

APPENDIX C

Dear Ms Taylor,

I write with regard to the application by WEAREFSTVL for a premises licence in respect of Central Park, Dagenham, made on the basis that the licence would allow for the provision of the retail sale of alcohol and a range of regulated entertainments at an annual 2 day festival for up to 23,500 people each year with the dates for the festival to be confirmed with six-month's notice. This year's festival is planned for the weekend of Saturday 12 / Sunday 13 September 2020.

I have read through the application form and associated (draft) Event Safety Management Plan (ESMP) and associated documents. I have had an initial video conference call with the applicant and attended the first virtual (Safety Advisory Group) (SAG) on this year's event.

While I recognise that the applicant is an experienced event organiser and promoter and that the paperwork submitted and being developed is detailed and will be further examined through the Safety Advisory Group process, I do have concerns which I wish to raise by way of a representation made under all four of the Licensing Objectives stated in the Licensing Act 2003, being

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

Firstly, the application is made under extraordinary circumstances, while the country is in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and we are all subject of the Government's social distancing restrictions. I expect these to remain in place, in some form, up to the time that the first of the planned festivals under the licence is due to take place. I am aware that the applicant is working hard to ensure that the 2020 festival can be made Covid-19 safe and that Government Guidance which might help inform this is expected before the scheduled event date, but I am mindful that currently the direction is that mass gatherings should not go ahead. So, while I look forward to seeing the arrangements that are proposed, currently I have real concerns as to whether it is possible to ensure that social distancing can be enforced with the numbers envisaged in a festival setting. Part of my concern rests on whether, even if Covid-19 compliant plans can be drawn up on paper, these can be conveyed to all attending and maintained in place throughout the event. I would use the example of the coverage of the very recent protests across the country as a demonstration of how difficult it is for large groups of people to maintain social distancing, particularly where there is an emotionally charged atmosphere.

So, for this reason in particular, but also given the intended commitment to an ongoing 10-year festival site, I believe that this matter is one that should be referred to the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee for determination.

I do have further concerns for this year's festival, however. In particular, if this application is granted and consent is given to the festival in September 2020 it is possibly the only sizeable music festival taking place in London and at the end of a summer affected by 'lockdown'. In my view, this 'opportunity for release' would prove an immense draw from all across London. While the event may be ticketed this will not necessarily deter all that do not have tickets and could give rise to issues around crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and nuisance in the locality and around travel arrangements. Again, while all of these matters will be subject of polices that will be scrutinised by partner agencies and the SAG, I would state my personal concerns and would wish to be assured by the final documentation and views of partner agencies.

If the event licence is granted, then I would insist that all parts of the ESMP are finalised and signed off by the SAG and relevant senior officers at least one month before the event, albeit allowing for any further changes made necessary by amendment of the Governments Covid-19 directions at that time.

As for the 10-year duration of the licence application, if the necessary consents are obtained by the applicant from the Events Team, I have no particular issue with this except that

- The festival arrangements must be subject of ongoing annual review with a process built in to provide for de-brief with the organisers and all partner agencies following each festival to identify areas that

may have been noted as in need of improvement and learning opportunities to feed into the arrangements for the following year's event. On this basis, I would also like to receive detail of how the matters noted as in need of attention from the (smaller) 'Defected' festival staged by the same event organisers at Central Park in 2019 and fed back at the debrief held in 18 November 2019 have been taken on board and dealt with. A copy of a summary of the issues raised is attached to this representation.

- I also understand that Central Park is scheduled for landscaping works in 2020 which are likely to affect both the location and layout of the festival site and the potential festival capacity. For this reason, should this year's festival be agreed with a capacity of 23,500, then the licence should make clear that future year's festival arrangements and capacity calculations must take into account changes to the physical layout of the park and any ongoing works.
- Furthermore, each year the festival ESMP should continue to be reviewed by the SAG in the normal way.

While I have stated that I believe this matter should go before the Licensing Sub-Committee, I remain available for constructive discussions with all parties on this application and will attend ongoing SAG meetings in the meantime.

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