

## Leeds Festival 2024

Date: Tuesday, 28 January 2025

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

Members are to receive a debrief from Festival Republic and partners of the Safety Advisory Group following the Leeds Festival held at Bramham Park over the August Bank Holiday in 2024.

### Recommendations

The Licensing Committee is asked to:

- a. Hear from representatives of Festival Republic and partners of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) following the Leeds Festival 2024.
- b. It is a recommendation that Members support the future development of working groups, particularly those to address sustainability and the traffic/taxi & private hire arrangements at the 2025 Festival.
- c. 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 Licensing Committee is to receive a debrief following Leeds Festival 2024 in the form of a verbal report from Mr Benn of Festival Republic and from partners of the SAG, including:

- 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
- LCC Safety Advisory Group representative

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

### **Background Information**

1. 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.
2. The Licence is subject to a condition that the Event Management Plan (EMP) and any revisions must be approved by the Licensing Authority prior to the Festival.
3. Since 2022 there have been a number of enhancements to the festival, including:
  - a. A ban of all campfires;
  - b. An enhanced entry and checking system at all entry gates;
  - c. Enhanced security & detection measures throughout the site;
  - d. Challenge 25 replaced the Challenge 21 proof of age scheme;
  - e. The removal of the 18yrs plus wristband, requiring age verification checks on the provision of alcohol;
  - f. A QR system on entry to gather data on the number of 16 & 17yr olds, both accompanied and unaccompanied;
  - g. Introduction of 24/7 Safeguarding co-ordinators and daily safeguarding meetings;
  - h. The provision of Air Hubs (Assistance, Information, Response) spread across campsites offering welfare and support facilities;
  - i. Introduction of a Welfare hub in the Arena.
  - j. Annual review and promotion of the #lookoutforeacher campaign - a drug, alcohol and wider health, wellbeing and safety festival campaign designed by the Reading & Leeds Festivals Advice Campaign Team.
  - k. Growing presence of welfare/social care providers and schemes advertised such as ‘Ask4Angela’;
  - l. Availability of spiking test kits for purchase, albeit the priority message is for customers to seek medical attention;
  - m. Improvements to onsite lighting and directional signage, particularly on egress routes leading from the arena to campsites, car parks, pick up locations and public transport hubs. The Festival App has been enhanced to include a location map and help maps displayed around site;
  - n. Deployment of quality security and stewards, especially with attention to campsites to improve customer engagement;

- o. Improved engagement and information sharing with the Security Industry Authority, allowing additional time for checks of security operatives.. This goes in hand with PNC carried out by the police together with onsite processing prior to commencing work;
- p. A change of medical provider and provision of onsite x-ray facilities;
- q. Minor changes to the established traffic management plan and the addition of a designated traffic liaison officer for Aberford;
- r. Development of a Salvage Working Group to identify and facilitate improvements to the salvage operation;
- s. Continuance of the ward/parish council working group to discuss matters such as road closures and resident letter content and distribution.

## **Leeds Festival 2024**

4. The Event Management Plan (EMP) was approved by the Chief Officer, Elections & Regulatory, on the 20 August 2024 following confirmation from all SAG partners of their satisfaction.
5. Prior to this, on the 6 August 2024, the Licensing Committee heard from Festival Republic and SAG partners on the arrangements in hand leading up to the Festival.
6. Multi-agency meetings and safeguarding meetings were held each day throughout the duration of the Festival.
7. This year brought some changes to the layout of the Festival, including the removal of the secondary main stage and the introduction of the Chevron stage. After 23:00hrs the Chevron Stage was utilised as the silent disco.
8. Both Yellow and Green campsites were reserved for Eco Camping due to high demand, and areas were also allocated to quiet and solo camping.
9. The Festival continues to be supported by a host of organisations and campaigns with a strong focus on intervention and prevention. Such organisations include Alcoholic Anonymous (providing twice daily meetings), Ask4Angela, Enough Campaign, Brook Consent Messaging, the Egalitarian (anti-spiking) and Forward Leeds.
10. The sustainability plan included messages to take belongings home and they were supported by rewards and incentives. Certain improvements were made to the Monday/Tuesday salvage operation - the details of which will be presented to the Licensing Committee.
11. The biggest impact on the Festival was Storm Lillian, bringing high winds on the Thursday into Friday. A number of campers' tents were destroyed as were parts of the infrastructure around the site. The Radio One stage also suffered irreparable damage and was taken out of use for the whole event.
12. An emergency meeting was held to identify a safe place for campers, but this was not put into use. Onsite camping stores were on hand to replenish camping equipment and support was available from the onsite welfare services. Festival Republic put into operation plans to prevent further arrivals, including suspension the shuttle bus service for some time. By Friday afternoon the gates had re-opened and entertainment was able to commence.
13. The above identified a need for the future severe weather plan to include measures for the temporary displacement of attendees.

## **What impact will this proposal have?**

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

- a.  Inclusive Growth     Health and Wellbeing     Climate Emergency

14. 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.
15. A range of welfare services are available throughout the site for customers to freely access, providing a means to access future support outside the festival environment.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. Eco campsites are expending year on year due to customer demand.
20. A sub-group involving Licensing Committee Members and Festival Republic's Sustainability Team was established for 2024. It is recommended that this continues for 2025.
21. 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?

Wards affected: Wetherby & Harewood

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes

22. A debrief meeting of the ward/parish council working group took place on the 12 September 2024. Whilst certain villages reported reduced issues there were other reports of increased traffic, noise (a large factor being the strong winds), absence of information for the Wetherby Shuttle Bus, and matters associated with village vehicle passes and distribution of the residents' letter. Such matters will be taken forward into the 2025 meetings.
23. A full debrief meeting of the SAG was held on the 2 October 2024.
24. The Licensing Committee will be attended by SAG representatives, who will provide Members a debrief from each respective agency.

### **What are the resource implications?**

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

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

26. The Festival is subject to a number of high level Safety Advisory Group and sub-group meetings with respective agencies and representatives.

27. Festival Republic is statutorily required to hold risk assessments and comply with relevant legislation aside from that of the Licensing Act 2003.

### **What are the legal implications?**

28. The Premises Licence is issued in perpetuity. Consequently, there is no recourse available to amend the existing licence unless following the receipt of a formal review application, or a new application/variation on submission from the licence holder.

29. 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.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

30. Following the Licensing Committee debrief meeting, Festival Republic and SAG partners will be looking ahead to the 2025 Festival commencing with a SAG planning meeting around February or March 2025. SAG meetings together with sub-groups and working groups will be held during the months leading up to the event.

31. A report will be brought to Licensing Committee in August 2025 when Members will hear from Festival Republic and SAG partners regarding planning arrangements.

32. Members will have the option to delegate authority to Chief Officer, Elections & Regulatory, to approve the EMP, or to convene a Licensing Committee/Sub Committee shortly before the Festival and once the final EMP is available.

### **Appendices**

33. Appendix 1 – Premises Licence Details

### **Background Papers**

34. None