Event Organisers approach for Road Closures

The City & County of Swansea recognises that well managed and safe events can bring significant benefit to local communities. The City & County Swansea, as the Traffic Authority for Swansea has produced these guidance notes to help organisers plan the traffic aspects of their event.

Our aim is to help event organisers plan their events to minimise disruption to traffic and residents and maximise traffic safety. It also gives guidance on how to get road closures, road signing for events and preparing effective traffic management plans.


Note that the City & County of Swansea is the Traffic Authority for all roads in Swansea.

Alerting the authorities

It is important that event organisers alert The City & County of Swansea Highways section and a number of other organisations of their plans. Events have different aspects (entertainment, environmental health, safety, and traffic to name a few). Some elements of an event may need licenses or special permissions from various different organisations. Similarly these organisations will be able to provide advice to event organisers to help make their event more effective and safer.

Basic principles of managing traffic at events

Events, both on and off the highway are an important part of the community. However, they can also cause significant traffic disruption on both the local and wider road networks. It is therefore important that they are carefully planned to minimise traffic congestion and risks to safety on the highway. This guidance will assist in helping an event organiser to identify potential traffic problems and provides advice on how to avoid them.

Impact on residents, local businesses and the road network

Events should always be timed to avoid clashing with peak traffic times. Events should be planned to ensure that access to local residents, businesses and buildings is not compromised. The event organiser should advise and discuss with local representatives to ensure that the local community is aware of the event and that their concerns are addressed.

The event organiser should consult with the Highways Agency where their event is near a motorway or trunk road or their junctions. The Highways Agency should also be consulted if traffic...
on motorways or trunk roads, or their junctions, is likely to be affected by an event, for example, traffic might queue onto a motorway or trunk road as a result of trying to access an event car park or as a result of being temporarily held up for a procession or carnival.

Event organisers are strongly recommended to plan their events to avoid attendees arriving or leaving at peak traffic times or at times that might inconvenience local residents or businesses. For well attended events it is recommended that event organisers encourage attendees to arrive / leave over a long period to avoid swamping the area with a lot of traffic at the same time.

Traffic control and signing at events

The public have no lawful powers to direct traffic at planned events.

Directing or control of traffic can also be achieved by the use of signs and most events will require signing of some sort, either to advise traffic of closures and diversion routes, changes to road circumstances or to help in minimising traffic disruption.

Signs used as part of a closure and the diversion route, will be authorised by the City & County of Swansea Highways section approving the closure. Details of signs used where no closure is needed (such as signs on the highway advising traffic of unexpected hazards or which lane to be in for people attending the event) should be sent to the Traffic Authority for advice and approval.

Advance signage should also be considered to advise motorists of upcoming events so that they can plan alternate routes. Such signs should only include the key information and be set up no more than one week before the event.

Once the use of signs has been decided the event organiser should create a sign schedule clearly listing the following;

- location of each sign, including road name and exact location on that road.
- type of each sign (Road closed / Diversion route etc)
- The legend of the sign and the colours to be used
- time / date of placement and removal
- sequence of placement and removal
- frequency of any inspection. (if needed)
- time / date of removal
- competency details of persons placing, maintaining and removing signs.

The sign schedule should be sent to the Traffic Authority. Prior permission and approval will be needed if planning to use street furniture such as Lamp columns or bollards.

The event organiser is responsible for procuring the appropriate signs and employing appropriately trained staff in order to set out, maintain and remove them at the end of the event.

Signs attached to street furniture and/or lamp or illuminated sign columns can damage the structure and protective paintwork which could then lead to more serious damage to the structure itself. The liability of maintaining these structures is held by the City & County of Swansea. Therefore once approval of the signs has been obtained from the Traffic section an indemnity will need to complete stating that any damage to the structures will need to be recharge at cost to the event organiser. The City & County of Swansea will request that specific methods of affixing the signs are used, in order to protect the structure from damage.
For larger events the event organiser may wish to consider the use of portable ‘variable message signs’ which can be hired from traffic management companies. Such equipment can provide up to date information for traffic and is especially useful where unplanned incidents adversely affect traffic in the vicinity of an event. In addition the use of the Traffic Authority’s own permanent matrix signs may be appropriate.

The City & County of Swansea, as the Traffic Authority, also operates a traffic control centre and specialist traffic light teams to manually manage permanent traffic light sites and monitor strategic routes. The services of this centre and or traffic light teams may also be needed in exceptional circumstances.

Under no circumstances should telephone numbers, internet addresses or other contact details be displayed on temporary event signs. The names of event sponsors should not be included unless similar events in the same area at the same time make such identification necessary for traffic management purposes. Dates and times of events are not normally included since the signs are only intended for people attending the event and need guidance on getting there. Signs of an advertising nature are not permitted.

The Traffic Authority is the final arbiter of the signing for an event and may remove any signs that have not been approved and / or are causing a highway danger. Expenses incurred in removing such signs will be charged at cost to the event organiser.

See Appendix One at the end of this note for further important information regarding the placement of signs on the road.

Road closures, diversion routes and other temporary traffic orders

As road closures cause disruption to drivers, pedestrians, residents and businesses, they should only be considered if absolutely necessary. Road closures are usually necessary for the purposes of safety during race or time trial type events where participants need to, or are likely to ignore give way signs at junctions.

Closing a public road, footway, footpath or verge without a lawful closure order is illegal.

If an event cannot be run without a road closure, then event organisers are advised to consider the following factors in the earliest planning stages:

1. Do you have enough resources to procure and maintain the signs needed?
2. Are your staff competent/trained to place, maintain and remove signs?
3. Have you applied for and received permission for the closure from the traffic authority?
4. Have you consulted with local residents/businesses/organisations or local disability groups about the closure?
5. Have you consulted with local passenger transport operators as their services may be affected by the closure?
6. Have you consulted with any local religious organisations as they may require access to buildings during the closure?
7. What are the options for diversion routes? The Traffic Authority will ultimately decide what the diversion route is, but it helps to consider it at an early stage.
8. Are there any motorways or major roads that might be affected? If so, a closure may well be refused or direction signing could be prohibitively expensive.

9. Have you consulted with local bus companies and / or emergency services regarding the closure?

10. Have you made any contingency plans for emergency access to your closure, for example to attend an accident?

11. What plans are there to remove broken down vehicles from within the closure or the diversion routes?

12. What plans have been made to avoid/remove vehicles already in place or prevent parking before the closure starts?

13. What plans are there to enable businesses or residents to access their property within the closure?

14. What training / briefings will be provided to event staff managing the closure?

There is a charge made for processing a legal order to close a road. This charge covers the legally required advertising (if necessary) of the intent to close a road, and the administrative costs incurred by the Traffic Authority preparing the order.

Some events may benefit from the implementation of temporary traffic regulation orders such as temporary speed limits to slow traffic down, or restrictions on parking in order to keep routes clear and free of ‘pinch points’. The Traffic Authority will be able to advise on such matters and will process the necessary application forms.

The police can authorise the use of ‘Police no waiting’ cones as an alternative to a temporary parking restriction order. The police may be able to supply the correct cones for this task but this should not be relied on.

For all closures, diversion routes and other temporary traffic regulation orders the event organiser will have to supply their own cones, signs and barriers and the appropriate staff to set them up.

See Appendices One & Two at the end of this note for information about the rules on placing signs and the law governing road closures.

**Pedestrians and public transport**

The event organiser should always consider alternative transport arrangements for people attending the event. Facilities should be considered to prevent pedestrians being dropped off on unsuitable verges, and safe pedestrian access via footpaths must also be considered.

For large event’s organisers should plan for drop off points and access / arrangements for people arriving by public transport. It is strongly recommended that the event organiser encourages the use of public transport wherever possible in order to reduce the traffic impact on the local network. Shuttle buses and special arrangements with local public transport operators must be considered for events with large numbers of attendees.
Traffic and travel information for event attendees

The arrival times and modes of event attendees will be directly influenced by their knowledge of the local area and the information provided by the event organiser. Event organisers are encouraged to provide event attendees with as much information as possible in order for them to be able to plan their journeys. Details of public transport facilities should be provided, including any special arrangements made for the event.

The use of local media and social media can be particularly effective in advising event attendees of the latest information regarding travel to and from an event. This is particularly important if changes to the event are to be made at the last minute.

Specific legal requirements are in place nationally to minimise risks to safety and congestion as follows.

The regulations require the organiser to notify the police at least 28 days before the start of the event. For time trials if notice is given in accordance with these regulations the event is considered to be authorised. Less notice may be given, but this would be subject to police approval. For races no automatic authorisation exists. Permission from the police must be obtained before the event can go ahead.

The organiser is reminded that police authorisation of the event does not remove the liability for safety or disruption, or the obtaining of any other authorisations, permits / closures etc..

Weather and event cancellation / amendment considerations

Event organisers should prepare written plans for adverse weather, because it can significantly worsen the event’s impact on local traffic.

Organisers should have a plan for cancelling / amending the event at short notice, with arrangements for contacting all organisations involved. Organisers also need to consider how they will distribute event cancellation / changes information to those attending the event, particularly if the cancellation / change has to be made at the last minute.

If wet weather is likely, organisers should also arrange to have equipment on site for clearing stranded vehicles from entries and exits and cleaning the public highway of mud. Equipment could include: tractors with towing hooks, road sweepers and tyre washes.

Wet weather is also likely to severely reduce ingress and egress rates to ‘off highway’ events and car parks. The event organiser should make alternative arrangements for maintaining optimum ingress and egress rates. For example; providing matting or hard-standing on fields for car parks or having additional access and egress points.

Traffic Management Meeting

Before the event, we strongly recommend that event organisers arrange a traffic management meeting. The meeting could be held as part of the Safety Advisory Group meetings that the City & County of Swansea holds on a regular basis, or as a separate meeting. Those attending to review the traffic issues usually include:

- event organiser and their traffic management representative
- representative from Authority Licensing department
- representative from the Traffic Authority
- the police
Alternatively, after reviewing draft event plans, the Traffic Authority or police may call a traffic management meeting.

At the meeting the event organiser will:

- brief attendees on the traffic matters relating to the event
- present a draft traffic management plan

The organisations will:

- give advice on how to minimise traffic disruption and maximise traffic safety
- help the event organiser plan the event more effectively and finalise the traffic management plan

Depending on the size and nature of the event, other organisations may need to attend the meeting, such as:

- emergency services
- local special interest groups
- bus operators
- Highways Agency (if the event affects any motorways or trunk roads)

A meeting after the event can sometimes help event organisers highlight measures that worked well, and improve planning at future events.

**Traffic Management Plan**

We recommend that all events have a written Traffic Management (TM) plan as part of the overall event management plan.

The TM plan:

- identifies traffic risks and actions taken by the organiser to minimise them
- provides invaluable information in case of an accident or incident.

In some cases, approvals for event licensing, road closures or use of traffic signs may be conditional on the event organiser having a TM plan.

The size of a TM plan document will largely depend on the impact an event will have on the highway. Impact is not necessarily only determined by the size of the event. Other factors, such as the nature of the roads to be closed / affected will also have a significant effect. As a general rule, any event planned to take place on, or affect any road with a speed limit of 50mph or higher, or that is classified as an A or B road is likely to have a higher impact on traffic and will therefore require more detailed planning.

TM plans for a local fete or carnival may only run to a single page. TM plans for major events such as the Wales National Air Show will consist of several volumes. However, in all cases, the same main issues must be covered although the detail and extent of coverage will be different.

As a minimum it is recommended that the TM plan should include information on all or most of the following:
Contact details
- contact details of the person responsible for traffic management
- contact details for other relevant organisations involved in traffic management

Sign schedule, road closures, traffic lights, plans
- roads to be closed and signed diversion routes
- a sign schedule
- any temporary traffic regulation orders made for example temporary speed limits, lifting of parking restrictions, temporary one-way systems
- any arrangements made regarding the control of permanent traffic lights.
- Qualifications of those placing signs or directing traffic.
- Plans of race routes, access and egress points for off highway events, roads to be closed and diversion routes

Estimated size of event
- The expected number of people and vehicles coming to the event
- the anticipated arrival times and peak event traffic times

Emergency procedures and bad weather contingency
- emergency access routes agreed with fire, police and ambulance services, with details of how this route will be kept open
- contingency arrangements for bad weather
- Lines of communication

Parking and public transport
- Number of parking spaces
- Details of how parking and illegal parking, will be managed.
- Details of drop off points and access for public transport
- Details of arrangements with public transport operators

Impact on the local traffic network
- details and agreements made in order to prevent congestion on the local and wider traffic network.(including arrangements made as a result of other known events or road works in the area)
- details of problems from previous events and what has been done to resolve those issues for this event

Summary of consultation and planning
Details and outcomes of consultations with all appropriate organisations and local groups for example;
- residents, businesses, religious groups & community associations
- local district councils, the police or the Highway Agency
- local disability groups
- local public transport operators
Bunting, banners and decorative flags

The City & County of Swansea does NOT permit Bunting, banners and decorative flags on or over the highways.

Costs of traffic related matters at events

There is a costs associated with the traffic / road element of an event. Event organisers should plan to cover costs for items such as:

- processing of road closures or temporary traffic regulation orders (charges made by the Traffic Authority)
- processing of licenses for banners, bunting and flags (charges made by the Traffic Authority)
- procuring signs and cones
- obtaining any public liability insurance needed as a condition of granting a road closure order or authorising a license to hang bunting, banners or flags over the highway

In addition, for larger events further costs may need to be budgeted for by the organiser, for example:

- procuring of specialist equipment (wheel washers, road sweepers)
- procuring mobile matrix signs
- procuring the services of the Traffic Authority’s permanent matrix signs, traffic control centre or traffic light teams.
- the police may also require an event organiser to pay for additional police presence for traffic purposes

Charges made by the City & County of Swansea as the Traffic Authority, (eg for processing road closure orders, temporary traffic regulation orders, bunting / banner licenses or the provision of matrix signs or the traffic control centre) may be reduced for charitable events.

If action is required as a result of a failure by the event organiser to appropriately manage traffic, all reasonable costs incurred will be recharged to the event organiser.

Other issues

The event organiser should also take into account any further requirements, licenses or permits that may be required, for example:

- trading on the highway
- sale of alcohol
- installation of any temporary structures

These licenses and permits are managed by the City & County of Swansea.
Closure Processing Costs:

*Charity or Community events:*  Road Closure  £275 per event

*CCS Internal events (if applicable):*  Road Closure  £275 per event

*Commercial/profit making organisations:*  Road Closure  £525 per event

*Additional mandatory external advertising costs (approximately £3000) for closures of over 5 calendar days.*

*Additional £50 for road application to Welsh Government (if applicable).*