

City manager Roberto Mancini has consistently said his fellow Italian is not for sale throughout this month's transfer window but that has not quashed rumors linking him with the San Siro giants.

Milan have made their liking for the 22-year-old clear but have previously baulked at City's reported £28million valuation. Now fresh reports have emerged claiming negotiations between the clubs have begun but City's public message on the matter has not changed.

First-team coach David Platt said: "I saw that speculation (on Sunday) but I've not heard anything. "As far as we are concerned I think he is still a Manchester City player. I don't think there is anything is going to happen."

Platt was speaking on Mancini's behalf at a press conference to preview City's Barclays Premier League trip to QPR on Tuesday night. Mancini was equally forthright on the Balotelli subject when asked when he last met the press last week.

Mancini said: "No, it is not true, Mario stays here. We didn't have any requests about Mario or other players." Balotelli has been involved in a number of high-profile controversies on and off the field during his time at City, including a training-ground bust-up with Mancini this month.

But Mancini said he remains part of his long-term plans. He said: "Yes, Mario has another three years on his contract."

Platt claims that situation has not changed. "I can only go off what you know and I have seen. I know exactly the same as you, which is speculation. It's a shame Robbie's not here. He might know more than me."

In terms of fitness, Balotelli missed Saturday's FA Cup fourth-round tie at Stoke after illness but he is in contention for the game at Loftus Road. Captain Vincent Kompany will be missing after straining his calf at the Britannia Stadium and the Belgian will also be doubtful for Sunday's clash with Liverpool.

Platt said: "It could be a fortnight, it could be three weeks. My experience of calf strains would be no chance for Tuesday, Liverpool a big doubt with an outside chance, but that would depend on the gravity of it.

"In all honesty you're probably looking at the game after that being a potential realistic target."

Kompany's absence increases City's defensive problems with Kolo Toure on international duty and Matija Nastasic also doubtful with a minor knee injury.

When asked if Nastasic was available, Platt said: "Maybe, but he will have to train (on Monday)."