

CABINET

24 OCTOBER 2023

THE GREAT LINES MUSIC FESTIVAL

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Harinder Mahil, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure

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Summary

A festival with the working title 'The Great Lines Music Festival' is a new major commercial event produced by Festivals Master Ltd, planned to take place at the Great Lines Heritage Park each year for the next three years.

Having received its premises license earlier in 2023 the aim is to drive excitement around a brand-new set of events that the local Medway community, and those from further afield, can look forward to returning to each year.

The report seeks agreement that the Council will hire the park to the organisers for the next three years, for an agreed fee, understanding that the organisers must meet all the terms and conditions of the location hire agreement, as set out at 1.1 of the report.

1. Recommendations

1.1. The Cabinet is requested to agree the hire of Great Lines Heritage Park to Festivals Master Ltd. from 2024 to 2027 to produce "The Great Lines Music Festival", subject to the organisers meeting the terms and conditions of the location hire agreement, including:

- All required permissions and licenses are obtained.
- Ward Councillors, residents and stakeholders are fully engaged in the planning process.
- All legal and regulatory requirements are met.
- Successful annual review
- The Council is reimbursed all costs incurred above normal service levels (e.g., waste management, traffic management, environmental protection etc.)

- The Council is exposed to no financial risk.
- Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group's ongoing support for all plans including for:
 - Noise management plans
 - Traffic and parking management plans
 - Ingress and egress plans
 - Waste and litter management plans
 - Public and crowd safety plans
 - Children and vulnerable safeguarding plans

2. Suggested reasons for decision

2.1. 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

3. Budget and policy framework

3.1. 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.

3.2. 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.

3.3. The paper is designed to support the delivery of the Council Plan contributing towards 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.

3.4. 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 five defined themes of the strategy are:

- Shared Ambition
- Connectivity
- Spaces and Places
- Creative People
- Community Engagement

3.5. Given the size, scale and multi-year impact of this new festival for Medway it is considered appropriate for this decision to be brought to Cabinet for approval.

4. Background

- 4.1. On 19 January 2023 Cabinet agreed to hire Great Lines Heritage Park to Stardust Festivals Ltd for a four-day festival due to take place during the late May Bank Holiday in 2023.
- 4.2. Initially Stardust Festivals Ltd were refused a premises license by the Licensing Hearing Panel.
- 4.3. Stardust Festivals Ltd appealed against the decision and in March 2023 were granted a premises license for provision of public entertainment and sale of alcohol for up to three days on one event weekend each year between January 2024 and 30 September 2027 on Great Lines Heritage Park.
- 4.4. The premises license allows licensable activities which include sale of alcohol consumed on the premises, live and recorded music, dancing, films and plays, for up to 3 days on 1 event weekend each year between 1 January 2024 until 30 September 2027 inclusive. Full details and conditions can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.5. Stardust Festivals is operated by Dream Valley and since the premises license award Dream Valley has been acquired by Festivals Master. The premises license has therefore been transferred to Festivals Master.
- 4.6. Festivals Master is operated by the Victoria Warehouse Group (VW) Music Ltd.

5. Festival overview

- 5.1. In acquiring Dream Valley and the associated premises license, Festival Master believe there is a significant opportunity using the senior management team's expertise to develop and operate a festival that will provide a pillar in Medway's events calendar, complementing the existing annual local event roster.
- 5.2. The South East region has been overlooked as an outdoor music show destination - specifically the Medway district with a buoyant local catchment area and excellent transport links to central London and other regional towns in the South East.
- 5.3. The show will extend commercial opportunities to businesses in the local area, both event infrastructure and labour suppliers along with those who can take advantage of the increase in inbound visitors during show periods.
- 5.4. With over 50 years' collective experience operating in the industry, Festival Master Ltd. strive to create unforgettable events with music at the heart. From festivals to club nights, gigs to corporate events, they are committed to going above and beyond to give their customers the time of their lives.

- 5.5. In 2024 'The Great Lines Music Festival' (working title) is a music festival of up to three days running from Friday 2 August 2024 to Sunday 4 August.
- 5.6. The festival is described as providing a unique experience for audiences bringing together a team of multi-award winning producers, famous names, directors and creatives with immersive art installations from across the world to put on an exceptional show.
- 5.7. Details of each day are being developed with operational hours not exceeding 12pm to 11pm and a maximum capacity of 15,000.
- 5.8. Festivals Master Ltd.'s vision for the next five years is to grow the programme and increase overall capacity gradually as they build the festival and local relationships.
- 5.9. They aim to drive excitement around a new set of events that the local Medway community (and those from further afield) can look forward to returning to each year.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. Festivals Master Ltd. is a new sister company to VW Music Ltd with over 50 years' collective experience operating in the industry. VW Music Ltd. hosts over 180 shows a year including:
 - We Are FSTVL (Essex)
 - Forbidden Forest (Leicestershire)
 - One More Time Festival (Middlesbrough)
 - Hard Generation (UK wide)
- 6.2. VW Music Ltd. operate the live music venue, O2 Victoria Warehouse in Manchester, which has a capacity of 5,000, and has welcomed tours from the likes of Lizzo, Sam Fender and Fatboy Slim with shows coming up from McFly, Jessie Ware and Jamie Webster.
- 6.3. VW Music Ltd. team also operate a successful corporate events business with numerous blue-chip clients such as Coca Cola, Microsoft, Red Bull and EA Sports.
- 6.4. 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, Wembley stadium concerts: Metallica, Muse and more
 - Traffic Management - Last Mile – Abba Voyage, Festival Republic, Broadwick Live
 - Medical Services – Elite Medical – Eastbourne International Airshow and 90's Baby Festival
 - Noise Management – F1 Acoustics – Pub in the Park, Brighton Pride, Printworks London

- Security and stewarding – Compact Security – V Festival, O2 Victoria Warehouse
 - Health and Safety Management - Safety Geeks – Boomtown Fair, London New Years Day Parade, Silverstone Woodlands
- 6.5. These teams are working with agencies, organisations and Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group (SAG) members to develop plans including:
- Noise management plans
 - Traffic and parking management plans
 - Ingress and egress plans
 - Waste and litter management plans
 - Public and crowd safety plans
 - Children and vulnerable safeguarding plans
- 6.6. Officers have taken up reference with Head of Licensing at Havering Council and Senior Environmental Health Officer for Melton Borough Council and these can be seen at Appendix 2
- 6.7. Organisers state the festival will bring a significant local benefit including:
- Creating a brand-new event series on the doorstep of the entire Medway community - reaching all generations at no cost to the local authority.
 - Providing free tickets for local residents
 - Using a local recruitment agency to employ local people
 - Creating work experience/apprenticeship opportunities for local students
 - Getting Kent-based suppliers on board where feasible
 - Employing a community response team to deal with any local disturbances
 - Encouraging environmentally friendly travel & promoting green travel partners such as Big Green Coach
 - Spending by the various contractors, stakeholders and visitors of events will benefit a wide range of businesses in the surrounding area e.g. hotels, restaurants, transport operators
 - Allowing no single use plastic items on site, including single use vapes.
 - Installing water points across the site to encourage refills
 - Helping Medway reduce its carbon footprint by implementing a sustainable approach to waste and litter and onboarding sustainable suppliers
 - Managing noise levels throughout the event days
 - Ensure the local authority is embedded into all plans with table top exercise taking place in advance.
- 6.8. The Council can generate income through the hire of a wide range of spaces to professional event organisers. The Council are in the process of centralising the hire of parks and public spaces into the Events Team.
- 6.9. A new Outdoor Events Policy (see Appendix 3) was adopted by Cabinet on 8 August 2023 and provides a singular clear framework for professional and community event organisers, to ensure events:
- Comply with all appropriate counterterrorism, children and vulnerable adults safeguarding legislation, health and safety legislation and regulation including those set out in the proposed new Martyn's Law.

- Improve coordinated scrutiny of event management plans by health, safety and emergency partners and agencies
- Support environmental, nature, wildlife and climate change priorities
- Minimise and/or mitigate negative impacts or disruption
- Are charged according to transparent and standardised fees and charges that support local community, charity and not-for-profit organisations
- Generate positive local economic impact
- Generate income for the Medway Council

6.10. The policy forms part of a binding contract for event organisers both internal and external to the council, wishing to use Medway as a location to host their event.

7. Risk management

7.1. 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

8. Consultation

8.1. To date consultation on the May 2023 proposed event has taken place via three routes. (1) Through the statutory Premises License process (2) Through an additional organiser led engagement for Ward Councillors, residents and stakeholders and (3) Medway Outdoor Events Safety Advisory Group.

8.2. The statutory Premises License process allowed residents and stakeholder 28 days to respond to the Premises License application for regulated entertainment and sale of alcohol.

- 8.3. Additional organiser-led engagement included online and in-person meetings in November 2022 with Ward Councillors, residents and community stakeholder. This will continue with future sessions in February, March and April with a de-brief meeting in June 2024
- 8.4. 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. Organisers presented festival plans to the SAG on 8 December 2022, with further engagement planned.
- 8.5. A timetable of future engagement including for Ward Cllrs, key stakeholders and businesses and residents is set out below:

October/November	Introductory meeting Kent Police (Licensing, Counter Terrorism and Operational Planning.
October /November	Introductory meeting Brompton Barracks, Medway Maritime Hospital & Royal Engineers Museum
October/November	Introductory meeting / initial briefing with all Cllrs, including Ward and neighbouring Ward Cllrs
October/November	Meeting Integrated Transport & Town Centre Management
October/November	Introductory meeting with Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park
November	1 st Safety Advisory Group meeting
November	1 st Stakeholder Group meeting
November	1 st Business engagement session
January	1 st Community & resident information session
January	2 nd Stakeholder Group meeting
February	2 nd Business engagement session
February	2 nd Safety Advisory Group meeting
March	3 rd Stakeholder group meeting
April / May	2 nd Community & resident information session
May	4 th Stakeholder group meeting
June	3 rd Safety Advisory Group meeting
July	5 th Stakeholder Group meeting
July	Resident letter drop
August	Post event stakeholder meeting

- 8.6. A stakeholder group will be convened following initial introductory meetings. This will have representative from Medway Maritime Hospital, Brompton Barracks, Royal Engineers Museum, Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park, Town Centre Management and Ward Cllrs. It will be coordinated by the Festival and Events Team.
- 8.7. Further engagement with businesses and community around trading opportunities, performance and residents ticket ballots will also take place through marketing and communication channels.

9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019 - item 1038D refers and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.
- 9.2. Council officers have a responsibility to take action to reduce the carbon footprint associated with the services they provide.
- 9.3. Alongside the Festivals and Events Team, the Climate Response Team provide guidance and monitor the organisers 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

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. Hiring Great Lines Heritage Park to Festivals Master Ltd. will generate income for the Council. Due to the commercial nature of the event and it being classified as a major event, the fee for hire will need to be negotiated by the Head of Service in consultation with Assistant Director, Community and Culture, the Director of Place, the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure and the Chief Operating Officer, in line with the Medway Outdoor Events Policy's fees and charges to be agreed by the Council at its meeting on 19 October 2023. All costs the Council incur above normal service levels (e.g., waste management, traffic management, environmental protection etc.) will be charged back to the promoter.
- 10.2. An example of what makes up the hire fee can be seen in Appendix 4.
- 10.3. Alongside contractual obligations, a damage deposit will be taken to ensure the promoter pays in full for any required reinstatement.

11. Legal implications

- 11.1. 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.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Great Lines Heritage Park Premises license, June 2023

Appendix 2 References

Appendix 3 Medway Council Outdoor Events Policy

Appendix 4 Quote format

Background Papers

None