

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 6th August, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor J Gibson in the Chair

Councillors A Ali, E Carlisle, R Downes,
L Farley, K Haigh, S Hamilton,
T Hinchcliffe, S Holroyd-Case and L Martin

18 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

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

19 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 Leeds Festival 2024.

20 Late Items

No late items of business were added to the agenda.

21 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowden, N Buckley, Seary and Senior.

23 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

24 Leeds Festival 2024

The report of the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory outlined the work undertaken so far in preparation for the Leeds Festival 2024, to be held in the grounds of Bramham Park over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

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 information associated with the Festival which falls under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

In introducing the report, the Section Head, Entertainment Licensing, noted that the premises licence for the Festival was subject to a condition that an Event Management Plan ("EMP") and any revisions to the EMP must be approved by the Licensing Authority each year. The Committee was

requested to consider whether to continue to delegate approval of the final EMP to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory or whether to delegate approval of the final EMP to a Licensing Sub Committee to be convened just prior to the start of the Festival.

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 Festival, including blue light and relevant services as partners of the Leeds Safety Advisory Group ("SAG") co-ordinated by the Resilience & Emergency Team.

The following representatives of the festival organiser were in attendance:

- Melvin Benn, Managing Director, Festival Republic
- Georgie Hanrahan, Festival Republic
- Vicky Chapman, Head of Sustainability, Festival Republic
- Hannah Corrigan, Festival Republic
- Andrew Pennington, Festival Republic

The Committee received a presentation from Festival Republic which provided an overview of the event planning which was now in its final stages and highlighted any changes to arrangements following the 2023 Festival:

Amended site plan - The site plan had been updated in response to changing musical trends, this included the removal of the Main Stage West, BBC Dance, Radio Xtra and the Alternative Stages. A new Chevron Stage, BBC Radio 1 stage and 'The Orcs' would be introduced for 2024.

Camp Sites - A second Eco Campsite had been introduced due to increased popularity, along with a dedicated quiet camp and a solo camp.

Increased late night entertainment - The new Chevron Stage will also host the silent disco The Anachronica stage would not return.

Fire Safety – To continue the 2023 provision, including the ban on campfires and barbecues.

Medical provision – To continue the 2023 provision with the same provider and to include on-site X-ray provision and a recording radiologist.

On-site support for attendees – A number of external organisations would be on-site to offer support and guidance to attendees, including Festival Angels, Brook, SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) Oxfam, Forward Leeds, Samaritans, Salvation Army, Egalitarian, Narcotics Anonymous, Safe Gigs For Women and Alcoholic Anonymous. Diverse UK would also operate a sensory space offering a safe and quiet space for attendees.

Campaign messaging – Social messaging would focus on the safety of attendees and staff. The Festival would run the "Look Out For Each Other", "Ask 4 Angela" and the "Enough!" campaigns through screen messaging, social media and the Festival App. Brook consent messaging would be shown on the screens adjacent to the stage and posters with information and guidance on modern slavery/exploitation would be displayed in staff toilets.

Assistance Information Response (AIR) Hubs - To continue the 2023 provision, with 12 Hubs throughout the camp sites and one located in the arena, to be staffed 24 hours a day by Age UK, Oxfam, Andy's Man Club and Festival Angels.

Alcohol - To continue the 2023 provision with ID checks undertaken at bars.

Under 18's - A QR system will again capture data on the number of 16/17 year old attendees both accompanied and unaccompanied, with the data shared at daily SAG meetings.

Security and stewarding – To continue the 2023 provision, with PNC checks on all staff and SIA licence checks undertaken by the Security Industry Authority.

The enhanced drug detection measures introduced in 2023 would continue.

Sustainability – 15% of campers had registered to use the 2 Eco Camps – a 25% increase in take-up. Decathlon would also be on site this year with a “no tent left behind” campaign and the offer of tent click & collect and repair services. No disposable vapes permitted for sale on site and vape specific bins will be provided. The salvage, deposit and on-site waste sorting schemes will return for 2024.

Noise/ Environmental Health – Off-site noise monitoring will be undertaken in the surrounding villages throughout the Festival. The Anachronica Stage will not operate and there will be 2 campsite DJs rather than 4 as provided in 2023. The letter to residents is due to be distributed and the local resident's website and hotline were now operational. The 2023 plans for water safety management and food safety testing plans will continue for 2024.

Traffic Management – The Traffic Management Plan had been updated and National Highways would take responsibility for site egress at Junction 44 A1(M). The closure of the southbound hard shoulder at J44 A1(M) was proposed along with enhanced signage in surrounding areas. Noting the impact of the long term A1(M) roadworks, consultation was ongoing between the Festival Traffic Sub Committee and the Works Operator. Additionally, the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire (HC/PH) pick-up/drop-off point would be managed by Event People, who will also have a representative in Event Control. Additional Wi-Fi and lighting will be provided at the pick-up/drop-off point along with safety messaging.

Signage – signage around the site will be provided including that by VMS and LED. Help maps & 'you are here' boards and various information sources will be available for attendees.

Members were also provided with the time frame for the final stages of planning for the event:

7th August – table top exercise

14th August – final SAG meeting

16th August – submission of the final EMP

20th August – proposed Member site visit.

In response to queries from Members of the Committee, representatives of Festival Republic provided the following additional information:

- Detail on the arrangements for the salvage operation and take-up by local or national organisations. Members noted the suggestion for Members of the Committee to join the Festival Sustainability Sub- Group.
- Detail on the tent rental scheme to be operated by Decathlon.
- Detail on the arrangements and facilities offered in the Eco camps.

- The commitment to women's safety and on-site provision of safe spaces and support, and confirmation that the 'Ask 4 Angela' campaign will be included within staff briefings.
- Confirmation that the Festival was intended to be a 'cash-less event. The impact on attendees' ability to pay for journeys home if Hackney Carriage/Private Hire vehicles did not have an operational card reader was discussed and the Chair encouraged all representatives of both trades to ensure their card readers were charged and operational if working at the Festival.

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

Co-Chairs of the local Parish & Town Councils sub group - Councillor N Harrington and Councillor M Robinson

The Committee noted that the sub group met with Festival Republic throughout the year, and that each locality within the outer north east area had a designated co-ordinator. Liaison letters to residents were due to be despatched this week. Confirmation that Wi-Fi connectivity had been increased on the Festival site was welcomed.

Issues relating to drug prevention, noise and access had been discussed through the year and Festival Republic had been receptive to suggestions made. The Festival website now hosted a residents' portal which was very helpful. Additionally, the benefits the Festival brought to local villages through the associated Community fund were highlighted.

National Highways – D Skupski

The 2023 Traffic Management Plan for 2023 had been successful and would be carried forward for 2024, the main area of concern had been egress on Sunday night and National Highways would lead on the management of J44 A1(M) through Sunday night/Monday morning this year. The long term roadworks on the M1 from Lofthouse to Hook Moor would be a challenge. However, in order to minimise the impact, traffic would be encouraged to utilise the A1(M). Signage improvements will be carried out.

In response to a query regarding the feasibility of taxi use of the designated bus access routes, the Committee heard that a number of discussions with the trade had been held. The Committee was told changing the taxi routes would have a significant impact on all routing into and out of the site, therefore no significant change to taxi access was proposed. Members commented that taxis were regarded as alternative public transport and were permitted to use bus routes in the city.

In respect of a reported issue experienced in 2023 when a fire service response vehicle was refused access to a route to attend a residential fire, the Committee received assurance that the incident had been discussed by SAG and would be addressed through improved signage to allow "emergency vehicles only beyond this point" and briefing of stewards.

The Committee also noted that the closure of a local footpath had prompted complaints from residents. It was explained that a number of bridal ways are subject to closures.

LCC Highways – M Norcliffe - Referring to the issue of HC/PH access, it was confirmed that altering the route would have a knock-on effect on traffic flow on the wider network. Access had been explored with partners, but an alternative acceptable arrangement had not been identified. Historically complaints had been received that HC/PH vehicles had used prohibited routes through nearby villages to access the Festival and been followed by other Festival traffic, and there were now less incidents of this due to the access introduced four years ago.

A Pennington, Festival Republic - Provided further detail on the consideration of requests for revised HC/PH access routes.

- Shuttle Bus Yellow Gate access - Reinstatement of the former route would not be possible as due to significant changes to the Festival site layout, the Yellow Gate area now hosted other facilities including accessibility access leaving no capacity for taxis. The rank was relocated to Red Gate four years ago to alleviate the impact of traffic on Thorner village.
- The trade's request for a quick return to the city centre has been accommodated by allowing HC/PH to access the site through Red Gate 1 and exit via a right turn at Black Gate which allows them to travel directly to Leeds via the A64. It was not feasible to allow access through the Red Bus/A64 closure. This would impact on the HC/PH egress plan throwing them back onto the eastbound exiting traffic towards the A1(M).

The Chair suggested that Members of the Committee attend the Transport sub-group to further discuss access and Councillors A Ali, Gibson and Martin agreed to attend.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service – C Fothergill - There was confidence in the response plan being developed for 2024 and the 2023 provider was contracted for this year with X-Ray facilities on site. Additionally, although an event of this size adheres to the provisions of the Purple Guide, Festival Republic had engaged strategic services to be on-site. There has been a proactive approach to the recommendations contained within Martyn's Law. YAS would be on-site 24 hours per day from the Thursday of the Festival.

LCC Safer Leeds - C Smith - The continued ban on campfire and Barbecues was welcomed.

LCC Public Health - D Burn – The collaboration between Public Health and Forward Leeds would continue. "Look out For Each Other" campaign has been subject to a refresh and animations would be relayed via various means including broadcast on stage screens, the Festival app, push notifications, posters and merchandise, with further messaging related to health protection messages.

LCC Environmental Health - S Hardisty & R Turner – No concerns were raised. Work with Festival Republic remained ongoing, and EHO would have a presence on site during the Festival to deal with food safety.

There was a well-established process in place to deal with noise monitoring and EPT officers will be based off-site, travelling around the localities to detect any issues. The website included relevant contact details and the Out of Hours Noise team was aware of how to make contact with the team at the Festival. The complaints line is now live.

LCC Emergencies Team/SAG co-ordinator - R Jowett - No concerns were raised. In respect of the timescales for the EMP, the earlier SAG deadline of 12/08 allowed time for partners to address any issues before the final submission of the EMP on 16/08. Members were reminded that they had been granted access to the Resilience Direct secure portal to view the EMP and to contact relevant officers to obtain passcodes.

Security Industry Authority – I Tough – No concerns were raised, although the Authority awaited details of stewarding staff from the contracted providers so that checks may be carried out. It was anticipated that these would be supplied shortly. Historical concerns regarding the experience of stewards were no longer relevant and in 2023 there were very few incidents of stewards attempting to use fake ID. In addressing whether there is the prospect of SIA badge holders, once registered, having an undisclosed criminal conviction, it was noted that such details are dependent on the information provided at the time of arrest. Badge holders may inadvertently fail to declare door supervision should it not be their main occupation.

LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Section – R Perrett – Enforcement officers would be on site each day of the Festival undertaking vehicle/driver checks. The team was liaising with neighbouring authorities to encourage their attendance to deal with vehicles licensed within their boundaries. Improved Wi-Fi and signage would be installed at the pick-up/drop-off point and toilet facilities for drivers will also be installed. Members received assurance that any offence occurring in Leeds will be dealt with by Leeds officers regardless of where a vehicle is licensed, having representatives of neighbouring authorities on site would mean that up to date information on those vehicles registered elsewhere was more readily available. Members also noted that non-compliance was significantly lower in 2023.

West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service – C Hammill – Good working relationships were established with Festival Republic, and although the Fire response contractor had changed for 2024, there were no concerns. WYFRS will have a tactical /operational commander on site throughout the Festival.

West Yorkshire Police – N Ireland – WYP were satisfied with the emerging EMP and a command structure was in place for 2024. WYP had been involved in a review of the 2023 Festival and were confident that the 2024 EMP reflected on and addressed any issues raised during that review. Members were provided with reassurance that conversations between WYP

Command and Festival Republic would be ongoing during the Festival to reflect/respond to issues whether that be traffic, crowd or crime related. Members received reassurance that the deployment of resources was done through an ongoing threat assessment in conjunction with other police forces which reviewed other events and crime patterns elsewhere, so that any necessary response is evidence based.

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 the work being done to develop the EMP to create an enjoyable and safe Festival and thanked all attendees for their participation in discussions today.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the presentation from Mr M Benn and representatives of Festival Republic on the planning and preparation for the 2024 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 2024 Event Management Plan to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory.

25 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday, 17th September 2024 at 10.00 am in the Civic Hall, Leeds.