

Public Document Pack

Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 21st November, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor J Gibson in the Chair

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

19 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

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

20 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

In respect of agenda item 7 Leeds Festival 2023 Debrief and agenda item 8 Leeds Festival 2023 Event Management Plan Method of approval, the Committee was advised that, although the reports did not include any exempt information, it may be necessary for the meeting to move into closed session should Members wish to discuss operational details of the 2023 Festival or elements of the of the Event Management Plan.

RESOLVED – That, in accordance with Schedule A to the Local Government Act 1972 and Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (1), (2) and (5) the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt from publication on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-
Appendices A & B to item 9 “Licensing Act 2003 Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths” – as the information included relates to an individual or may be likely to reveal the identity of an individual and contain information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in any legal proceedings.

21 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda; however the Committee was in receipt of supplementary information relating to agenda item 7 Leeds Festival Debrief (minute 25 refers). The documents had also been published to the Council’s website:

- Submission on behalf of Eurocabs
- Submission on behalf of National Highways

22 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hamilton and Hutchison.

24 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held 1st August 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

25 Leeds Festival 2023 Debrief

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory, which introduced a de-brief on the Leeds Festival 2023 held in the grounds of Bramham Park over the Bank Holiday weekend, August 2023. Representatives of the event operator, Festival Republic Limited, and partners from the Safety Advisory Group were invited to provide the Committee with feedback.

The Licensing Officer introduced the report and noted receipt of two supplementary documents provided on behalf of Eurocabs Hackney Carriage Association and on behalf of National Highways.

Mr Melvin Benn, Managing Director, Lucy Kinsella, Sarah Tombulca and Hannah Corrigan of Festival Republic Limited attended the meeting.

Mr Benn addressed the Committee on two key issues:

- Representatives of the Local Authority Festival and the Safety Advisory Group scrutinised preparations for the Festival and following the sad death of Mr D Cellino at the 2022 Festival, he felt that appropriately, the Festival had been under increased scrutiny. The plans for the 2023 Festival presented to the Committee in February 2023 had paid dividends in terms of customer feedback on their experience of the Festival.
- The revised arrangements for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire (HC/PH) pick-up/drop-off had worked well and Mr Benn provided assurance that these would remain if the 2023 arrangements were the preferred option for the HC trade. Additionally, HC/PH planning could be dealt with as part of the traffic management meetings for the Festival.

Lucy Kinsella provided the Committee with a presentation on the 2023 Festival and any proposals for change in respect of the following issues:
Fire Safety – Campfires had been banned for the first time in 2023, although fires powered by small gas canisters were permitted. Only 7 fires had been reported, compared with 54 in 2022. The campfire ban would continue for 2024 and the team were looking to improve communications between West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) and West Midlands Fire Service which was contracted to support the Festival.

Alcohol and Tobacco – Check 25 had been implemented, the Event Licensing Team on site were supported by LCC Entertainment Licensing. Over 18 wristbands had been issued as described in February 2023 and would continue in 2024.

Medical Welfare and Safeguarding – The two Campsite Welfare hubs introduced for 2023 had dealt with 816 attendees. Daily onsite safeguarding meetings had been held. Minimal drink spiking test kits had been sold. The “#Look Out For Each Other” messaging campaign had been a success, and

drugs advisory messaging to deter attendees bringing drugs on site had been implemented at the event access points.

- 1668 people had attended the medical facilities, compared to 1445 in 2022.
- 14 offsite transfers had been made, compared to 31 in 2022.
- 27 on-site X-Rays had been undertaken.

The Committee was provided with statistical analysis of the reasons for attendees seeking medical assistance, which showed leg injury, drug intoxication, alcohol intoxication and head injury as the major causes of visits. The statistics showed that attendees had sought medical support.

Examples of social media messaging and website coverage were provided, including the “Ask for Angela” and “#Look out For Each Other” messaging which had been displayed intermittently on the screens adjacent to performance stages, providing assurance that all attendees had sight of support messaging throughout the Festival.

Security / Policing – A hostile environment for drug dealers had been successfully created with covert teams operating throughout the event. 72 arrests had been made – 82% were drug related. 213 evictions had been implemented compared with 130 in 2022, for non-compliance with Festival rules. Drug surrender bins were located at each Gate with drugs dogs, resulting in £30k of drugs being surrendered.

Assistance Information Response (AIR) Hubs – 16 AIR Hubs were installed across all camp sites were open 24 hours from the Wednesday to the Monday of the Festival. These were now embedded into the Festival management plan, and were staffed by volunteers from local community groups, Festival Angels, Age UK and Oxfam.

Sustainability – A Sustainability Working Group had been established to report on how the event met its targets and the incentives to encourage attendees to help the event meet its targets. In terms of the salvage operation, over 300 volunteers had attended with a 51% increase on salvage from 2022, Councillors attended the Sustainability Working Group and the system of sign-up to join the salvage team had been improved. In terms of public engagement, the Climate Live bus was located on site, with Climate Live hosting a talk and film on climate action. A bottle/cup return scheme was implemented. The eco-campsite had 6,500 attendees signed up to it by August 2023 and more work would be done to encourage take-up in 2024.

Environmental Health and Noise – Off-site noise monitoring had been undertaken, The ‘Anachronica’ stage had been moved with no off-site noise impact and the Green Campsite DJ had been re-introduced with no reported adverse impact on the Noise Management Plan.

Traffic Management – The A64 eastbound closure worked well and the closure of Kiddal Lane, Aberford was largely supported by residents. Festival organisers met with representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade prior to the event and took on board their suggestions. One area for improvement had been identified as the Sunday egress at Junction 44 of A1 (M) interchange.

Discussions with the Committee covered the following matters:

- The Traffic Management Plan (TMP) could only be fully tested once the Festival was live. The issue in respect of Sunday egress and the impact on Junction 44 of the A1M had been discussed at the Traffic Management Sub Group. Some learnings have been taken away including one agency overseeing the Plan in the future.
- The carbon footprint had increased from 64 in 2022 to 171 in 2023 largely due to the lack of availability of bio diesel. The order for the 2024 Festival had already been placed to secure a sufficient supply.
- Incentivising attendees to take their kit and rubbish home with them was challenging as it was difficult to identify those who had retained their kit/rubbish. It was agreed that this would be further considered by the Festival Republic team.
- Regarding the comment of the Coroner on staff intervention in 2022, a change of policy direction had been introduced for all Festival staff, whereby proactive intervention and approaching attendees to ask if they required help was promoted.
- With regard to PH/HC issues, no problems had been reported directly to the Festival Republic team however they were aware of one issue with a shortfall of HC vehicles available between midnight and 01:30. Public wi-fi had been installed at the pick-up/drop-off site. Improvements to the PH/HC area to be made.
- There had been some cases of spiking reported but the majority of tests completed returned a negative result. There had been a few more reported cases this year, but this could be attributed to attendees being encouraged to seek help.
- With regard to the reported late confirmation to volunteer salvagers, it was agreed that an “in principle” confirmation could be sent earlier with the details of their post to follow.
- A suggestion to operate an on-site rental service for mattresses or camping equipment was made, however it was noted that because the materials are sold cheaply it is sometimes easier for attendees to buy and then discard the items, so a rental scheme could be challenging but the suggestion would be considered by the Festival team.
- It was felt that the Green Volunteer scheme was not widely promoted and further information on how volunteers could participate was sought with the suggestion that links to the LCC volunteer schemes and Voluntary Action Leeds could be good resources to tap into. The incentive to join the scheme was attendance at the Festival, with volunteers largely Festival attendees but

the suggestion would be fed back to the Festival's Sustainability Working Group.

- One Member commented that he had struggled to get the Festival App to work on-site, but this could have been due to their own phone's capability. Related to this it was confirmed that physical maps of the locations of stages/camping/facilities were available at the AIR Hubs and in the village so attendees did not just rely on the App.
- Drinking Water was readily available on site at numerous water points across the site.
- In respect of the statistics showing increased numbers accessing medical support, this was seen as a positive result by the Festival team and Medical team on site. Attendees looked out for each other so more people had sought assistance. Any attendees who thought they had a drug issue were encouraged to seek medical help and not take a risk.
- Testing for possible spiking incidents was available for free at the Medical tent and this practice would continue. The spiking kits available to purchase were perhaps less effective as they did not test for all drugs and it was a balance whether the purchase was worth it. The message is for people to seek medical attention. Tests from the Medical tent were more accurate but results took longer to return. The Ask For Angela campaign was promoted on site with one positive instance reported.
- The lighting on site along public walkways and at the HC/PH pick-up/drop-off area was to a similar standard to that on city street and lighting checks were undertaken prior to the Festival opening. It was noted that a couple of complaints had been received about lighting at the pick-up/drop-off point and these would be addressed for 2024 by the Festival team.

The Chair thanked the Festival Republic team for their presentation and the information shared with the Committee and expressed his wish for the Committee to continue to work in collaboration and scrutinise the arrangements for the Festival.

The Committee then moved on to consider representation from members of the Safety Advisory Group

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) – Chris Hargreaves.

WYFRS supported the ban on campfires implemented in 2023 which had minimised risk on site. Information had been provided to WYFRS in a timely fashion this year and a minor issue between WYFRS and West Midlands Fire Service had been discussed at the debrief and measures implemented. For future events, there were some amendments and modernisation to implement in the EMP, including the suggestion to use the JESIP principles (Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme) to establish an interoperability framework and standard approach to multi-agency working,

and categorisation of incidents that SAG may need to respond to. WYFRS could provide training to SAG partners.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Festival Republic team agreed to commit to implementing the JESIP principles.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service – Chris Fothergill. YAS welcomed the early engagement with Festival Republic in 2023 and was pleased to report that the Festival had minimal impact on the work of YAS during the Festival. No 999 calls to YAS were made. YAS was stationed on site 24/7 and Festival Republic had also sourced an ambulance liaison officer from YAS. Festival Republic had procured a medical provider who was Care Quality Commission (CQC) qualified and able to deal with off-site transfers and the delivery of medical resources met and exceeded current event guidance standards. The Doctors and Registrars on site were able to take decisions on whether to transfer a patient to off-site medical support. An assurance visit and mystery shopper type exercise were carried out which identified no concerns in the amber or red categories; and medical staff were well prepared for the practices they were to implement. Looking ahead, YAS did have some concerns over the impact of “Martyn’s Law” when implemented as it will require venues/events to take steps to improve public safety, with measures dependent on the size of the venue and the activity taking place. The new law arose from the Manchester Arena attack in 2017 and there is uncertainty around its implementation for outdoor events.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Festival Republic team agreed to continue to engage early on in the planning process with YAS.

LCC Traffic Management – Nick Gardiner The Traffic Management Plan (TMP) had been successful and no complaints had been received for the 2023 Festival. The request from the Hackney Carriage was noted and it was felt that this could be appropriately dealt with by the Traffic Management working group – to which Ward Councillors would be welcome. As the TMP was successful, any changes should be carefully considered, and LCC Traffic Management would be happy to participate in further discussions on egress from the Festival site on Sunday.

In response to a query from the Chair, Festival Republic team agreed to consider inviting local Ward Councillors to a meeting of the Traffic Management working group.

LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing – Nick Hammill Issues reported with lighting, staffing and Wi-Fi on the Friday of the Festival at the PH/HC pick-up/drop-off point had been resolved for Saturday and Sunday. There had been feedback from some attendees that some of the stewards provided by PH/HC firms spoke little English so attendees struggled to get advice on where to get their cars for journeys home. There had also been some over-charging and Plying for Hire incidents which were being investigated.

Noise - Ruth Turner Only 5 noise complaints had been received by LCC, predominantly the issues were weather related which directed noise towards Aberford. The Festival Republic noise consultant had been very responsive to reduce noise levels on site. In response to a comment that residents had felt that their complaint would not be dealt with, it was noted that if complaints were made to the Out of Hours noise team, that team would report to the Environmental Protection officers on site who would respond and react to those reports.

Additionally the Harewood Ward Councillor commented that local residents had not received their letters in a timely way, found the content convoluted and providing contact details for the Festival Republic team is key.

Wetherby Ward Councillor N Harrington Meetings had been held with the local Parish and Town (P & T) Councils involving Festival Republic, and work was done to ensure that letters to residents were despatched and timed to coincide with P & T Council newsletters. Consultation on the content of the letters was done with P & T Councils. It was suggested that any such feedback is made to P&T representatives.

SIA – Ivan Tough No complaints had been received for the 2023 Festival. Queues developed at the staff processing and accreditation point and staggered attendance times could be an improvement for 2024. There were some security officers who operated niche roles – such as working with drug dogs – who were not checked by the SIA and it was felt that closing this perceived loophole would provide further assurance. No unlicensed stewards had performed “licensed tasks”, i.e. body searches. Information had been made available earlier in the planning process which had allowed the SIA to engage with the contracted firms earlier. In response to a query regarding the availability of security staff, it was noted that during the Coronavirus pandemic many security officers had found other work and not returned to the industry but numbers had now improved.

West Yorkshire Police – Superintendent Dan Wood Supt Wood had acted as Silver Command for the Festival and he reported that there had been no specific pattern or series of crimes to cause concern. In terms of reported crimes, the following were reported -

120 recorded crimes (145 in 2022, 234 in 2019)

3 rapes

8 sexual assaults

7 spiking incidents

15 assaults

59 drug offences (4 of possession, others for supply) 8 of those were remanded into custody and the majority have already attended Court and received prison sentences. Of the 59, only 14 were West Yorkshire residents. In future liaison shall be held with other forces. When drugs were found, the Detective Constables on site leading the investigation worked with the Festival Republic team. There was a visible police presence at the access gates, and improvements for next year shall be to focus on car parks.

In terms of security, the police undertook 4999 vetting checks on staff and only a handful were rejected. Festival Republic had been more stringent on ejections this year for persistent trouble making by attendees. In terms of management of egress from the site, improved advertisement of the availability of the buses would be beneficial for 2024 as the bus provision worked very well for the 2023 Festival.

It was confirmed that a counter terrorism officer is allocated to the Festival.

In response to queries, Supt Wood agreed to provide further detail on the outcome of the investigations into the reported rapes outside of the Committee meeting.

In terms of comparing the number of reported criminal acts in 2023 with previous years, there were 25 fewer than 2022. Although there had been an increase in the number of arrests, the number of rape allegations remained consistent with previous years, there were 7 reports of drink spiking this year, 12 in 2022. However the reports of theft reflected the deterrents and measures now in place - 140 in 2019, 54 in 2021, 48 in 2022 and 39 in 2023.

Public Health – Dan Burn Public Health had assisted in the development of the “#Look out for Each Other” campaign which had proved to be very successful and widely used in social media and on-site. The campaign was popular as attendees could take their own photo and “win” a showing of it on the big screens. A Task & Finish group is planned for January to work on the campaign and imagery for 2024.

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.

Mr Benn took the opportunity to report that Lucy Kinsella would be moving on from Leeds Festival and the 2023 Festival had been her last. He wished to publicly thank her for her work and introduced Sarah Tombulca to that role and Hannah Corrigan as the new Licensing Officer.

The Chair also thanked Lucy for her work with the Licensing Committee, noting her responsiveness.

RESOLVED -

- a) To thank the Festival Republic Team and partners of the Safety Advisory Group for their presentation following the Leeds Festival 2023.
- b) To note the contents of the presentations and the comments and assurances provided during discussions.

26 Leeds Festival 2023 - Method of Approval of the Event Management Plan

Further to minute 16 c) of the meeting held 1st August 2023, the Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory, which provided an opportunity to review the process for the approval of the Event Management Plan (EMP) associated with the Leeds Festival. The Premises Licence for the Leeds Festival is subject to a condition that the EMP and any revisions to the EMP must be approved each year by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.

The report set out two options for the Committee to consider as the method of approval of the final EMP for Leeds Festival 2024 and onwards,

- a) To continue with the existing arrangements and delegate approval of the final Event Management Plan to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory; or
- b) To consider alternative options.

The Committee discussed the following matters:

- noted the arrangements in place for the development of an EMP for each Festival in partnership with members of the Safety Advisory Group.
- Members of the Licensing Committee would again be granted access to “Resilience Direct” - the secure national government platform for storing and sharing sensitive information with emergency services and relevant partners of the Leeds Safety Advisory Group (“SAG”) from March 2024 in order to review the emerging EMP.
- Members welcomed the proposal for the emerging EMP to include a summary of changes.
- The Committee noted the opportunity for Members to provide comments/ a steer to the Chief Officer on the EMP prior to its approval and that final approval of the EMP was always subject to all partners of SAG confirming their satisfaction with the Plan.

Having considered the options available, the Committee

RESOLVED - To continue with the existing arrangements and delegate approval of the final Event Management Plan to the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory.

(Councillor Wilson left the meeting at this point)

27 Licensing Act 2003 Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer, Elections and Regulatory, which noted that following the Inquest into a fatality at the Leeds Festival 2022, Leeds City Council had been served with a Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths by the Senior Coroner for the Coroner area of West Yorkshire East. Leeds City Council had a duty to respond to the Regulation 28 Report by 5th December 2023.

A copy of the Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths from the Senior Coroner dated 21st August 2023 was included at Appendix A. A copy of the proposed response on behalf of Leeds City Council was attached at Appendix B. Both Appendices were designated as exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4 (1), (2) and (5)

The Chair commended the work of the Council's Legal Services and Entertainment Licensing Teams in responding to the Regulation 28 Report.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths, received from the Senior Coroner for the Coroner area of West Yorkshire East, attached as Exempt Appendix A be noted,
- b) That the content of the draft response on behalf of Leeds City Council, attached as Exempt Appendix B be noted, and
- c) That the Committee authorise the Chair to respond to the Senior Coroner in relation to the Regulation 28 report on behalf of the Licensing Committee.

28 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 10.00 am.