

CABINET

7 FEBRUARY 2023

STARDUST FESTIVAL

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

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Summary

The Stardust Festival Ltd.'s festival 'The Great Lines Great Music Weekend' is a new major commercial four-day festival event for Medway planned to take place at the Great Lines Heritage Park from Friday 26 to Monday 29 May 2023.

The festival will generate income for Medway Council from the hire of the park as a venue. If successful, the Council will be asked to agree a multi-year contract with the event organisers.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. Medway Council recognises the value and benefit that a varied and well managed outdoor events programme can offer people living, working, studying and visiting Medway.
- 1.2. Outdoor events in Medway positively contribute to celebrating diversity, tapping vast depths of potential talent, boosting our local economy, creating a strong sense of community cohesion, supporting children and young people by fostering a culture of innovation and imagination, and by providing activities for older people - all contributing to a vibrant culture, environment and economy.
- 1.3. The paper is designed to support the delivery of the Council's Plan contributing toward the delivery of the following themes:
 - People Healthy active communities,
 - Place Put Medway on the map
 - Growth A strong diversified economy and residents with jobs and skills.

- 1.4. The policy is also strongly aligned to Medway's Cultural Strategy that places culture and creative industries at the heart of our priorities, shaping context and delivering a range of programmes that support the long-term ambition of Medway being the first choice for people to live, work, study and visit. The four defined themes of the strategy are:
- Shared Ambition
 - Connectivity
 - Spaces and Places
 - Creative People
 - Community Engagement
- 1.5 Given the size, scale and impact of this new festival for Medway it is considered appropriate for this decision to be brought to Cabinet for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1. Stardust Festivals Limited is an event business created specifically to deliver new and unique public live ticketed event experiences, by bringing together all essential stakeholders in a unique partnership.
- 2.2. Stardust Festivals Ltd's aim is to forge long term partnerships with local authorities and community-based businesses and companies that share their vision to create a more vibrant, relevant and safe environment for residents and audiences.
- 2.3. In August 2022 Stardust Festivals Ltd approached Medway Council to hire Great Lines Heritage Park in May 2023 for the first in a series of large-scale events to be delivered in Medway.

3. Festival overview

- 3.1. 'The Great Lines Great Music Weekend' is made up of four different days different genres of music, attracting different audiences and focusing on.
- 3.2. **Friday 26 May – Classical Concert**, which will be an opera and classical festival inspired by Glyndebourne Home festival and will showcase a range of operas and classical music. The operas will include Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, Rossini's Il Barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville), Verdi's Rigoletto, Bizet's Carmen and Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier.

Operating hours: 5pm to 10 pm
Capacity: up to 5,000
Audience profile 50 years+

- 3.3. **Saturday 27 May - Dance Day with Dream Valley**, which is an immersive world that merges art, music and experiential performance, with the goal of providing a unique experience for everyone who visits. A team of multi-award-

winning producers, directors, and creatives from across the world will deliver an unforgettable experience.

Operating hours 11am to -10.30pm
Capacity up to 25,000
Audience profile 18 to 55 years

- 3.4. **Sunday 28 May – 80s, 90s, 00s**, which will be a day of nostalgia as life is brought to the glory days of 80s and 90s pop, rock, and R&B music. Stardust will be transporting you back to when music was more than just a way to pass the time.

Operating hours 2pm to 10pm
Capacity up to 15,000+
Audience profile 35 to 75 years

- 3.5. **Bank Holiday, Monday 29 May – Community & Family Festival**, which will be a day for the entire family and community. It is a celebration of food, friends, and family. There are many activities for the kids as well as adults to enjoy. Activities will include face painting, arts and crafts, a petting zoo, games, musical entertainment on two stages, and more.

Operating hours 10.30am to 6:30pm
Capacity up to 15,000+
Audience profile 0 to 90 years

- 3.6. The setup of the festival will begin on 19 May, seven days before the first day of the festival and the park will be cleared by 5 June, seven days after the last day of the festival.
- 3.7. The draft site plan is overleaf.



LEGEND

Bar	Evacuation meeting point	Food trader	Fairground ride	Water point	Walking route
Carousel	Ferris Wheel	Information point	Toilet blocks	Steelshield fencing	Security check
Emergency exit point	First aid point	Ride operator	Toilet - disabled	Inner heras fencing	Sponsor activation

4. Advice and analysis

4.1. Stardust Festivals Ltd. have a diverse and well-rounded portfolio of events. Their team have produced successful major outdoor events across the UK over the last 30 years. On average the team produces over 200 events per year with audiences of up to 90,000 people. These events include:

- 2018 – 2021 Grease 50s Music Tribute Spectacular
- 2018 & 2019 We Are FSTVL - 3-day camping festival, 70,000 audience
- 2018 Beckenham Together Christmas Parade
- 2019 Stardust LDN - Disco, Pop, Jazz Music @ London's Tobacco Dock
- 2019 Beckenham Together Christmas on The Green
- 2019 Defected London FSTVL - Central Park, Dagenham
- 2019 Abode in the Park - Olympic Park
- 2020 Love, Pub & Grub - socially distanced
- 2021 Fields of Love - socially distanced
- 2021 Land of Love - Herts County Showground - Lydd Airport
- 2023 LoveNYE - Wembley Arena

- 4.2. The organisers have gathered a high-quality team of professional events specialists to deliver aspects of the festival including:
- Police Liaison - Richard Woolford – Reading and Leeds Festivals, We Are FSTVL, Latitude Festival, Wembley stadium concerts: Metallica, Muse and more.
 - Traffic Management - Last Mile - Medway Council Lambeth Council Enfield Council
 - Licensing Solicitor - Simon Taylor – Reading and Leeds Festival, Bestival, V Festival, Festival Republic, Live Nation, AEG All Points East, Victoria Park, Hyde Park, Wireless Finsbury Park, Dream Valley, Latitude Field Day, Wembley Stadium concerts.
 - Licensing Lead - Philip Kolvin QC – Licensed Premises: Law and Practice, with Updating Supplement Gambling for Local Authorities: Licensing, Planning and Regeneration Licensed Premises: Law, Practice and Policy: 30 Jun 2013 Events & Festivals: Festival Republic, Live Nation, Wembley Stadium, We Are FSTVL, Hyde Park.
 - Site & production delivery – Slammin Events – Alexandra Palace, Haringey Council, Hackney Council, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Red Bull Events
 - Noise Management – Vanguardia – Royal Parks, Isle of Wight Festival, Rolling Stones Tour, Creamfields
- 4.3. Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is made up of health and safety and emergency teams inc. Kent Police, NHS, MC Environmental Trading & Protection, Greenspaces, Traffic Management, Health and Safety and Licensing.
- 4.4. These teams are working with agencies, organisations and SAG members to develop plans including:
- Noise management
 - Traffic Management
 - Ingress and Egress plans
 - Waste and litter management
- 4.5. Organisers state the festival will bring a significant local benefit including:
- Significant economic uplift to the local area
 - Great source of entertainment to Medway at no cost to the local authority
 - An aspirational event series on the doorstep for those in all levels of education to be inspired by
 - Committed to employing local people, as the show becomes established in the area, and they aspire to recruit 50% (of circa 1,500 staff) into all the non-specialist roles from the local communities. (Recruitment subject to

local demographic). Organisers are looking at partnerships with the Medway Universities and Mid-Kent College.

- Spending by the various stakeholders and visitors to the festival benefits a wide range of businesses in the surrounding area including accommodation, catering establishments, shops, attractions and leisure facilities, transport operators, contractors and various supplier businesses.
- 4.6. The organiser also promises to be a good neighbour by offering:
- A resident hotline and community response team to deal with any issues and queries.
 - A sustainable approach to waste and litter.
 - A noise management throughout the event days.
 - A detailed transport plan to manage the audience ingress & egress.
 - A security plan developed with responsible authorities
- 4.7. The organisers must meet all the terms and conditions of the location hire agreement including:
- All required permissions and licences are obtained
 - Ward Councilors, residents and stakeholders remain on board
 - All legal and regulatory requirements are met
 - Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group's continued support
- 4.8. The Council can generate income through the hire of a wide range of spaces to professional event organisers. The Council are already planning to centralise the hire of parks and public spaces into the Festivals and Events Team. Doing so will provide a clear framework for organisers both community and professional and to make effective use of the skills and knowledge of the Event Officers and the expertise of colleagues across the Council and partner agencies at key stages.
- 4.9. Benefits include:
- Improved efficiency with standardised policies, systems, procedures and fees for community and professional organisers
 - Improved coordination with SAG partners, health, safety and emergency partners
 - Provides professionalised external facing webpages and digital application process for residents and industry professionals
 - Increased income generation for Medway Council.
- 4.10. 'The Great Lines Great Music Weekend' is the first festival where we have tested the approach to new ways of working that we will develop and adapt as part of the new service.
- 4.11. The festival will generate additional income from the hire of the park. If successful, the Council will consider agreeing to a multi-year contract with the event organisers.

5. Risk management

- 5.1. Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. Using the following table this section should therefore consider any significant risks arising from your report.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Public safety	Organisers are not compliant with health and safety regulation and legislation	Specialist event safety professionals have been employed by the organisers to develop plans with local health and safety agencies and teams. SAG review and scrutinise emerging and final plans four times before delivery of the festival.	C3
Reputation	Negative press & community feedback	See consultation section (6). All comments are used to develop the event plans.	D3

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very high B High C Significant D Low E Very low F Almost impossible	1 Catastrophic (Showstopper) 2 Critical 3 Marginal 4 Negligible

6. Consultation

- 6.1. Consultation has taken place via three routes. (1) Through the statutory Premises Licence process (2) Through an additional organiser led engagement for Ward Councillors, residents and stakeholders and (3) Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group.
- 6.2. The statutory Premises Licence process allowed residents and stakeholders 28 days to respond to the Premises Licence application for regulated entertainment and sale of alcohol.

- 6.3. Additional organiser-led engagement included online and in-person meetings in November 2022 with Ward Councillors, residents and community stakeholders. This will continue with future sessions in February, March and April and with a de-brief meeting taking place in June 2023.
- 6.4. Organisers presented festival plans to the SAG on 8 December 2022. As these plans evolve, they will be presented to two further SAG meetings in February 2023. An emergency planning tabletop exercise is also planned for April 2023.
- 6.5. Overall engagement timetable is set out below.

23 November to 23 December 2022	Premises Licence statutory consultation
24 November 2022	Ward Cllr Consultation 1 – Teams meeting
28 November 2022	Ward Cllr Consultation 2 – Teams meeting
7 December 2022	Local resident consultation 1 – Gillingham Library
8 December 2022	Local resident consultation 2 – Online meeting
8 December 2022	SAG meeting 1
20 January 2022	Licensing Panel Hearing
23 February 2023	SAG meeting 2
TBC February 2023	Ward Cllr consultation 3
TBC March 2023	Ward Cllr and Stakeholder group mtg 1
TBC March 2023	Local residents' consultation 3
TBC April 2023	Ward Cllr and Stakeholder group mtg 2
27 April 2023	SAG 3
10 May 2023	Local residents' information letter distribution
11 May 2023	Emergency Planning table top exercise
26 to 29 May 2023	Event Dates
TBC July 2023	Post-event local resident feedback meeting
TBC July 2023	Post-event SAG debrief meeting

7. Climate change implications

- 7.1. Alongside the Festivals and Events Team, the Climate Response team will provide guidance and monitor the Stardust Festivals Ltd as set out in the terms and conditions of their location hire agreement which includes:
- Environmental Impact assessment
 - Noise management
 - Waste and litter management
 - Single use plastic
 - Wildlife and nature
 - Traffic and transport
 - Trees
 - Site reinstatement

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. Hiring Great Lines Heritage Park to Stardust Festivals Ltd. will generate income for the Council. If successful, the Council will consider a multi-year agreement with the organisers.

- 8.2. All costs that the Council incur above normal service levels (e.g., waste management, traffic management, environmental protection etc.) will be charged back to the promoter.
- 8.3. A damage deposit will be taken to ensure the promoter pays for any required reinstatement.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The Council has the ability to hire out its greenspace for events, as this is a short-term occupation. This is not a disposal and therefore the requirements of S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 are not engaged. The company will be required to enter into a hire agreement which as well as requiring a damage deposit ensures that they have adequate insurance in place and obtain all necessary consents such as a Premises Licence, Planning Consent etc.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. The Cabinet is asked to approve the hire of the Great Lines Heritage Park to host the four-day 'The Great Lines Great Music Weekend' festival over the late May Bank Holiday in 2023.
- 10.2. The Cabinet is asked to instruct officers to ensure that the organisers agree to meet the terms and conditions of the location hire agreement as set out in paragraph 4.7.

11. Suggested reasons for decision

- 11.1. Approving this festival will:
 - Generate income for the Council
 - Generate increased economic benefits to the area
 - Provide increased access to cultural festivals for Medway residents

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None