

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 1st August, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor J Gibson in the Chair

Councillors A Ali, E Carlisle, R Downes,
L Farley, S Hamilton, T Hinchcliffe,
S Holroyd-Case, A Hutchison, L Martin,
D Seary, A Smart and I Wilson

10 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

11 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information however the Committee was advised that it may be necessary for the meeting to move into closed session should Members wish to discuss the details of the Event Management Plan for the 2023 Leeds Festival.

12 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

13 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Buckley.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th May 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

16 Leeds Festival 2023

The report of the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory outlined the work undertaken so far in preparation for the Leeds Festival 2023, to be held in the grounds of Bramham Park over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The report noted that the premises licence for the event, originally granted in 2006, was subject to a condition that an Event Management Plan (“EMP”) and any revisions to the EMP must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival, this task had previously been delegated by the Committee to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory. This year, the Committee was requested to consider whether to continue that delegation or whether to delegate approval of the final EMP to a Licensing Sub Committee to be convened on in August, just prior to the event.

Members of the Committee had been granted access to the EMP as it evolved on the secure national government platform - “Resilience Direct” –

which was accessible to all partners involved in planning for the event, including blue light and relevant services as partners of the Leeds Safety Advisory Group (“SAG”) co-ordinated by the Resilience & Emergency Team.

The Committee noted that, due to the nature of possible discussions on any specific measures or proposals for this year’s event, Members may consider it appropriate for the public to be excluded from part of the meeting which would facilitate discussions in private 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 Rules.

The following were in attendance:

- Melvin Benn, Managing Director, Festival Republic
- Lucy Kinsella, Licensing Co-ordinator, Festival Republic
- Nick Wallen, Festival Republic

In introducing the report, the Licensing Officer reported the comments of LCC Environmental Protection Team who were unable to attend the meeting. It was noted that the noise monitoring arrangements would be the same as in place for 2022 when no noise complaints had been received, the Team had no concerns with arrangements for this year’s event and would be on-site to monitor noise and disturbance.

The Committee received a presentation from Festival Republic which provided an overview of the event planning which was now in its final stages:

- Final plans would be shared with SAG two weeks prior to the Festival once final attendance figures were known through the sale of tickets. Currently the event was not sold out.
- Following discussions with the Committee at its January 2023 de-brief meeting, work had been done to quantify the attendee demographic, approximately 55% of ticket holders were under 21 years.

Changes to previous years arrangements were outlined as:

Main Stage West – to hold a Silent Disco on Sunday

Main Stage East & West – a security response team to be located at both stages.

Campsite Village – to include locations for medics, information points and a new ‘check-in and chill’ area.

Brown Campsite – reduced in size.

Eco Campsite – increased in size.

Air-Hubs – new for 2023.

Event Gate quantity – reviewed.

Turning to issues central to the EMP:

Fire Safety – All campfires, anything with an open flame and barbeques were banned from the 2023 event. The same level of fire crew would be retained and deployed in fire towers. Fire risk assessment reviewed.

Alcohol and tobacco – Challenge 25 would be implemented, which would encourage more attendees to get an Over-18’s wristband. Central Fusion had been contracted to run the bars and an Alcohol Compliance Manager was in

place. The retail of disposable vapes would not be permitted on site as part of the events sustainability push. Refillable vapes will be permitted.

Medical/Safeguarding – Elite EMS appointed as medical provider with previous experience of Leeds Festival and other festivals. The Medical Management Plan reflects the anticipated number of attendees and had been shared with Yorkshire Ambulance Service. An X-Ray facility will be on site and the Safeguarding Plan now included a new provision of an Overnight Safeguarding Team. New additional support will be on-site – The Egalitarian team primarily focus on drink spiking and women’s safety and the SSAFE team focus on suicide prevention, these would be alongside various welfare groups including the Samaritans, Forward Leeds etc.

The `#Lookoutforeachother` campaign content had been reviewed – minor tweaks to animations and static messaging.

Drink Spiking – At the January 2023 meeting, Festival Republic had committed to more widely communicating the availability of drink spiking test kits. More work had been done on this, and the focus will encourage people to come forward and report an incident and get their drink tested free of charge. In this way the right support can be put in place. Testing kits will still be available to purchase.

Wristbands – The wristband procedure had been made more robust with all attendees advised to bring ID with their entry ticket to access the Festival. ID will be checked at the gate by the Wristband Teams, and data captured of the number of 16 and 17yr olds in attendance which shall be shared at the onsite meetings.

Security/Stewarding – The Advantage Plus team had been contracted again to patrol the event space. Security would be increased by 50% at the campsites. Festival Republic staff vetting had been improved and any last minute additions to the Festival Republic team would be checked prior to them starting work. Information on all the stewarding and security staff will be shared with the Security Industry Authority. Additionally, the number of Drug Dogs on site would be increased, as in 2022 it was evident that more items were surrendered at those entry gates with Drug Dogs. The location of CCTV had been reviewed to ensure it was located to capture as much information as possible.

Assistance Information Response (AIR) Hubs – New for 2023, 16 AIR Hubs would be installed on site, approx. 200 m apart, open 24 hours Wednesday to Monday and easily identifiable through neon signage/uniformed workers. These will be staffed by local community groups and partners. Photos of AIR Hubs successfully trialled at other festivals were displayed.

Sustainability -To date, 4821 attendees had signed up to the Eco Camp, showing an improved take up on 2022 figures. The salvage operation will run on Monday and Tuesday after the event closes and incentives will be offered to encourage the re-use and re-cycle of items, such as ‘side of stage experiences’. The Sustainability Sub Group had met which included Member representation and the Sub Group will have a role in the review and success of the measures.

Noise/Environmental Protection - Changes to the site included removal of the Green campsite DJ and the relocation of the Anachronica Stage. The on-site monitoring would remain unchanged and off-site monitoring will include a

location in Barwick. A Water Management Plan was in development and an independent Environmental Health Officer would be employed for the event.

Traffic – The closure of the eastbound A64 would be in place from Wednesday to Monday of the event, and local traffic will utilise the ELOR route. The Egress Plan had been updated, specifically around Junction 44 A1M. Liaison with Aberford residents was underway regarding impact on the local bus route. A new Transport Management Plan was in place for the drop-off/pick-up location and a Traffic Control Manager had been employed to provide an overall view of the plan, to join up the on-site and off-site management of traffic.

Signage – Increased and more visible directional signages would be deployed to car park routes and drop-off/pick-up locations. Safety messaging would be provided at the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire (HC/PH) points to warn against the danger of entering an unmarked vehicle for journeys out of the site. Improved signage would be in place to indicate the respective private hire and hackney carriage waiting areas, and 'you are here' boards in campsites and at AIR Hubs. Increased variable messaging signage would be deployed throughout the event site to assist egress.

The Committee was also advised that the bespoke Festival App for smartphones would contain all the advice and guidance attendees would need. Members were also provided with the time frame for the final stages of planning for the event:

8th August – final SAG meeting

10th August – security briefing and incident practice

11th August – submission of the final EMP

15th August – final Working Group meeting which will include representatives of the local areas and provide an opportunity for a residents Q&A session.

The Committee then heard from relevant services and partners of the Leeds Safety Advisory Group.

West Yorkshire Police – Superintendent D Wood

Superintendent Wood provided an overview of the focus and development of a policing strategy for the event and reported that Police Officers would be stationed within the Leeds Festival control room for the first time in 2023. He additionally provided information on the specific teams set up for the event, including dedicated roads, intelligence, safeguarding, armed response and crime scene teams. The Police would be visibly present on site and also undertake covert operations focussing on violence reduction and safeguarding attendees who may be vulnerable to criminality. A drug testing officer would also be on site. In conclusion, Supt. Wood confirmed he was satisfied with the arrangements in place for the event and that they would meet the WYP objectives set out in the policing strategy.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- Reported incidents were monitored to inform how incidents would be responded to– 141 crimes were reported in 2022 showing an increase of 20 from 2021.
- Additional drug dogs would be on site.

- There was no evidence that reports of drug misuse/overdose showed an increase.
- The ban on disposable vapes would apply to the retail of disposable vapes on site, it would not be possible to prevent attendees bringing them, but they would be heavily discouraged and removed wherever found.
- Today's press release 01/08/23 would advise of the ban on barbecues and fires and information would be included on the Festival App.
- Research on the provision of free drink spiking kits had been undertaken, young people tended not to test every drink they had, so the focus would be on those making a report with the Ask4Angela campaign, which was felt to be universally understood by attendees and Festival staff and would bring improved results.
- Attendees who looked younger than 25 would have the opportunity to acquire a relevant wristband when they presented their ID and ticket at entry to the festival. ID would include passport or Driving Licence, but not Student ID cards. Any fake IDs would be confiscated which would prevent that individual from attending. It was difficult to prevent over 18's purchasing alcohol at the bar for someone under 18 who was within their group of friends. From the ID information gathered at the entry gates, Festival Republic would be able to review how many Under 18's attended. The wristbands were designed to be difficult for the wearer to remove and pass on to anyone else. Anyone found to be under the influence of alcohol and Under 18 will be guided to receive welfare support.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service – D Fothergill

A response plan was in development as part of the SAG and EMP arrangements to ensure the event is sufficiently resourced. The medical support contracted by Festival Republic this year would be provided by a Care Quality Commission registered provider and would include provision of on-site X-Ray facilities. Last year the casualty rate was just short of 13,000 with 21 requiring off-site transfers for medical assistance but it was reported that quite a few of the transfers were made for X-Ray services and that number would reduce this year with on-site provision. For this year YAS would have a 24 hour presence on site with dedicated ambulance liaison officers. It was reported that the medical provision exceeds guidance and that strong working relationships had been established with Festival Republic

Wetherby Ward representative - Councillor N Harrington

The Committee noted that all Parish Councils in the outer north east area and city Councillors had worked intensively with Festival Republic. Traffic and noise were highlighted as the major issues for the locality and there had been some instances of festival goers walking on main roads to nearby villages in previous years. The noise monitoring proposed for 2023 was welcomed and a comment regarding site access and egress to encourage the placement of relevant traffic advice signage early in the routes to the site was noted.

National Highways – D Skupski

The 2022 Traffic Management Plan had been successful and only minor changes were proposed for 2023, with a review of hard signage which had been supported by National Highways. Variable messaging signage would also be utilised on the routes to the festival site and additional portable signs will be implemented with additional signs at Junctions 44 and 45 of the A1M close to the site. In terms of egress Sunday and Monday, the approach at Junction 45 A1M will be retained. For Junction 44 at the Bramham crossroads, a joint approach had been developed with WYP and National Highways to essentially direct traffic by hand – this was seen to be the most reactive and effective response to changing traffic situations at this complex junction.

In response to a comment seeking clarity on the use of the bus only access routes by HC/PH vehicles bearing in mind a comment regarding parents picking up festival goers after the event ended on local roads, the Committee noted that there was no special provision for HC/PH vehicles to do so.

LCC Highways - N Gardiner

Following the opening of the East Leeds Orbital Route (ELOR), work had been done include it in the Traffic Management Plan and as no formal complaints had been received about traffic, a similar plan will be employed for 2023. Regarding buses, work was ongoing with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, buses would terminate at Aberford but there was a proposal still to discuss with WYCA for the No.7 service to still run through Thorner which could resolve outstanding issues.

The Committee noted a comment that there was a dedicated route to the HC/PH drop-off/pick-up point on the event site which also allowed HC/PH to exit the site and turn right onto the A64 westbound into Leeds.

Committee members sought clarity from Mr Gardiner on whether taxis and PH vehicles would be able to access through the hard closure on the A64 situated adjacent the Red Bus café. Mr Gardiner confirmed that this would not be possible as this hard closure can only be accessed by local residents requiring access to their properties who had been issued with passes. Mr Gardiner explained that allowing access to any additional vehicles would render the hard closure ineffective.

In response to a query regarding the location of the HC drop-off/pick-up point on site and its positioning near the PH drop-off/pick-up point, the Committee received confirmation that they were in the vicinity of each other, each with a dedicated 'pen' for festival goers to queue for their vehicle. In response to a comment around the wording of safety messaging about entering unmarked vehicles to journey home, it was confirmed that this issue had been raised previously and the messaging would relate only to PH travel – which must be pre-booked. The Committee also noted discussions on the use of Uber PH and representations received by one Councillor over the fees charged by Uber to take festival goers into the city centre based on Uber's reactive pricing strategy. The Committee received assurance that Festival Republic did not

have an agreement to prioritise Uber, although Uber would have its own 'pen' where its customers could wait for their transport.

LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Section – N Hammill

In response to the discussions, it was confirmed that the drop-off/pick-up points for HC, PH and Uber were closely located, with the HC 'pen' closer to the exit to assist in traffic management. LCC TPHL had no authority over the Uber charging structure.

The Committee noted that although there may be a slightly longer walk to the HC drop-off/pick-up point, the HC vehicles would be first out of the site via the nearest exit. Mr Benn additionally confirmed that HC, PH and Uber had equal standing and Uber did not pay a fee to Festival Republic for priority access. In response to a comment, it was agreed that Festival Republic would consider including information in the Festival App about what festival goers should expect to pay for a PH journey from the site to the city centre. In response to specific questions and suggestions from Committee members in relation to the positioning of the HC pick-up point - Mr Benn also confirmed that he would be happy to make arrangements for HC's to be located in any of the pick-up locations if that was helpful.

Mr Hammill also directed Members to three issues raised at a previous Multi Agency meeting and noted the responses provided by Festival Republic – Signage – Festival Republic agreed to share the proposed improved signage with TPHL prior to it being installed.

Lighting in the drop-off/pick-up point – This had proved to be inadequate in 2022 with only one lighting unit in the area. It was noted that tower lights would be installed, and the lighting plan would be shared with TPHL.

Wi-Fi on site – This had proved to be a particular issue for attendees who had pre-booked travel via an App. Customers and drivers lost signal and could not locate each other which the Committee regarded as a safeguarding issue if a vehicle left the site without its passenger. It was noted that Festival Republic invited mobile networks to bring temporary masts to the site, 11 would be deployed for 2023 with one in the drop-off/pick-up point. Festival Republic also agreed to install an additional 'star-link' Wi-Fi device which although would not improve mobile signal, it would improve WhatsApp and PH App usage. In response to further comments regarding safeguarding issues related to HC/PH travel, further liaison between Festival Republic and TPHL, and Highways officers was agreed.

The Committee then considered TPHL enforcement and noted that LCC TPHL Enforcement Officers would be on site, assisted by colleagues from Bradford City Council. Members heard that non-Leeds vehicles would be requested to show the passenger booking information and if none were provided, the driver would be asked to leave in order to discourage touting for business. Noting previous discussions on Wi-Fi, Members were keen to ensure that Enforcement officers were mindful that some drivers could experience difficulty loading the App booking whilst on site.

Security Industry Service – I Tough

The Committee heard that communications and information exchange between Festival Republic and the SIA had improved with the SIA content with the relationship. Additionally, accreditations for SIA staff were being processed in time for the event.

West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service – N Devine

The ban of campfires and the control of vaping was welcomed and would support the WYFRS approach of prevent, protect, respond and resilience. WYFRS had reviewed the management plan produced by the Midlands Fire Service supporting the Festival and were content. Midlands FS would be on site Thursday to Monday with dedicated crew and equipment throughout the event and would have access to a water source. If more water was required, this could be requested from North Yorkshire, with Tadcaster being a nearby access point. A WYFRS commander would be available throughout and communications would be established with the Midlands FS. Site visits would be undertaken which will inform the final fire risk assessment plan.

In response to a comment that although campfires and barbecues would be banned for the Festival, guidance on barbecues remained on the Festival website. Members received assurance that the guidance would be removed and replaced with the information due to be included in the 01/08 press release. Additionally, Members heard that confiscated vapes would be disposed of by being placed in special containers which will be made available to attendees. In response to a comment that the information on disposable vapes and barbecues was difficult to find on the Festival website, Members were advised that clear messaging was being included on the Festival's social media accounts as this tended to be where most attendees read about the event.

LCC Safer Leeds – C King

Members noted that the discussions today had provided reassurance around the issues of barbecues and drink spiking, with the provision of AIR Hubs being seen as very positive.

At this stage of the meeting, Members were asked to consider moving into private session as the discussion was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information, particularly information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Event Organiser and its associates and also information relating to action taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime. Those issues fell within the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4(3) and 10.4 (7).

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the following part of the meeting as discussion was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information, particularly information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Event Organiser and its associates and also information relating to action taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

At the conclusion of discussions in private session, the Committee resumed in public. The Chair acknowledged and welcomed that Festival Republic had responded positively to the issues raised at the Committee's meeting in January 2023 and thanked all attendees for their participation in discussions today.

Members considered the options available to them in respect of the EMP for 2023. Members noted and supported a proposal that the Committee should continue to delegate the final approval of the EMP to officers for the 2023 Festival, but that a report should be brought to the next Committee meeting which would give the Committee an opportunity to review the process for the development and sign-off of the EMP, in conjunction with SAG partners, for the 2024 Leeds Festival.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the presentation from Mr M Benn and representatives of Festival Republic on the planning and preparation for the 2023 Festival, and the comments from partners of the Safety Advisory Group provided in discussions with the Committee.
- b) To delegate approval of the final Leeds Festival 2023 Event Management Plan to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory; and
- c) That a that a report be presented to the next Committee meeting which would give the Committee an opportunity to review the process for the development and sign-off of the EMP, in conjunction with SAG partners, for the 2024 Leeds Festival.

17 Licensing Sub Committee - Revocation of taxi driver licences on the basis of minor motoring convictions

Further to minute 18 of the meeting held 9th August 2022, the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory, submitted a report on the trial 12 month period where any decisions to revoke taxi drivers' licences on the basis of minor motoring convictions would be determined by Licensing Sub-Committee.

The report detailed that during the trial period, there had been no cases where such decisions may have been required. It was however reported that there were now a number of pending cases where revocations may need to be considered. The Committee was therefore requested to approve a further 12 months trial of the process.

In response to one Councillor's report that he had received information that there had been occasions when a case had been determined by officers that could have been considered by a Licensing Sub Committee, Members were informed that this was not correct. There had been some cases where drivers having amassed 9 points or more had received training but no cases had come before officers to consider revocation.

The Committee also noted that training would be provided to Members in readiness for any Licensing Sub Committees required to consider minor motoring conviction cases and the format that such meetings would take.

RESOLVED –

- a) That Licensing Committee delegate to Licensing Sub-Committee the power to determine the potential revocation of taxi and private hire drivers' licences on grounds of minor motoring convictions.
- b) That the delegation of this power be reviewed after a period of 12 months.

18 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 19th September 2023 at 10.00 am.