convened on two separate occasions to consider evidence and hear from witnesses -

- 26 August 2010
- 6 October 2010

4.2 Members of the Task and Finish Group aimed to examine and make recommendations on –

- the departments costs in the delivery of events management with the proposed charging policies.

The Work Programme Request (PID) is attached as Appendix 1.

4.3.1 At its meetings on 26 August 2010 and 6 October 2010 the Task and Finish Group considered evidence from Council Officers, raised questions and considered answers and recommendations relating to the Review of the Community Events and Road Closure Policy.

5 Witnesses

5.1 The Task and Finish Group heard representations from –

- Ian Ellis, Assistant Network Manager
- Duncan Malloch, AMEY Network Manager

6 Key Issues Arising from the Evidence

6.1 From the evidence provided at the Panel's two meetings, the following key themes emerged.

6.1.1 the current charging policy fees were arbitrary and unfair;

6.1.2 the current policy was too bureaucratic and complicated

6.1.3 the advertisement of temporary traffic regulation orders was an expensive part of the process because it restricted the advertisement of TTROs to local newspapers

6.1.4 the Transport and Highways Department budget was used for the majority of City Council events

7 Findings

- 7.1 Based on the evidence the Panel had received, it was considered the problems arising from the current Community Events and Road Closure Policy would be addressed if –
- an agreed charging policy that catered for different scale/types of events was formulated
 - advertisement costs could be reduced. These make up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the fees charged, and could be reduced by advertising on the Council's website, in shop windows, libraries and town halls other than the current requirement to publish in a local newspaper. However current government and Plymouth City Council legal advice does not support this;
 - smaller event organisers are encouraged to avoid road closures and specifically on major bus routes or traffic sensitive roads and thereby avoiding the need for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs), with reliance on the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 for smaller community based events

8 Recommendations

1. That representations be made to Central Government in relation to the medium used to advertise Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders e.g. Local Government Association, Department for Transport, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
2. That there be an approved list of events for which the Council will provide Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) free of charge and that this will be approved by the Cabinet Member for Transport. The list will include civic and other similar events that have been held across the city for at least the last 5 years. The list to be reviewed on an annual basis
3. That the department of the Council responsible for the decision to hold any event not included in the approved list, should provide the budget for the reimbursement of the cost of the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) to Transport & Highways
4. That Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) continue to be advertised in the local newspaper for all events except those falling within the criteria for street parties and fetes (pending any Government response from the representation)
5. That a charging policy be implemented based on the proposed categories and charges, and be reviewed annually (or sooner if a change of law). Any changes to be approved by Cabinet member for Transport. The criteria are to be finalised by officers.

Category	Suggested criteria (still to be fully defined)	Charge
A	Require diversion of major Bus routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Close any traffic sensitive road (The list online www.plymouth.gov.uk/trafficsensitivestreets) ▪ Divert significant traffic onto any traffic sensitive road ▪ 1000 or over attendees/participants 	£3,000
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Important route, but not traffic sensitive, e.g. distributor road ▪ Close less than 200m of road ▪ Close any road for less than 6 hours in total (including setting up and cleaning up) ▪ Divert traffic for less than 1km ▪ Less than 1000 attendees/participants 	£1,200
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Street parties and fetes ▪ Non distributor roads eg residential ▪ Limited to a length of road not exceeding 200m ▪ No two adjacent roads closed on a single day 	£35

6. That officers be thanked for their efforts to recognise and support the organisers of smaller events

7. The panel also welcomes the investigation of parade and carnival routes and whether these can be standardised to simplify the TTRO process

Request for Scrutiny Work Programme Item

1	Title of Work Programme Item	Review of Community Events and Road Closure Policy.
2	Responsible Director (s)	Anthony Payne : Director for Development & Regeneration
3	Responsible Officer Tel No.	Tom White : Head of Network Management, Transport & Highways 01752 304256
4	Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	<i>Cabinet Member for Transport</i>
5	Aim	The scrutiny panel will review the departments costs in the delivery of events management with the proposed charging policies and make recommendations
6	Objectives	<p>Scrutiny members will gain a better understanding of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Traffic Management Act 2004 • The new events management procedures • Costs being incurred by the Council for the management of events eg Road traffic orders, licences etc • Types of events eg community, charitable both small and large and associated traffic management requirements • Police presence • Benchmarking with other authorities
7	Benefits	The review will benefit the Council and Plymouth residents by ensuring a fair and equitable approach
8	Beneficiaries	Plymouth residents
9	Criteria for Choosing Topics	Concerns expressed by small community event organisers
10	Scope	Consider the financial impact of current or future subsidies Criteria for charging i.e. type of event

11	Exclusions	This review excludes the Events Strategy which is being formulated in parallel to the Visitors Strategy.		
12	Programme Dates	First meeting to receive a presentation from PCC Officers , second meeting to make decision and may involve witnesses		
	Timescales and Interdependences	Milestones	Target Date for Achievement	Responsible Officer
		Agree recommendations arising from scrutiny within 1 months of first meeting	Growth & Prosperity OSP 18th Oct 2010	Tom White
13	Links to other projects or initiatives / plans	CIP 11 /CIP 12		
14	Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel / Membership if Task and Finish Group	Growth & Prosperity		
15	Lead Officer for Panel	Gill Peele		
16	Reporting arrangements	To Overview and Scrutiny Management Board		
13	Resources	PCC staff resources		
14	Budget implications	Resources within existing budgets		
15	Risk analysis	n/a		
16	Project Plan / Actions	<i>Project plan to be prepared by Task and Finish Panel</i>		

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