



Subject:	Application for Extended Hours - Belfast City Blues Festival, Writers' Square
Date:	20th April, 2016
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager, ext. 2435
Contact Officer:	Patrick Cunningham, Assistant Building Control Manager, ext. 6446

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider a request from the organisers of the Belfast City Blues Festival to operate their musical festival over three nights within a marquee at Writers' Square, running from Friday 24 th to Sunday 26 th June 2016, and to permit the entertainment to run beyond 11.00 pm to 12.00 am on each of those nights.
1.2	The organisers have advised the Service that the purpose of the festival is to celebrate the musical heritage of the City and that, through the event, they will promote this message with over 45 live performances by local and international blues artists taking place. The event will also consist of showings of archive film of local musical greats and music workshops.
1.3	This is the eighth year of the festival, which is now established as one of the main blues festivals in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
1.4	It is a standard condition of the Marquee Entertainments Licence that all requests to operate beyond the permitted hours of entertainment must be considered by the Licensing Committee.
1.5	A copy of the letter from the organisers outlining the background to the festival and reasons for requesting the extended hours to 12.00am is attached at Appendix 1.
1.6	A Location Map is attached at Appendix 2.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Taking into account the information presented and any representations received you are required to consider the request to extend the hours of entertainment and, subject to all technical requirements being met, either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agree if any or all of the three proposed nights should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence or; 2. refuse to extend any or all of the hours as requested.
3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.1 Writers' Square is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development and it has currently applied for both a Seven-day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and a Seven- day Annual Marquee Entertainments Licence for the Square.</p> <p>3.2 The Outdoor Entertainments Licence application is being presented to you in the form of another report at your April Committee meeting and the Marquee Licence application has already been issued under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, as no objections have been received to the application.</p> <p>3.3 The standard days and hours during which a Marquee Licence is currently licensed to provide entertainment are:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Monday to Sunday: 11.30 am to 11.00 pm.</p> <p>3.4 In addition the following conditions are attached to the Entertainments Licence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control Service and will vary depending upon individual concert set up proposals; 2. prior to any event taking place the promoters are required to demonstrate evidence of early consultation and have in place a robust system of dealing with any complaints, which has been agreed in advance with the Council; 3. any requests to provide entertainment later than 23:00hrs must be considered by the Licensing Committee and therefore must be made at least 3 months in advance of the proposed event; and 4. should the Council receive a significant number of noise complaints for any event which has successive nights of entertainment permitted beyond 23:00hrs, or if a complaint about an event beyond 23:00hrs is of major concern, then those successive nights with later hours may be subject to reduction and the promoter should have appropriate arrangements in place should this occur. <p>3.5 Members may recall that, in previous years, the Committee has granted extensions beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm for other events, such as the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival and the Belfast Brewing and Distilling Festival, which you recently considered at your March meeting.</p>

3.6	<p>However, you previously considered a request to operate beyond the permitted hours of 11.00 pm to 12.00 am at this venue from the organisers of Feile an Earraigh at your meeting on 17th December 2014. The request was for their 2015 March event and was to operate three of their four day festival to 12.00 am.</p>
3.7	<p>Whilst recognising that such events contribute to the overall vibrancy of the City, it is also the case that noise from these events has the potential to cause widespread disturbance to those living and working in the vicinity.</p>
3.8	<p>Before granting any extension, the Committee has always carefully considered the financial and commercial benefits of such events against the interests of residents within the area and has, on occasions, agreed with respective promoters to reduce the number of nights they had originally intended to go beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm in order to reduce the impact the event may have upon them.</p>
3.9	<p>The organisers are still in the process of finalising the programme of entertainments for the festival but they have confirmed that the line-up will consist of both local and international artists.</p>
3.10	<p>The organisers have requested that you give consideration to permitting each of the three nights of entertainment to run beyond 11.00pm as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 24th June 12.00am • Saturday 25th June 12.00am • Sunday 26th June 12.00am
<p>Rationale for Additional Hours</p>	
3.11	<p>The organisers have advised that the aim of the festival is to promote the blues musical heritage across the world, citing artists such as Van Morrison and Gary Moore, who provide so much pleasure to people through the arts and medium of music.</p>
3.12	<p>They aim to deliver a great festival experience through the live shows which is one of the main reasons they wish to operate to 12.00 am as they want the audience to experience those live performances and feel that they are part of our musical heritage and be proud of Belfast and all that it has achieved, musically, through the genre of blues music.</p>
3.13	<p>As this is not an application to vary the terms of the Marquee Entertainments Licence, but a request for Council's permission to extend the hours under an existing licence condition, there is no requirement to advertise the application.</p>
3.14	<p>Officers have also worked with the organisers to identify and liaise with those in the area who may be affected by the event, including St Anne's Cathedral. Officers have received a copy of a draft resident's notification letter and they will liaise with them to ensure that the letter is appropriate and issued to the correct addresses prior to the event taking place.</p>
3.15	<p>Representatives of the Belfast City Blues Festival will be available at your meeting should you wish to seek further information about the festival.</p>
<p><u>PSNI</u></p>	
3.16	<p>The PSNI has been consulted regarding the festival and their request to operate all three nights of the event to 12.00 am. It has confirmed that it has no objections or concerns with</p>

this proposal regarding the operation of the event and is currently working with the organisers regarding the extent of the proposed Liquor Licence. A copy of its comments is attached as Appendix 3.

NIFRS

3.17 The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has also been consulted about the application and has confirmed that it has no concerns about the event and have requested to be kept involved with the planning for the event.

3.18 Members are advised that, as with all such events, planning meetings will be held in due course, and attended by officers of the PSNI and NIFRS to look at public safety, traffic management, transport and any wider operational issues.

Health, Safety and Welfare Issues

3.19 Officers are continuing to work with the organisers, their representatives and agencies involved with the event. At the time of writing this report the relevant event documentation has yet to be submitted but as part of our work with the organisers, Officers are satisfied with progress and have been privy to the information and detail which will be incorporated into the event documentation.

Noise issues

3.20 The Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) has been consulted in relation to the request for late night entertainment to run beyond 11.00pm on each of the three nights at the venue.

3.21 Due to the cumulative impact of the consecutive nights proposed and potential sleep disturbance to those in the area, Officers are concerned that there is a greater potential for complaints after 11.00pm. Members are reminded that the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 gives councils additional powers in relation to entertainment noise after 11.00pm.

3.22 However, considerable work has been done with organisers of various events and festivals at similar venues in the city centre and as a result the level of complaints and noise issues the Council has received has been reduced.

3.23 EPU Officers are currently working with Officers of the Service and the event organisers to ensure an appropriate noise management plan is developed, which must demonstrate that noise from the event will not cause unreasonable disturbance to both the commercial and residential premises of the area.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.24 Officers will be required to carry out inspections at the event but this is catered for within existing Service budgets.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

3.25 There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.

4.0

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Rationale from the organiser outlining the reasons for requesting the extended hours

Appendix 2 – Location map

Appendix 3 – PSNI correspondence