

Leeds Festival 2024

Date: Tuesday, 6th August 2024

Report of: Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory

Report to: Licensing Committee

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief Summary

Leeds Festival (“the Festival”) takes place each August Bank Holiday at Bramham Park.

The Festival is authorised under a Premises Licence (“the Licence”), granted under the Licensing Act 2003, and issued by the Licensing Authority to Festival Republic Limited (“Festival Republic”) in 2006.

The Licence is subject to a condition that the Event Management Plan (“EMP”) and any revisions to the Event Management Plan must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.

The licensing regime contributes to two pillars of the Best City Ambition ([Best City Ambition](#))

- Health & Wellbeing
- Inclusive Growth

Furthermore, Leeds Festival contributes to the third pillar, “Zero Carbon”, through its sustainability plan.

Recommendations

The Licensing Committee is asked to:

Hear from Mr. Melvin Benn and other representatives of Festival Republic on the planning and preparation for the 2024 Festival, to receive comments from partners of the Safety Advisory Group and to either:

- a. Delegate approval of the final Event Management Plan to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory, or
- b. Delegate approval of the final Event Management Plan to a three member Licensing Sub Committee to be convened no later than Tuesday, 20 August 2024.

Members may consider it appropriate for the public to be excluded from part of the meeting to allow Mr. Benn of Festival Republic and other attendees to provide Members with confidential information associated with the Festival which falls under the Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), as it includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person or organisation; and/or Rule 10.4 (7), information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime and in each case in all the circumstances of the matter the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

What is this report about?

The Festival is held on August Bank Holiday each year, under the authority of a Premises Licence (“the Licence”) granted to Festival Republic Ltd.

The Licence was originally granted by the Licensing Committee in 2006.

The Licence is subject to a condition that the Event Management Plan and any revisions to the EMP must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.

The EMP sets out all arrangements for the event which contribute to the licensing objectives;

- the Prevention of Crime and Disorder;
- the Prevention of Public Nuisance;
- Public Safety; and
- the Prevention of Children from Harm.

The Licensing Committee is to receive details of the planning and proposals for Leeds Festival 2024 in the form of a verbal report from Mr. Benn of Festival Republic and from partners of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG), which includes representatives of the following agencies:

- West Yorkshire Police;
- Security Industry Authority;
- West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service;
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service;
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust;
- LCC Public Health;
- Highways England;
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority;
- LCC Highways and Urban Traffic Control;
- LCC Environmental Health;
- LCC Health & Safety/Building Control;
- LCC Cleansing;
- LCC Entertainment Licensing; and
- LCC Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

In addition, the Licensing Committee may hear from representatives of the ward/parish council working group.

Background:

1. The EMP is uploaded by the document owner to Resilience Direct - a secure national government platform for the storage and sharing of sensitive documents and information. Resilience Direct is accessible by all blue light services and relevant agencies, who are also partners of the Leeds SAG (as detailed above).
2. Members of the Licensing Committee have been granted access to Resilience Direct. Access is strictly for the purpose of viewing the current version of the EMP and associated meeting minutes, subject to maintaining the confidential nature of that information.

History

3. In January 2023 the Licensing Committee received a debrief from the 2022 Festival.
4. Hearing from the Festival Organiser, Mr. Melvin Benn, and partners of the SAG, a number of matters were noted and assurances given for 2023, including;
 - a. There shall be a ban on all campfires;
 - b. A new provision of Air Hubs (Assistance, Information, Response) spread across campsites offering welfare and support facilities;
 - c. Challenge 25 to replace Challenge 21 proof of age scheme;
 - d. A robust system to provide a more accurate figure of the numbers of 16 and 17 year olds in attendance;
 - e. Spiking Test Kits to be more widely advertised and available to purchase;
 - f. Provision of quality security and stewards, particularly in campsite areas to improve public engagement;
 - g. Improved engagement and information sharing with the Security Industry Authority to allow adequate time for the service to carry out their duties;
 - h. There shall be a new medical provider for 2023 equipped with onsite x-ray facilities. The Committee heard in January that early engagement was already underway with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service;
 - i. Whilst the new traffic plan was deemed a success, this was to be further reviewed with partner agencies to identify congestion alleviation from the A1(M) and to address certain other aspects, including access for key services to Aberford;
 - j. Improvements to lighting and directional signage and the provision of quality stewarding, particularly on egress routes leading from the arena to campsites, car parks, pick up locations and public transport hubs;
 - k. Safety messaging for customers using taxis/private hire vehicles of the dangers of getting into an un-booked vehicle; and
 - l. A review of the salvage operation for which a subgroup has been established to consider options to scale up this operation.
5. The said assurances were applied to the 2023 Festival.
6. A debrief of the 2023 Festival was held at the meeting of the Licensing Committee on the 21st November 2023. The Licensing Committee heard that all SAG partners were satisfied with the Festival. However, certain matters were noted for future action, such as:
 - a. PUDO (Pick Up/Drop Off) / Taxi area
Illumination, signage and staffing, including that for incoming taxi cabs and WiFi availability to be addressed. A commitment was provided to undertake an inspection and test of all equipment prior to the areas coming into use.

b. Traffic Management

Sunday egress at J44 of the A1(M) to be reviewed and one agency (National Highways) to co-ordinate the planning.

Following the recent SAG meeting it was noted that the ongoing central barrier works will be in situ thus causing additional delay on the A1(M).

c. Sustainability

It was noted based on 2022 comparison data that there had been a carbon footprint increase. This was due to being unable to source biodiesel and confirmed that an order had been placed for 2024.

Regarding the salvage plan, Licensing Members have received reports from charities of the obstacles faced in booking a place on the salvage operation and assistance provided on the day. It was confirmed that the Salvage Working Group would address such matters for 2024.

d. Fire Safety

One issue was reported of an emergency vehicle being prevented from passing a road closure. Road closures and emergency vehicle access will be clarified and information shared with appropriate agencies, security and stewards.

It was asked that providers are familiar with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (“JESIP”).

e. Residents

The pass system for Thorner to be reviewed following complaints regarding the amount of vehicles passing through. In addition, road closure arrangements for Aberford and public service arrangements to be confirmed and traffic management services briefed as appropriate.

7. Members noted the following:

- a. Spiking tests are available, albeit subject to a charge. The message is for persons to seek medical attention to ensure the correct procedures are followed.
- b. Air Hubs were successful and to be repeated.
- c. There were a range of welfare providers and schemes published onsite, e.g. Ask4Angela. The education campaign, “#lookout4eachother”, is a collaboration between Festival Republic, Public Health Leeds and Reading, which was widely publicised on site and via social media.
- d. For the first occasion in 2023, the Festival introduced a system to identify the number of unaccompanied 16 and 17yr old’s in attendance by way of checking identity and scanning appropriate QR codes on entry.
- e. The fire authority welcomed the ban on all fires.
- f. The Yorkshire Ambulance service provided positive feedback of the new onsite medical provider. JESIP principles applied.
- g. Onsite x-ray facilities were a great asset reducing the number of hospital transfers.
- h. The Security Industry Authority provided positive feedback, having experienced good liaison with Festival Republic.
- i. PNC checking of security staff was carried out by the police on behalf of Festival Republic and there was onsite processing of all security before they commenced work.
- j. 2023 saw an enhanced admission procedure for all attendees with detection dogs on all entrance gates and profiling carried out.

- k. The police confirmed that certain arrests were of persons from other districts and consequently it is intended for 2024 to liaise with other police forces.
- l. It was confirmed that the Festival engages with the counter terrorism security co-ordinator.
- m. It was confirmed that the resident focus meetings included a representative from each Parish Council. Collectively the content of the resident letter was designed.
- n. Environment Health confirmed that 2023 had attracted 5 noise complaints. As previous, officers monitored sound levels and liaised with the Festival's noise consultant who was responsive.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected: Wetherby & Harewood

Have ward members been consulted? Yes

- 8. The Premises Licence is issued in perpetuity, allowing the grounds of Bramham Park to be used for the Leeds Festival each August Bank Holiday weekend, commencing on the Wednesday and ending on the Sunday preceding the Bank Holiday Monday.
- 9. The Licence is subject to a condition that the EMP and any revisions to the EMP must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.
- 10. The EMP is an evolving document, and the final version is not normally available until shortly before the start of the Festival; hence the recommendations set out above.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

a. Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 11. The Festival brings benefits to the region supporting the City's economy and highlighting Leeds as a place to visit. Attracting up to 89,999 attendees, some of whom will visit the City's hospitality and retail sector, stay in accommodation and use public transport. For many it will be their first experience of Leeds and they may return later to enjoy the City.
- 12. A range of welfare services are available throughout the site provided by several voluntary/social care agencies.
- 13. Festival Republic has a commitment to reducing carbon emission and environmental impact, promoting 'No Music on a Dead Planet' via public messaging and encouraging recycling and composting throughout the site.
- 14. Where feasible, reusable and sustainable power sources, recycling and composting facilities are used around the site which Festival Republic (through their dedicated sustainability team) continue to explore and implement.
- 15. Appeals are made for customers to take camping equipment home or to donate at designated points around the site, for which rewards and incentives are offered.

16. Customers may now book to camp in “Eco Camping”, for which demand is increasing year on year.
17. A sub-group involving Licensing Committee Members and Festival Republic’s Sustainability Team has been established to consider options for enhancing the salvage operation.
18. The Traffic Management Plan includes a shuttle bus service which frequently runs between Leeds City Centre and the festival site with additional services during times of peak demand. A limited service is also provided to the North of the City.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

19. The original premises licence application as approved in April 2006 was subject to the formal consultation process as prescribed by the Licensing Act 2003, including consultation with the designated responsible authorities and public notices.
20. The EMP is accessible via Resilience Direct to Licensing Committee Members and partners of the SAG.
21. Multi-agency meetings under the SAG process have been taking place since early this year in preparation for the 2024 Festival.
22. Sub-groups have also been established to consider safeguarding, traffic management and sustainability/salvage.
23. Festival Republic hold regular meetings with local representatives and Parish Councils.

What are the resource implications?

24. No resource implications for the licensing authority have been identified.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

25. The Festival is subject to a number of high level Safety Advisory Group and sub-group meetings with respective agencies and representatives.
26. Festival Republic will be statutorily required to hold risk assessments and comply with relevant legislation aside from that of the Licensing Act 2003.

What are the legal implications?

27. Members may consider it appropriate for the public to be excluded from part of the meeting to allow Mr. Benn and other attendees to provide Members with confidential information associated with the Festival which fall under the Access to Information Procedure Rules: specifically Rule 10.4(3) (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person); and Rule 10.4 (7) (information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime) and, in each case, whether, in all the circumstances of the matter, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

28. The Licence is subject to the following condition:

“The Event Management Plan and any revisions to the Event Management Plan must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.”

29. Should the Licensing Committee approve delegation of the EMP, it is necessary to confirm one of the following options:

- a. In order for the Chief Officer’s approval to be valid, it is necessary for the Licensing Committee to delegate its authority to approve the EMP to the Chief Officer Elections and Regulatory; or
- b. In order for the Licensing Sub Committee’s approval to be valid, it is necessary for the Licensing Committee to delegate its authority to approve the EMP to a three member Licensing Sub Committee.

30. There is no scope for the Licence to be amended, suspended, or revoked under the recommendations in this report. A copy of the Premises Licence details providing the operating schedule, including the licensable activities and hours, is attached at Appendix 1.

Options, timescales and measuring success

31. Safety Advisory Group meetings have been taking place since February of this year, as have various sub-groups co-ordinated by Festival Republic with the respective agencies.

32. A table-top exercise involving all SAG partners is scheduled to be held in August.

33. Prior to the Festival commencing, comments will be obtained from SAG partners to garner their satisfaction with the EMP. This will in turn inform the Licensing Committee or Chief Officer, as delegated, for the purpose of approving the EMP.

34. Subject to approval of the EMP, onsite multi-agency meetings and engagement with Festival Republic will be held throughout the duration of the Festival.

35. Following the Festival, a SAG debrief meeting will be held following which a debrief report will be brought before the Licensing Committee.

Appendices

36. Appendix 1 – Premises Licence Details

Background Papers

37. None