

EA – LICENSING TEAM

EAST AREA BOROUGH

Barking and Dagenham Licensing Authority

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For the Attention of Management Team WE ARE FSTVL LTD

Police Representation to the Application for a new Premises Licence for WE ARE FSTVL, CENTRAL PARK, Central Park Dagenham RM10 7EU, 12th & 13th September 2020.

I certify that I have considered the application shown above and I wish to make **representations** that the likely effect of the grant of the application is detrimental to the Licensing Objectives for the reasons indicated below.

- 1. The prevention of crime and disorder,**
- 2. Public safety,**
- 3. Prevention of public nuisance, and**
- 4. The protection of children from harm**

Reece MILLER on behalf of WE ARE FSTVL LTD. has made this application for a 10 year licence.

The promoters and organisers of the event are the same as those that run the WE ARE FESTVAL in Havering and previously DEFECTED FSTVL in Central Park, Dagenham. Whilst this application is a new application, there is significant cross over in the management, ownership and organisation of both events. As a result, comparisons can made between the existing WeAre festival and the proposed application for WE ARE FSTVL.

Whilst conditions have been included in the application, police have concerns that the grant of the application is likely to impact on the licensing objectives as summarised below.

The Prevention of Crime and Disorder

As detailed above the same organisers run the WeAre festival in Havering. The anticipated crowd dynamics of the festival are similar to that of their other festival as is the style of the festival.

The 2019 WeAre festival was carried out over three days. Approx. 3000 persons attended on the Friday night with approx. 25000 persons on the Saturday and Sunday of the event.

There were 68 crimes recorded in total at the event. *(As shown in Appendix A)*

Significant incidents include a GBH where a male was stabbed in the abdomen (CRIS: 5408662/19), seven allegations of robbery, one of which was at knife point (CRIS: 5408758/19) and nineteen drug related incidents, including supply and possession of class A drugs.

Drugs have been a common theme of the festival during the period it has been in existence in Havering. Representations have previously been made against the festival by police and also against DEFECTED FSTVL which was held at Central Park, Dagenham.

Should the WE ARE festival licence be granted it is likely that the festival will see a similar pattern of crime. Dance music attracts a crowd that are more likely to consume class A drugs, which brings associated issues of intoxication, vulnerability and exploitation by criminal gangs.

Public Safety

WE ARE has been running a number of years already in Havering and even with all the modifications made by the owners and promoters over the years to improve the safety of the public at the event, there is still a large amount of crime taking place and drugs being consumed, thus risking the lives of the festival goers. This has been evidenced in PC DALY's (an experience former Police Licensing officer) statement of findings from walking around We Are festival and conducting Test purchases. *(As seen in Appendix B)*.

At the time of writing these representations I have not received any form of security plan from the applicant.

This is highlighting a huge concern for Police as the previous applicant for this festival in Havering submitted the crowd safety plan for the WeAre festival 2019 on the last day possible to be compliant with the licence. At the festival there was a large breach at the entrance gates to the festival. This resulted in a number of Injuries due to a crush in the crowd with a Twenty (20) persons admitted to Hospital for treatment four (4) into the Intensive Care Unit

The introduction of new technology at the gates contributed to this issue. By the organisers introducing new technology to the entry lane system, they ignored a report, commissioned by themselves, in relation to the WeAre festival 2017.

The report was extensive and written by a professor within the industry. The author's conclusions were quite clear and included the following comment:

“12.14 To conclude the recommendations and as a final note, it is clear from the observations by the author of the testing, knowledge of a wide range of festivals and events and the documentation provided by the police, local authority and the event that the key characteristics related to this report centre on the following issue(s). The length of time that patrons would be required to wait to gain full access to the site would be unreasonable. This is compounded by the possibility of disorder and issues of safety which cannot be overlooked. The use of an untried and untested scanning system in an outdoor event environment is not a strong enough basis for the recommendation of its use.”

This demonstrates a lack on consideration for public's safety having gone ahead with a trial of electronic equipment on such a large scale event.

See below links of National Social Media Footage of incidents from the previous festival;

<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23wearefestival&src=typd&lang=en>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-48410269>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/26/we-are-fstvl-east-london-crowds-collapse-heat>

<https://www.romfordrecorder.co.uk/news/review-upminster-s-we-are-fstvl-2019-1-6075643>

There were numerous Breaches of the Perimeter Fence by large numbers of persons gaining entry.

There was no contingency plan in place for the supply of bottled water to the Crowd waiting to gain entry to the venue. Prior to the crowd surge patrons had been waiting for several hours in hot weather.

Transport Plan – It is not known if there is a BTP (British Transport Police) Plan confirmed to support egress into the station)

Police have concerns, based on this application, that the applicant has not considered all areas necessary to ensure a safe festival.

It is unknown what consideration has been shown at this stage to include people driving to the venue and dropping/collecting attendees. The marshalling/control for people coming in via buses from Dagenham and Romford Town. The bus rank is just off the roundabout in Wood Lane. Also the potential for people to come in on mainline trains to Romford who may either bus or walk to Central Park (2.6miles). This has the high potential to cause serious traffic congestion and hold ups in and around major junctions and traffic lights.

According to the site plan it is not established where vehicles would park or coaches possibly pulling up to drop/pick up festival goers.

The congestion level this would cause could have a mass effect on the junction of Whalebone Lane South and Wood lane, which is a major junction leading to all areas of Dagenham.

There is an active fire station directly next to the site, any congestion could potentially cause severe public safety implications elsewhere, should the fire brigade not be able to exit their building to attend calls.

Prevention of Public Nuisance

This festival is located in a public park in a residential area. There have been festivals in this location in the past, although not of the same nature. Dance music tends to include repetitive beats and bass which local residents may have issue with over an extended period.

This includes persons walking from the park to Dagenham East station. There are licensed and residential premises along the route. Any congregation of persons along this route will likely cause nuisance to persons living nearby. The draw of licensed premises, May also cause any transport plans to be impacted by crowds not leaving the area.

Police also have concerns that any issues may lead to large crowds congregating in and around the festival and in nearby residential areas.

The scale of litter left by the festival could cause a detrimental effect on the local wildlife and local community who use the park on a daily basis.

The location of the festival is situated very close to Romford Town Centre which is a likely travel route for the festival goers on departure of the festival. This has the potential to cause further larger scale disorder within the area as there is a large night time economy at this location which could potentially attribute to the all-day drinking which festival goers are likely to take part in and come across further members of the public intoxicated at Romford Town Centre.

The Protection of Children from Harm

In order to protect children from harm at an over 18's festival there is a necessity for multiple checks to ensure that patrons are old enough to attend and purchase alcohol. This would include checks during the ticket purchase stage, ID checks on entry and at bars within the venue. What steps are being taken to ensure that no underage entries will be made and no underage sale of alcohol will be achieved?

At the 2019 WeAre Festival there were two crime reports where the victims were seventeen years old.

One male was a victim of robbery and a female the victim of a sexual assault. (CRIS: 5408721/19 and 5408968/19).

There were eight test purchases of bars at the festival with a 50% failure rate where staff did not check for ID under the challenge 25 principles.

There were a limited number of checks conducted by security at the queueing lanes, this was non-existent during the large crowd surge on the Saturday of the festival. The event management plan detailed that checks would be conducted at the first entry point to the queueing lanes, these were not conducted as security staff were largely trying to hold back a crowd.

This application does not detail any measures that satisfy police that children will be excluded from the festival; there are also no considerations around safeguarding any children found on the site.

CONCLUSION

Drugs are an ever growing part of a music festival and this festival, at time of writing, is the only festival likely to go ahead across the UK.

Thus meaning it is the only festival whereby gangs and organised criminals will have the opportunity to supply large amounts of illegal substances.

This brings several issues, firstly that there will be a large amount of illegal substances being supplied and consumed on the premises, putting patrons lives and safety at risk.

The other concern to Police is that multiple different gangs from all over the nation will attempt to compete against each other for the area to supply their substances, this could result in a form of gang turf war at the location, again, potentially putting the lives and safety of innocent people at risk, not to mention the strain it would put on emergency services to deal with a form of large scale disorder.

I make reference to “We Are FSTVL 2019” repeatedly as this is the previous “We Are FSTVL” having taken place and displays the behaviour and problems that were apparent in people being unsafe and/or at risk as a result of the festival going ahead with significant improvements needed. Thus Police having concerns that it showcases “We Are 2020” will not be a safe place for the public to attend as there will be criminal activity and disorder taking place which is not what innocent members of the public should be subjected to.

I urge the sub-committee to not grant the licence based on the criminal activity which is almost certainly going to take place at the event and possibly put people’s safety at risk.

Should the licensing sub-committee grant this licence I urge that a 10 year licence is far too excessive and should be drastically reduced to a potential maximum of 3 years.

I also recommend that it be allowed for the SAG to make a final decision if the event should go ahead based on the plans and policies submitted within the final 30 days prior to the event.

Yours sincerely,

PC Owen Dunn 3326EA

Licensing officer Barking and Dagenham

Appendix A – Crime stats from We Are 2019

Appendix B – PC DALY statement of findings from We Are 2019