

Licensing Sub Committee Hearing Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 8 April 2024

Present: Councillor Grimshaw – in the Chair

Councillors: Hughes and Judge

LCHP/24/24. Temporary Event Notice - Didsbury Sports Ground, Ford Lane, Manchester, M20 2RU

The Hearing Panel considered a report from the Head of Planning, Building Control and Licensing concerning an application for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) for an event proposed to take place at the Didsbury Sports Ground, Ford Lane, Manchester, M20 2RU. The Hearing Panel considered the written papers of the parties submitted and the oral representations of the parties who attended, as well as the relevant legislation.

The applicant, Mr Clive Szmit Director of Didsbury Sports Ground represented himself. Also in attendance were PC Alan Isherwood (Greater Manchester Police) and Sion Roberts (Licensing and Out of Hours Compliance Team).

The Chair conducted the hearing in accordance with the agreed procedure.

The Hearing Panel heard that objections had been received from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and Manchester Council Licensing and Out of Hours Compliance Team (LOOH) to the granting of the TEN for a beer festival event to be held on over the Bank Holiday weekend of 24 to 26 May 2024.

GMP attended the hearing and advised the Hearing Panel that there were serious concerns regarding the application regarding the likelihood of disruption to nearby residents, as did LOOH. The application proposed a music event for 499 people and this was likely to amount to calls from residents to GMP. There was no mention of security on site or where stewards will be positioned. They noted that the invite requested attendees to attend on foot or by public transport but there was nothing in the policy or application regarding how parking would be managed. No noise management plan had been shared with responsible authorities either. There was mention of a taxi pick up area but it was not stated how this would be enforced. Guests would have been on-site drinking all day and this could lead to noise outbreak. Alongside this issue it was noted that toilet provision for the site was not sufficient to cater for the event. A full risk assessment should have been carried out prior to any ticket sales. Litter was also a concern for local residents. For the reasons set out in the statement above, GMP requested that the Hearing Panel serve a counter notice to this event.

Responding to questions the GMP representative stated that the event was due to move indoors in the evening, that the line up for the evening would attract a lot of people and was over a three day period and that tickets would be capped at 499 but

word of mouth could spread awareness of the event and there was no mitigation in place for this.

The officer from the LOOH team advised the Hearing Panel that a risk assessment had been undertaken on the proposed TEN and similar representations were made to those submitted by GMP. It was not clear whether the TEN covered the indoor area as well as the outdoor event. It was not known how the organisers would keep track of the numbers entering the event and the maximum capacity for the premises was not known either. There was potential for attendees remaining on the site until late – 01:00 on Friday and Saturday and 00:30 on Sunday and the noise from egress of attendees was of concern. The application stated that there would be a noise limitation of 65 dB but this was bass heavy music that was likely to travel and disrupt local residents, the closest of which was only 70 metres away. LOOH had similar concerns over taxis driving to the club to collect customers. It was not known how attendees would be challenged on dropping litter around the area. Public urination was also a concern in the area around the venue. For the reasons stated above over a three day period, LOOH requested that the Hearing Panel issue a counter notice.

Responding to a question, LOOH stated that there had been similar incidents at the venue whereby the patio doors created noise egress in the later hours.

Mr Szmit addressed the Hearing Panel and stated that he had tried to address each email from responsible authorities and deal with each one sufficiently and admitted a mistake initially for the maximum capacity being set at 5,000. There was never any plan to have this many people on site. Mr Szmit felt that the event would be good for local people and that they would welcome this in their neighbourhood. There had been open communication with the authorities and there was a move to speaking with local residents too. Mr Szmit stated that this was all a good learning curve and that a previous TEN put in last year had stung the organisers. They wanted to make the event open to everyone. In terms of detail within the application, 499 people was inclusive of staff on site running the event and the outdoor area at the sports grounds was huge and large enough to accommodate the projected numbers. Club members would also have to buy a ticket to gain entry to the premises for the weekend so could not add to the numbers either. The end of May brings the football and rugby season to a close and the club was looking to make some extra money in difficult times for premises. Different coloured wristbands would be used for attendees of the daytime and evening events and proceedings would cease at the changeover time. At this point, stewards would tidy the area ready for the evening event and move anyone on who did not have the correct wristband. The indoor event was to be capped at 150 even though it can safely hold 200. At this point, only the clubhouse would be open. There would not be over 400 people leaving in the later hours, only 150 with 2 exit points. The club regularly had large numbers on site for sporting events which are always managed safely. The club already had a licensing agreement for smokers with regular checks of a small outdoor area. There would be a General Manager and Assistant Manager on site for the 3 day event and regular perimeter checks. The club already had a good relationship with residents and work to keep them happy. There was a noise assessment team booked who were used to doing much larger events who would maintain constant decibel checks throughout the event. The two closest residents were supportive of the event and the outdoor speakers would be aimed towards the river, away from residents with trees acting as

a sound baffle. Regarding toilets, there were 25 toilets in the clubhouse and changing rooms and all would be available for the 3 day event. There were also disabled toilets on site. Regarding the acts booked for the evening event, they were much older, in their 50s now and the crowd they would attract would be the same age range and would not be openly urinating in the streets. Mr Szmit was happy to have stewards marshal Ford Lane to ensure this. The club has actually improved things in the area and on Ford Lane as there used to be regular youths and antisocial behaviour. Mr Szmit closed his statement by expressing that the club were looking to make some extra money with these events and were happy to learn from any potential outcome to improve applications for future events.

In responding to questions, Mr Szmit stated that he was not the applicant of the TEN, that the applicant was putting the beer event and music event in place and could not attend today due to personal circumstances, that Mr Szmit employs the application (Mr Osborne) and as Director, would ensure that everything in the application was covered, that Mr Osborne has lots of experience with putting on events, that the notification for customers not to arrive in vehicles is similar in nature to other events the club put on and there is sufficient notice to all attendees not to do so, stewards are placed at the top of Ford Lane to enforce this, the beer festival would attract an older demographic of more responsible people, that the allotment would not be subjected to anything unlike other sporting events held at weekends, that they were not aware and had no record of anyone leaving the premises at 03:00 or 04:00 as mentioned by LOOH, residents have a good relationship with the club due to having their children on sports teams there, the club were using the club's licence to trade in the function suite from 22:00 to closing time, Mr Szmit had attended other beer festivals which finished at 22:00 then moved indoors and did not see a problem with it, that there was no written consent from the 2 nearby neighbours who offered support to the event, Mr Osborne had already advertised the event which was a mistake and Mr Szmit had asked him not to but no tickets had been sold.

GMP summed up by stating that the event was open to disruption to local residents with all the best will in the world but this would not deter drunken patrons from doing as they please. There was potential for lots of traffic with no-where to go on site leading to further disruption of the local residents. GMP stated that it would have been good to speak to the event applicant also and requested again that the Hearing Panel serve a counter notice.

LOOH summed up by stating that the cumulative effects of the proposed 3 day event would be a nuisance to residents and requested the Hearing Panel serve a counter notice.

Mr Szmit did not sum up his case.

After hearing the representations from all parties concerned, the Hearing Panel retired to consider the statements and evidence submitted.

After considering the application the Chair of the Hearing Panel informed all parties present of the decision.

In taking into account all evidence and representations submitted, the Hearing Panel agreed with Greater Manchester Police and the Licensing and Out of Hours Compliance Team, about potential issues that may ensue, if the application was granted. The Hearing Panel also agreed that the licensing objectives could be undermined if the application for the TEN was granted.

The Hearing Panel agreed that the Application be refused, and a counter notice be served.

Decision

1. To refuse the application for a Temporary Event Notice for an event at the Didsbury Sports Ground, Ford Lane, Manchester, M20 2RU, from 24 to 26 May 2024.
2. That a Counter Notice be served to the application.