

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Licensing Committee
Date: 6th November, 2013
Report for: Discussion
Report of: The Managing Director – Warehouse Project

Report Title

Warehouse Project, Victoria Warehouse.

Summary

Briefing on recent events and measures implemented at the Warehouse Project by the Managing Director.

Recommendation

To be noted

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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1. Introduction:

The Warehouse Project established in 2006 as a brand, has organised seasonal music events, firstly at Boddingtons Brewery, and then under Piccadilly Railway Station, before moving to Victoria warehouse in 2006. The events are seen in the music industry as a successful, modern and an exclusive brand which is constantly evolving. They attract DJ's from around the world, and in the main appeal to a young student audience from across the United Kingdom and abroad. Over the years, it has won many awards, including Best UK Club, Best UK Dance Brand and Overall Best Bar None Winner, presented at The House of Lords.

The Victoria Warehouse in Trafford Park is being developed as a hotel and entertainment venue, and Warehouse Project established it as their music venue from the 2012 season, with a capacity for 5,000 patrons per event. The core Warehouse Project season runs from the end of September, finishing with a closing party on January 1st. The 2012 season comprised of 28 events, with an additional 10 events held between January and April 2013.

The Warehouse Project season for September 2013 to January 2014 is expected to consist of 28 events.

At all stages of the planning process, the Warehouse Project management has involved Greater Manchester Police, Trafford Council's Public Protection Service, the Health and Wellbeing Manager and the Strategic Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Manager. Policing services are paid for at every event.

During the Events there are approximately 150 bar staff, 78 security staff, 10 private undercover operatives, and 10 paramedics employed. There is also an ambulance on site to provide medical and welfare support if needed.

The Warehouse Project operates a zero tolerance drugs policy. This includes searching every person entering the premises, the use of passive drugs dogs, and amnesty boxes on entry. Any person found to be in possession of suspected drugs is not allowed entry and passed to the Police.

2. Incidents of Note

Sadly, on the opening night, a tragedy occurred in the early hours of the 28th September, 2013, when a young man was taken to Manchester Royal Infirmary. Mr Nick Bonnie lost his life, after taking drugs. Five of his friends attending the Warehouse Project were taken to hospital as a precaution.

A suspected drug dealer from Manchester was admitted to Salford Royal on Saturday, 28th September, after he was arrested. It is thought he had swallowed around 12 small bags of drugs while he was being detained by police.

Altogether 12 people attended hospital.

Following the tragedy, a meeting was called by Chief Superintendent Mark Roberts and Simon Collister from Greater Manchester Police. The meeting took place on Sunday 29th September at Stretford Police Station. It was recognised and discussed, that recently in the region, there had been 12 drug related deaths, all connected to the national problem of a substance known as PMA.

3. Measures Implemented

The Warehouse Project were shocked and saddened at this tragedy at their opening night, and immediately reviewed all existing policies and procedures. These were found to be robust, although

the following improvements have been made:

- Substantial and additional Air Conditioning units have been installed in the main three rooms at the venue, in order to better control the temperature. In addition fans have been installed at key positions blowing air through the venue. Additional lighting has been installed in areas that were previously not well lit.
- Free drinking water is available at a water desk in the entrance courtyard, and this operates throughout the event. The two main bars have drinking water taps and 'free water signs'. Free bottled water is handed out by stewards at front of stage. Free bottled water is offered to patrons on leaving the venue.
- Changes were made within the venue to address any areas of congestion. This included slowing down the queue of customers entering the venue; thereby relieving the pressure during the first few hours when all customers are arriving, going to the bathroom, hanging their coats, and getting a drink. Provision of extra stewarding to several areas within the venue, which are known to get congested, and to keep the flow of customers moving. Introducing a number of one way systems to ensure that the flow of customers move smoothly within the venue.
- To run alongside the Paramedic Unit, a separate Welfare Unit has been created, which is used as a Triage.
- Greater Manchester Police presence has been increased, and a weekly debrief has been initiated. The number of drug sniffer dogs has been increased from four to six, and search lanes increased from eight to fifteen. Everyone attending the venue is given a flyer explaining the dangers of drug use, especially an awareness of PMA.

It should be noted that the Home Office undertook a pre-arranged and first ever drugs testing pilot scheme at the venue on the 12th October. This Multi-agency pilot project drawing together forensic testing, toxicology, social research, interventions and evaluation, is being managed by Fiona Measham, Professor of Criminology at Durham University. This national project is intended to educate the public on health related issues in the night time economy.

Warehouse Project and Trafford Partnership branded bottled water is also handed out to patrons on egress; with key safety messages, and a QR code that links to a podcast made by the drugs charity The Loop.

4. Summary

The Warehouse Project will continue to work closely with Greater Manchester Police and Trafford Council throughout this season of events.

Each week a comprehensive debrief will be held to review the previous weekend, and ensure continuous improvements are put in place.

The Warehouse Project will continue to strive to be the bench mark for exemplary practice in the dance music sector.