

SANDY PARK EVENTS – TRANSPORT STRATEGY METHODOLOGY

TO	Eleanor Ward, National Highways Lisa McCaffrey, National Highways	FROM	Ian Beavis, WSP
CC	Pete Thomas, Bell Cornwell Tony Rowe, Exeter Rugby Group Mark Isaacs, Exeter Rugby Group Natasha Pavis, Exeter Rugby Group		
DATE	12 July 2023	CONFIDENTIALITY	Confidential
SUBJECT	Sandy Park Events – Proposed Transport Strategy Methodology		

INTRODUCTION

This note sets out the proposed methodology to update the existing Event Access Strategy and other documents that were produced to support the operation of the music concerts that were held at Sandy Park in June 2023.

CURRENT POSITION

Exeter Rugby Group applied to amend the existing planning consent at Sandy Park to allow music and other events to be held at Sandy Park in the summer off-season. This application was approved on a temporary basis to allow 4 music concerts to be held at Sandy Park, on the weekends of 17th/18th June and 24th/25th June 2023.

To support the application, the following documents were produced and submitted as part of the planning application:

- **Sandy Park Events Transport Statement** – this document set out the proposed approach to developing the transport strategy and the requirements for supporting assessments.
- **Event Access Strategy** – this sets out the proposed transport strategy for managing the arrivals and departures of spectators to Sandy Park on event days, providing a transport strategy to accommodate up to 15,000 spectators.
- **Sandy Park Car Park Management Plan** – this document details the strategy for managing parking on the Sandy Park site on match days, event days and weekdays. This document was originally produced and approved for the Sandy Park Hotel planning application and has been updated to incorporate event days.
- **Sandy Park Site Travel Plan** – this document details the Travel Plan for the whole Sandy Park site, setting the strategy for encouraging access to the site by sustainable travel modes. This document was originally produced and approved for the Sandy Park Hotel planning application and has been updated to incorporate event days.

The documents above also reference the **Match Day Access Strategy (MDAS)**, which sets out the strategy for managing the arrival and departure of spectators attending Sandy Park on rugby match days.

This document was first produced in 2007, and has been regularly updated since then; the most recent version was approved in 2019 as part of the Sandy Park Hotel planning application.

Exeter Rugby Group are now seeking to submit a planning application to amend the existing planning consent to allow music concerts and other events during the summer off-season on a permanent basis. This application will require the transport strategy, supporting documents and analysis that were previously produced to be updated; this note sets out the proposed approach and methodology to carry out these updates.

SUMMARY OF SANDY PARK EVENTS HELD IN JUNE 2023

Four events were held at Sandy Park this year on the weekends of 17th/18th June and 24th/25th June 2023. These events operated using the agreed Event Access Strategy; the principals of this strategy were aimed at maximising travel to Sandy Park by sustainable travel modes, and reducing access to the stadium by car. The strategy included use of off-site parking, provision of event special bus services from Exeter City Centre and extended train services from Digby and Sowton and Newcourt station.

The events had a maximum attendance of 3,550, which is well below the level of attendance provided for within the Event Access Strategy (up to 15,000 spectators). No issues or incidents were reported with the transport strategy on any of the event days.

SURVEY DATA

Transport surveys were carried out on the first event day (17th June), which was the event with the highest attendance. The following surveys were undertaken:

Survey	Method	Details
Spectator Interviews	Survey staff	Interviews of spectators arriving on site. Questions asked in relation to origin, method of travel, group size, parking location etc.
Rail Passenger Count	Recorded by camera	Count of passengers departing trains at Digby & Sowton and Newcourt rail stations
Car Park Occupancy Count	Recorded by camera	Count of car park arrivals and departures to determine car park occupancy
Car Passenger Drop-Off Count	Recorded by camera	Count of car vehicle drop-offs (including both taxis and private vehicles)
Bus Passenger Drop-Off Count	Survey staff	Count of bus passengers arriving on all buses (shuttle services from car park and event day special services).
Bike Count	Survey staff	Count of number of bikes at the cycle stands on site (at end of survey period only)

As well as the above information, traffic count data will be obtained for the survey day from Devon County Council for the M5 offslips at M5 J30, and Honiton Road (west of M5 J29).

The surveys were carried out over a 3-hour arrival period, from 5:30pm-8:30pm; which is consistent with the 3 hour period used during previous Match Day surveys.

A supporting Technical Note is to be produced which will set out the key findings from the surveys and provide a review of the survey outcomes against the targets set out in the EAS. The note will also document the level of transport provision that was available on the event days.

PROPOSED FUTURE EVENTS

Future events are proposed at Sandy Park; it is currently proposed that 6 events are held at weekends (Saturdays and Sundays only) in the period between May and July (before the school holiday period commences). These events will be music concerts as were held in 2023.

METHODOLOGY FOR EVENT ACCESS STRATEGY UPDATE

The survey data will be used to review and update the existing documents that were produced to support the original planning submission. This will primarily consist of an update to the Event Access Strategy and supporting analysis, but all documents will be reviewed and updated as required.

The Event Access Strategy (EAS) sets out the proposed strategy to manage the arrival and departure of spectators to Sandy Park on event days. The strategy accommodated up to 15,000 spectators.

The EAS includes an analysis of the level of transport provision available across all modes on event days. This information was reviewed against the distribution of spectators attending the events (available from ticket sales data) to produce mode split targets for the event days. These targets considered the likely level of use of each travel mode, based on the origin of spectators, the modal capacity available, the measures implemented to increase sustainable travel use and the mode split of spectators attending Sandy Park on match days. For 15,000 spectators, the strategy targeted 27% access by non-car modes, with 73% by car modes (either through driving or car drop-offs).

Alongside this, the EAS included an analysis of traffic flows on the network in June and July, based on traffic data that was obtained from Devon County Council. This analysis was carried out for the northbound and southbound offslips at M5 J30, and Honiton Road (west of M5 J29). The analysis compared traffic flows during the arrival period for events with peak traffic flows, and clearly demonstrated that in all cases, traffic flows during the arrival periods for the proposed events were significantly lower than peak traffic flows, and lower than traffic flows during the arrival period for rugby matches. On this basis, and given that the current Match Day Access Strategy operates very successfully on match days, it was concluded that the level of traffic associated with the events would be able to be accommodated on the network with no issues.

Event Access Strategy Update

The Event Access Strategy will be updated using the outputs from the survey data collected on Saturday 17th June. The survey data will be used to determine the volume of spectators using each travel mode to access the site, which will be corroborated using the spectator interview data. The mode split targets set out in the EAS will be reviewed against the survey data, and amended if required. The level of transport provision and capacity set out in the EAS will also be reviewed against the actual provision that was available on the event days; again, this will be updated as required.

It is proposed that the EAS is updated to incorporate a more detailed analysis of the impact of traffic associated with the event days on the transport network. This will be carried out using the survey data to determine the distribution of spectators accessing Sandy Park by car. The survey data will be used to identify the volume and profile of additional car traffic on event days; this data will be used alongside the distribution data to determine the forecast impact in terms of additional traffic on key links on the nearby road network (particularly at M5 J29 and J30). Once the forecast traffic flows have been calculated, an analysis will be carried out of the forecast level of flow against peak flows recorded on the network to determine whether the additional traffic would be able to be accommodated. This methodology would provide a more detailed analysis than that previously provided in Section 4 of the existing EAS.

Given that future events will continue to be held in May-July (outside of the peak summer holidays period), and that traffic flows during event arrival periods in May-July are significantly lower than peak flows during



these times, it is anticipated that the analysis proposed above will provide sufficient evidence and that no further traffic modelling will be required.