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Media Release

For Immediate Release

Motorists warned of road closures ahead of Unite-organised Honda march

Parts of Swindon town centre will be closed to traffic to allow for next Saturday's (30 March) planned march and rally organised by Unite the union.

Thousands of people are expected to converge on the town from across the country to take part in the event, which has been organised as part of a campaign to keep Honda's Swindon factory open.

The 'Save Honda Swindon' show of support will start at the County Ground at 11.30am and the march will conclude with a rally around 90 minutes later in Faringdon Road park. The rally will also feature music, key speakers, children's entertainment and food stalls.

To ensure the safety of all those taking part, Swindon Borough Council will create a pedestrian walkway across the Magic Roundabout and a number of roads will be closed to all traffic from 11.15am to allow the march safe passage to Faringdon Road park. These include: Fleming Way, Princes Street, Commercial Road, Milton Road and Faringdon Road.

A rolling road block will be in operation so that roads can be reopened as soon as the march has safely passed through.

Officers from Wiltshire Police will be in attendance on the day and marshalls will also be on hand along the route.

Local businesses likely to be affected by the event have been notified of the disruption as have Swindon's bus companies. Advanced warning signs will also be placed on the road network over the coming days.

Councillor Maureen Penny, Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, said: "I am right behind this very public show of support as it is important we do all we can to try to convince Honda to stay in Swindon.

"We have been working closely with Wiltshire Police and Unite and, as we are expecting a lot of people to take part in the march and subsequent rally in Faringdon Road park, we have had no choice but to close these main routes around the town centre to ensure the safety of all those taking part.

"I would encourage drivers if they need to come into the town centre for those two hours next Saturday to plan their journeys accordingly and to allow for the inevitable

congestion that will be caused on other parts of the road network.

“We will be employing a rolling road block on the day and we will reopen those roads affected as soon as it is safe to do so.”

Wiltshire Police’s Assistant Chief Constable, Gavin Williams, said: “We absolutely support the right for people to protest but this must be done peacefully.

“We will not tolerate any disorderly or violent behaviour and if anyone breaks the law they will be arrested.

“Whilst there is no intelligence to suggest that this event will be anything other than peaceful, it is crucial our planning for an event of this scale takes into account the likelihood that several thousand people might attend.

“Our resourcing of this event will therefore be robust.

“We are working closely with partners, including Swindon Borough Council, to make sure appropriate resources are being put into this event.

“For operational reasons it is not appropriate to discuss exact numbers of officers involved but sufficient resources will be in place.”

ENDS

Media contact: Kevin Burchall, Communications Lead – Media Relations, Swindon Borough Council, 01793 463105.

A map of the roads that will be closed as part of the Honda march route is below. It is also available at: www.swindon.gov.uk/hondamarch

