

AEG Presents Ltd



Licensing Section
John Onslow House
1 Ewart Place
London
E3 5EQ

29th January 2018

Dear Councillors,

We would like to thank you for your letter making representations regarding AEG Presents' application for a Premises Licence at Victoria Park.

We were surprised to hear that you had felt it necessary to put in an objection after the consultation process that we have been through over the recent months. From our viewpoint, this is not consistent with the feedback that we have received from the community groups and stakeholders. We are therefore keen to hear your concerns in person so that we can provide further information about the event and to also discuss why we feel your requests are unworkable with the contract that has been awarded.

I was very glad to have had the opportunity to brief Cllr. Peck in person on our plans for the new Major Events contract at our meeting of 28th November last year. At that meeting, we presented a programme of World Class events offering unprecedented value to London Borough Tower Hamlets and its residential and business communities.

As well as the direct financial benefits, which I am sure you are familiar with, we have developed a new event format and schedule for Victoria Park which will deliver many benefits. These include:

- Halve the period that event infrastructure will be present in Victoria Park than previous licensed events delivered;
- Condense the event period, to ensure that the event does not fall inside any of the school summer holidays;
- Direct investment into park infrastructure;
- Create opportunities for businesses across LBTH and East London to supply the event;
- Work closely with local schools as well as higher and further education organisations for young persons to gain invaluable education, training and experience opportunities.
- Surpassing the resource levels for the ingress and egress stewarding plans.
- Provide funding for local performing arts groups to participate and perform at the event.
- Deliver the event site and its infrastructure free of charge back to LBTH to operate their own community event.

We will deliver all the above commitments and will demonstrate this based on our upcoming Community Engagement Evening, the Documentation and Plans already submitted in the Licence Application and the Financial Offering and other contractual obligations.

These valuable commitments to the park and community stakeholders are set against the backdrop of a world-class line-up of artists, and the creation of a new free-to-access event format, underwritten by the concert events, which will provide further opportunities for local businesses and residents as well as visitors, traders and performers.

I feel it would be beneficial to re-introduce AEG Presents to you all once again. AEG has proven to consistently create and deliver first class events, that are operated at the highest level and that meet the needs of today's discerning fans, whilst working in collaboration with the local stakeholders. With the success of BST Hyde Park, Coachella, The O2 and The Eventim Apollo in Hammersmith all standing as testament to this approach; you can have total confidence in our ability to deliver quality events that achieve our respective goals.

Our philosophy of delivering quality extends to creating first class relationships with all stakeholders be they operational partners, fans and the community. We know that this tested and proven management philosophy will deliver improved management controls to ensure the events in Victoria Park are successfully delivered with a plan that does not just offer minimal impact on the community but a plan that concentrates on delivering maximum value to the community.

AEG will be an excellent partner for LB Tower Hamlets, communities on all sides of the park, and to the stakeholders who represent and serve them. In creating and developing plans for the event prior to the launch and the submission of the licence application we met with all the communities and stakeholders, to ensure that we gained approval of our plans following this process:

- We carefully studied the Tender issued by the LB Tower Hamlets.
- We then submitted an excellent tender response as part of a competitive tender process that was both compliant and in sync with the tender guidelines and specification published by LBTH.
- Our tender response was judged to be of high quality and relevance to the specification published by LBTH and we received a score of 99 out of 100.
- Our tender forms part of our contract with LBTH and as such forms the central pillars to our event operating plan which was presented in draft form to the stakeholders including Environmental Protection, Licensing, The Metropolitan Police and other Responsible Authorities.
- Following successful presentations of this plan to these stakeholder groups, we presented our vision and event plan to business and residential community groups as part of the ongoing and detailed consultation process.
- After these detailed consultations with key stakeholders and interested parties, our Event Operating Plans were finalised and now form part of the Premises Licence Application.
- After what has been a detailed and thorough consultation process with the Police, Emergency Services, LBTH Officers (from all specialist departments) and a wide range or community representatives, we received no opposition. We in fact received extremely positive feedback.
- By the end of the consultation period, no representations of any kind were submitted except for the representations from this group of councillors.

The full timeline of engagement is detailed below; following the award of the contract and the subsequent completion of the contracting process we began a thorough and extensive period of community and stakeholder consultation, which is shown below.

Date	Activity
17 th October	Meeting with Victoria Park Friends Group
17 th October	Meeting with Mayor Biggs
23 rd October	Festival Public Launch
23 rd October	Local Community Launch with 10,000 properties invited to our community engagement evening
27 th October	Meeting with Licensing department to discuss the Licence Application process and identify suitable conditions to be applied
27 th October	Email to local Councillors introducing the event
7 th November	1 st Community Consultation Meeting
8 th November	1 st Sound Management Meeting with Environmental Protection
9 th November	1 st Security & Crime Reduction Meeting with the Metropolitan Police
16 th November	1 st Multi-Agency Planning Group Meeting with Responsible Authorities and other Stakeholders
28 th November	Meeting with Councillor Peck to introduce event and listen to concerns
6 th December	Meeting with Councillor Francis to introduce event and listen to concerns
10 th January	2 nd Sound Management Meeting with Environmental Protection
17 th January	1 st Operational Meeting with LBTH Arts, Parks & Events Team (held monthly)

We will continue this process of consultation and planning with the following meetings over the coming weeks:

Date	Activity
31st January	Local Business Fair
1 st February	Hackney Operational Planning Meeting
7th February	2nd Community Engagement Meeting
8th February	2nd Security & Crime Reduction Meeting
14th February	3rd Sound Management Meeting
1st March	2nd Multi-Agency Planning Meeting

We acknowledge that all stakeholders are understandably very keen to ensure that any improvements that have been made in the management of Major Events in Victoria Park in recent years should be captured and built on during the new contract period. We can categorically confirm that our operating plan increases management systems and resources. This increase in resources is over and above the requirements asked for by LBTH in your tender specifications and are demonstrated in Ingress / Egress management, Antisocial Behaviour, Community Engagement and Sound Management. Commitments to improvements in all these areas have been detailed in the contract and will be delivered.

As stated previously, during these meetings we were pleased to have had an overwhelmingly positive response to our plans, which we suggest is reflected by the fact that other than your representation, there have been no representations against our licence application from members of the public or the responsible authorities.

We were especially pleased to hear that the community engagement program has made a difference. Speaking about our forthcoming local business fair, it was gratifying to hear the Victoria Park Friends Group state on their twitter account:

"We have been saying @AEG_Presents @AllPointsEastUK are a new and different experience this is further proof, well done!"

This is an important response and endorsement to receive from a community stakeholder group who have previously represented against the licences for Major Events in previous years.

For what we believe to be the first time for event organisers operating in Victoria Park, we are also directly engaged with LB Hackney, to ensure that any concerns and issues around the ingress and egress to the north of the park are captured and dealt with in our plans.

By way of demonstrating our commitment to make improvements, we have engaged Loud Sound, a production agency who have over ten years' experience in managing events in Victoria Park. We have also appointed other first class contractors who are experts in their field.

Some of the key experts we have on our team are:

- Sound Management – Vanguardia
- Technical Production – LarMac Live
- Crowd Management & Security – G4S

We have improved the management controls and resources to ensure that all our contractors are able to deliver a first-class service benefitting the event and surrounding communities.

By working with the best operators, all with extensive experience of Victoria Park, we could identify several areas of improvements many of which went over and above the specification asked for by LBTH. It is important to note that these tender operating commitments meet and in many cases, exceed those requested by LBTH. They form part of our contract with LBTH and are included within our event plan and licence application.

Response to Representations

We would now like to address the points that you raise in your representation.

1. Length of the licence applied for:

AEG have previous experience of operating events in Victoria Park including:

- Tiesto Concert 2009
- LED Festival 2010
- LED Festival 2011
- Winterville 2015

Our Event Management Contractor Loud Sound have over ten years' experience working in Victoria Park and have a deep understanding of relationships, the community and the sensitivities around delivering major events in the Park. AEG have worked with Loud Sound for 10 years and they lead all aspects of event management and operations at BST Hyde Park which is one of the World's leading examples of good practise. We have worked hand in glove with Loud Sound on this project to ensure that we utilise their experience alongside ours to bring an enhanced level of delivery to the events for this year and in the future. This is demonstrated in the engagement and consultation process that we have set upon since being appointed last summer.

The Tender Specification which was based on the Councils Major Events Policy, which specified a contract period of 4+1 years. We have been able to demonstrate at the tender stage that we are a fit and proper organisation capable with managing this contract for its entirety and we have built the Event Plans submitted as part of the licence application from this.

Having met with the Licensing, Environmental Protection and Metropolitan Police representatives in advance of submitting the licence application, these specialist organisations have been supportive of our current plans and have made no representations. These individuals are experts in their fields. We are continuing our planning and communication with them to ensure the plans are robust, with approval of these plans required on an annual basis from the existing Multi Agency Planning Group

For example, as part of the Licence Application we provided the agreed egress plan to demonstrate the mitigations that will be in place. This plan has been discussed in advance

with LBTH Arts, Parks and Events, Licensing, Environmental Protection and the Metropolitan Police. I should reiterate again that the plans exceed not only the provisions made by previous operators, but also the requirements laid out in the tender issued by LB Tower Hamlets.

We have already agreed with the Licensing Authority that we will include a Voluntary Condition (See Appendix A – Licence Conditions) on the licence that the Event Plans have approval from the Multi-Agency Planning Group on an Annual basis prior to each series of events. In addition to this, under the Licensing Act 2003 a robust statutory system for calling the licence into review already exists. We feel that the requirements for annual approval under a licensee condition coupled with the statutory remedy of review provide appropriate safeguards. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to limit the licence to one year.

Without a commitment of a licence for the period of the agreed contract length, the level of investment that AEG has committed to LBTH in delivering these events will be seriously undermined. A one year licence would not only go against legislative guidelines but given our global and local experience of running major events it is an unnecessary and unreasonable position to take given the contract award for up to 5 years.

There is the precedent at Victoria Park of recognising that the Premises Licence and Hire Agreement should be co-terminus. This makes obvious good sense.

AEG has proved itself to be of sufficient expertise and experience to be afforded a licence that matches the term of the contract. Should it be less we would have no choice but to reserve our rights to pursue all options available to address this inconsistency.

This will be a multi-million-pound investment into the events and to make this kind of financial commitment there must be security in the knowledge that these events will operate for multiple years. All the responsible authorities are happy with our plans and proposals so far and therefore as we can demonstrate that we can promote the licensing objectives for 2018 then it follows that we will be able to do this for future years.

Regarding management of noise, we have met the Environmental Protection team to improve the communications process in place from previous operators, and ensure that our responsiveness to feedback is better resulting in reduced noise impact on the community.

Additionally, we have reviewed the Sound systems to be used at the stages, to ensure that they are using state of the art technology that will further manage off site levels.

Regarding the Audio Media International article that you refer to in your representation, unfortunately you have incorrectly interpreted this. Correct research will show that an immediate improvement was made in 2013 from the previous operator in 2012. Complaints went from over 100 in 2012 under the previous Promoter to 20 in 2015, demonstrating a significant reduction. In 2017, the number of complaints was in single figures, which demonstrates a well-managed event in a built up and residential area like Victoria Park. This reduction was down to various sound system improvements as well as community engagement; all methods that we at AEG are looking to employ for the Victoria Park Events. The aim of the article that you have referred to was to demonstrate how noise complaints reduced year on year over the three-year period between AEG being awarded the Hyde Park contract in 2013 and three years later in 2015 when the article was written. It was not showing that it had taken 3 years to make an improvement as your representation incorrectly implies.

In summary, we feel it unreasonable to limit the licence to less than the full term of the contract. The request does not offer greater protection for the community as the local authority and any other interested party can request a review of the licence regardless of its length.

We feel that it has been proven that a good operator with the consistency of term in both contract and licence will invest more and operate better when stability and a longer-term vision are in place.

To agree to your request would undermine our vision of collaboration and development for the longer term and thus by default deliver shorter term and narrower thinking, both of which will not deliver the world class event that LBTH wanted when they awarded AEG this 5-year contract.

2. The Major Events Noise Level

AEG went through a competitive tender process in May 2017 for the Major Events Contract for Victoria Park. As part of the tender specification the Maximum MNL of 75dBA was explicitly referred to in the tender and is a level consistently used in open spaces in London. We are aware that this is the level that has been agreed for recent events. This level is also the dBA level that has been agreed to be conditioned in the licence we have applied for, by the Environmental Protection Team.

The Tender response requires us to deliver an event that meets the tender specification to provide a viable event. Without this the events success would be questioned and we foresee any additional conditions to be onerous and unreasonable.

If a noise condition of 75dBA, that we have agreed with the Environmental Protection Team, is not appropriate for the event, we would question why it was specified the tender specification. In any event, we are confident, as is the Councils Environmental Protection Officers, that our proposed level of 75dBA is an acceptable level that will not cause a nuisance or unreasonably disturb the community.

It is independently agreed and widely known that a sound level lower than 75dBA is unworkable for a major music event. We would therefore again question why a tender was issued requesting a major music event and then a contract given for such an event where a lower level would render both the tender and contract award gravely damaged.

To further reassure you of our responsible management approach, our plans also include a reduced number of stages than have been present at previous Major Events in Victoria Park. From Field Day in 2017 it is a reduction from 12 stages in 2017 to a maximum of 7 at All Points East. **We have committed that any increase to the number of stages at our events must be signed off by the Multi-Agency Group including the Environmental Protection Teams.**

We have also been responsible in the types of artist and genre that have been booked to ensure that we minimise the impact of music noise.

As part of the Sound Management Plan that we have provided in the Licence application we have demonstrated how we will monitor and manage noise levels off site. We have also met with the Environmental Protection Team to discuss an improved way of monitoring community feedback to ensure that any feedback is dealt with promptly and resolved.

These commitments to responsible noise management, in addition to dialogue and documentation have resulted in no representation from any community groups or the relevant Responsible Authority to our application.

3. Noise levels for Bass

As stated previously, we have followed the tender specification, consulted with community groups and worked with the Agencies and Stakeholders to agree a set of conditions that have been approved by the Responsible Authorities.

Within these there exists a noise condition. We have sought advice from our expert at Vanguardia (See Appendix B) and they have stated:

“There is no need to adopt an additional low frequency bass limit as Government research has shown that the LAeq alone is the best descriptor to assess modern day music. “

We have agreed that the LAeq will be set at the 75dBA that has previously been used as a condition on Victoria Park Premises Licences for several years.

We have already stated our improved engagement, working practices and complaints process which will enhance how we managed any feedback during the event. To refer again to our expert sound acoustician from Vanguardia:

“The best way to manage low frequency sound is from control systems within the venue and a new real-time system (Metrao) has been successfully adopted at Hyde Park and will be implemented at Victoria Park this year. ”

This is one of several control measures that we will use in the events at Victoria Park to ensure that we have live real-time monitoring that can be transparently shared with the Environmental Protection Officers. We are confident, as is the Councils Environmental Protection Officers, that our proposed conditioned LAeq level of 75dBA is an acceptable level that will not cause a nuisance or unreasonably disturb the community.

4. Time for the Mid-week

The minor events have been designed to be low impact community events. These events will be free to access open events that allow the local community to come into the event site and experience the facilities and activities within the park. We will be operating community theatre, silent cinemas and offering local artists the opportunity to showcase their talents on small low impact stages to a wider public.

The times applied for, are to enable as many of the community as possible to experience the event. We can demonstrate that this is not just words. At Hyde Park for British Summer Time we committed to the residents that we would reduce noise impact, improve ASB, and provide them with free access to the park during mid-week; we delivered on every single commitment.

We have offered to invest in the Midweek programme and fund a community event. We are engaging with educational establishments and local businesses to ensure that the midweek is not just for the community but curated by and about the community. We believe this is a fantastic showpiece for the borough to display its best attributes within a world class facility.

We know from our Hyde Park events that many people wish to come to the park after work. This therefore means that the busiest period will be between 1900-2100hrs. We have applied for a 2200hrs finish to allow for a steady egress out of the event and to ensure that there is minimal impact on the external residents.

The Midweek low impact community events require investment and it will be loss making to operate. Reducing the hours will result in lower operating costs and would in fact be beneficial to AEG. However, after meeting with several resident groups feedback was clear that this curfew would allow the community a longer period for use for this free amenity.

Your request to reduce these hours appears at odds with what the community has requested us to offer. We have no objection to reducing this time to 2130hrs, although it will result in this free amenity being available for a shorter period to the local community. We do not believe that this is what you wish to achieve and so we hope that the above has explained our justification for these hours.

Summary

So, to recap on the above.

- We have entered a deep and meaningful engagement process with the Council Officers, Stakeholders and Business and Residential Community Groups. This will continue.
- We will improve on previous events to create World Class events for Victoria Park
- We will provide the community a free amenity to enjoy, participate in and to inspire.
- We will abide by the conditions that we have voluntarily presented and agreed with the Responsible authorities.
- We will continue to listen to resident groups and ensure that the management controls around the event will improve their management; in particular Sound, ASB and Security.
- We have committed to huge investment in the LB Tower Hamlets and in Victoria Park.
- We will deliver on our promises.

In spirit of mediation we have written to all of the councillors (via LBTH Licensing) concerning the representation to request a mediation meeting in advance of the Licence Hearing on the 6th February. We have offered three time periods to ensure that there is ample opportunity for you to meet with us individually or as a group. We believe that if we can discuss with you, the points contained in this letter, then we will be able to reassure you of AEG's responsible management of events and long term commitment to successful Major event in Victoria Park.

Yours Sincerely

James King
Executive Vice President Live Music



Goldenvoice