

Dear Licensing,

Thank you for forwarding on the noise management plan for the Cheltenham Tribute Festival, as prepared by "Pacific Sound and Light", dated 12th July 2025.

The Environmental Protection team have now had an opportunity to review this plan and have the following comments/queries to make in relation to the plan and the Licence application itself.

Firstly, it should be noted that we have been given a very short time frame to review this application. In normal circumstances a license application would be made some months before the event to allow full consultation and consideration of issues in due time to allow additional or clarifying information to be provided by the licence applicant and event operator. In those normal circumstances, once the licence is agreed it is common for the operator to prepare a noise management plan for agreement with our Environmental Health Team some weeks before the event, this allows both parties to make suitable arrangements for management of noise and monitoring of levels around the site. In this case the application has been made at the eleventh hour which has left little or no scope for advising the applicant on deficiencies in their event planning.

The noise management plan (NMP) was provided on 4th August by the applicant, prepared by Pacific Sound and Light. A revised NMP was provided on 11th August which contained minor changes to monitoring arrangements. The report author, who is not named, does not appear to be an expert in noise or acoustics and does not quote any relevant qualifications. So it may not be surprising that the NMP has significant failings, which I will itemise below using the paragraph numbering from the revised report:

1.4 The site plan doesn't contain key information in any detail including the stage location / orientation, and is cropped to remove most of the noise sensitive property potentially affected by this event. The initial plan also fails to identify suitably accessible & representative monitoring locations, although some further information was provided in the revised plan (see below).

2.3 This is irrelevant, as the event is not due to run after 23:00.

2.4 Suggests controls on low frequency noise, but does not offer any suggested limits or methods of monitoring.

2.5 – 2.7 "Night-time" noise provisions are irrelevant

2.8 – 2.9 This indicates that the event should operate to a condition relating to low-frequency noise, which is generally monitored using "C-weighted" noise measurements, denoted by L_c in guidance. The C-weighting applies extra value to low-frequency noise when measuring noise in a broad frequency range, as is generated by music.

3.2 The mixer position is an assumption, no evidence is provided for the value used, and no scale plan is available.

3.3 This event will not generate ambient noise. This is the wrong terminology.

3.4 This approach is not acceptable. A plan for one-off monitoring on the day of the event leave no contingency for weather affecting the measurement. The measurement will not be representative of evening noise levels, which are likely to be lower and when the event is in operation. Monitoring of background levels needs to take place over a prolonged period to identify the worst case scenario, and may need to be repeated at multiple locations to assess the impact of variable and unpredictable wind directions.

3.7 Predicted background noise level of LA_{eq} 50dBA is a considerable over-estimate, and uses the wrong measurement of background noise. Background noise should use the L₉₀ measure – IE the noise exceeded for 90% of an extended monitoring period, not an L_{eq},

which is an average. I have measured an LA90 outside noise sensitive residential premises in the area and found a value of 40dBA. Using the limits specified in the Code of Practice cited would therefore produce an off-site noise limit of 55dBA. This erroneous and unjustified assumption by the writer of the report then makes all the following calculations worthless, as on-site noise levels will need to be considerably lower than those calculated. 3.8 Again, this is irrelevant and superfluous. The event operator needs to determine the hours the event will operate, and be in a position to implement a "hard stop" in the event of an over-run of the licensed time.

4 etc. The data used to produce these figures has not been reported, so we can not be confident that the data is actually representative of set-up for this event. IE: Stage / rig height and location, distance to receptor, volume of rig, frequency distributions etc. The software used is not specified but appears to be designed to assess sound in a performance arena, not designed to predict overspill.

4.5 The predictions are based on "neutral meteorological conditions" these are not specified. We can't expect any day to meet "neutral conditions", and weather is liable to change rapidly and without notice. The "neutral conditions" are certainly not the "worst case". "Real world values will have substantially more attenuation based on terrain and natural absorption barriers" This statement is not valid - real world values will depend most significantly on wind direction, strength, temperature / cloud cover.

4.6 The maximum output needs to meet a considerably lower threshold and the plan doesn't identify these "noise sensitive properties".

4.7 To be clear, this front of house level is not agreed, and is likely to be far too loud to achieve off-site compliance. I would also suggest that the applicant considers the on-site noise levels nearer the stage if operating at this level.

Fig 1 & 2 – These figures are not labelled or explained. They don't show stage position or orientation, which is a key consideration.

5.2 "A member of the event management team will be responsible for the management of noise during the event." – This individual needs to be named, and contactable for the duration of the event. They must also be available to deal with any noise issues, not tied-up with other matters at the event.

5.10 For clarity: that on-site noise value is not agreed and is likely to be too high to achieve off-site compliance.

5.11 Monitoring locations off-site will need to be flexible to respond to complaints and changes in weather.

5.12 As above, the event operator needs to set a finish time, which can be put in the licence, and be able to ensure compliance. If required they should implement a "hard stop" curfew.

6 The list of monitoring locations is not appropriate. The site identified as "B4632" is on the side of a busy road, where the dominant noise source will be traffic, so measuring a music noise level will not be possible. As identified at the start of this response, details like this could have been confirmed with this department well in advance, if more notice of the event had been provided.

Other issues not in the NMP:

The event is advertising "Spectacular Pyrotechnics", but the noise impact of these are not mentioned in NMP. We have attempted to discuss this at a Safety Advisory Group, but the operator was not clear on what effects he is planning to use.

The NMP contains no mention of communications to nearby residents. I would expect an event of this scale to implement a letter drop to residential property liable to be affected by noise, to include the hours of operation, and contact details for anyone with complaints, which will be manned and available for the duration of the event.

The main concerns with this plan are as follows:

Inappropriate background noise level used in calculations.

1. The NMP assumes a background noise level at nearby noise sensitive property of 50dB (15mins LAeq). Notwithstanding that background noise is generally quoted using an L90 level, this level is unjustified guesswork, and in my experience of monitoring of that area, excessively high. My measurements on the evening of 11th August at a representative location produced an outdoor background level of 40dB (LA90). This would then make the "background +15dB" limit quoted, 55dBA (LAeq, 15mins). That level is VERY different from the 65dBA proposed.
2. The successful delivery of an event like this, within legal limits, relies on off-site measurement of noise levels, and the ability to take swift, appropriate action to address issues, which are likely to vary throughout the day, according to wind strength and direction, and the characteristics of the acts in progress. The NMP provided does not identify suitable locations, methods, equipment or personnel for any monitoring to be effective.
3. No limits have been proposed for low-frequency noise and no monitoring of low-frequency noise has been proposed. Low frequency noise has the potential to spread considerably further than other frequencies, affecting more properties. Previous events at this site have successfully used an approach using a C-weighted noise measurement which measures low-frequency noise more effectively. This approach is consistent with emerging guidance on noise from events which is likely to replace or update the widely-quoted Noise Council Guidance in the imminent future.

I must therefore recommend that given the information currently available, the application for a premises licence relevant to this event is **REFUSED**, as I consider it likely that it will cause significant public nuisance affecting a broad range of properties in the Prestbury and Southam areas.

However, if the committee is of a mind to grant a premises licence I would recommend the following conditions are attached, which are consistent with other recent events of a similar nature at the same location. Please note that some of these conditions also include phrases which will be of relevance if the event returns to the same location in subsequent years:

OFF-SITE EFFECTS

1. The Licensee shall ensure that a noise control consultant/s is appointed whose name, address and telephone number is provided to the Public Protection Division of the Council at least 10 days prior to the event. The noise control consultant/s shall liaise between all relevant parties on all matters relating to noise control prior to and during the event. The noise control consultant/s must be present on site, or monitoring the event off site, throughout the duration of the regulated entertainment with authority to monitor and control noise levels on site.

2. Sufficient noise propagation tests shall be undertaken prior to the performances in order to set appropriate control limits at the sound mixer position. The sound system shall be configured and operated in a similar manner as intended for the event. The sound source used for the test shall be similar in character to the music likely to be produced during the event.

3. The control limits set at the mixer position shall be adequate to ensure that a Target Music Noise Level (MNL) of 55dB LAeq (15mins) measured at one metre from the façade of noise sensitive premises shall be achieved between the hours of 0900 hrs to 2300 hrs. Where the Target Level of 55dB LAeq (15mins) is exceeded then suitable and appropriate action shall be taken to meet this Target Level. An Absolute Music Noise Level (MNL) Level of 60dB LAeq (15mins) measured at one metre from the façade of noise sensitive premises shall not

be exceeded between the hours of 0900 hrs to 2300 hrs. The noise levels shall be monitored at noise sensitive locations agreed with the Council. (Note: MNL and noise sensitive properties are as defined in Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts – Noise Council 1995).

4. No licensable activities shall occur on the Licensed Site occurring between 2300 hours and 0900 the following day.

5. The Licensee shall ensure that the promoter, sound system supplier and all individual sound engineers are informed of the sound control limits and that any instructions from the appointed noise control consultant/s regarding noise levels shall be implemented.

6. The appointed noise control consultant/s shall carry out noise level measurements at positions identified in consultation with officers of the Public Protection Division, and control noise levels to comply with conditions 3 and 4 above. The appointed noise control consultant/s shall also continually monitor noise levels during performances at the sound mixer position and advise the sound engineer accordingly to ensure that the noise limits are not exceeded. The Licensing authority shall have access to the results of the noise monitoring at any time.

7. The Licensee shall provide a Noise Management Plan to the Council's Public Protection Division at least 28 days before any event. The Noise Management Plan shall identify how noise arising from the holding of the event will be effectively controlled so as to comply with conditions 3 and 4 above. Inter alia, the plan shall include:

- i) A monitoring regime for numerical levels, subjective levels and low frequency noise targets.
- ii) Response process for any deviations from the Target Level.

8. The Licensee shall keep a documented record of complaints received and resultant actions.

9. A site contact telephone number for complaints which is staffed at all times while the event is taking place shall be made widely available to local residents. The details of all complaints shall be recorded in writing and the appointed noise control consultant be notified of any complaints immediately.

10. The Licensee shall provide a report to the Council's Public Protection Division in order to demonstrate compliance with these conditions within 28 days of the Event.

11. Any reasonable request by an authorised officer of the Council to reduce noise levels as a result of non-compliance with licence conditions shall be complied with immediately.

ON-SITE SOUND

12. The peak noise level must not exceed 140dBC at any point where the public have access. Noise measurements must be taken and recorded during events to ensure this noise limit is not exceeded.

13. In order to protect the hearing of the audience on site, no-one shall be exposed to an Event Leq of more than 107dB(A).

14. Where practicable the audience shall not be allowed within 3 metres of any loudspeaker. Under no circumstances shall the person and loudspeaker separation distance be less than 1 metre.

15. Where the Event Leq is likely to exceed 96dB(A), the audience shall be advised of the risk to their hearing in advance; e.g. either on tickets, advertising, notices on or near the site.

Further Conditions

1. The level of amplified music sound energy emitted from the site shall not exceed a target of 85dB LCeq(15 minutes) with an upper limit of 90dB LCeq (15 minutes) at any time when measured at locations specified in an approved Noise Management Plan.
2. The premises licence holder's acoustic consultants must monitor sound levels during sound checks and throughout the duration of the event.
3. No fireworks or pyrotechnics will be used as part of this event.