

Before a Licensing Sub-Committee of Trafford Council

In the matter of:

A Review of the Premises Licence Number PLOOO631

and

The O₂ Victoria Warehouse

Statement of Max Martin

1. I am Max Martin
2. I am an Environmental Health Officer employed by Trafford Council. My duties include enforcement of legislation in relation to Food Hygiene, Public Health, Health and Safety at Work and Animal Welfare.
3. On Wednesday 29th November 2023 at approximately 19:00, I attended Victoria Warehouse, Trafford Wharf Road, Trafford Park, M17 1AG with my colleagues to carry out an unannounced inspection during the 'Sleaford Mods' concert. During the visit I was accompanied by:
 - a. Mrs. Nicola Duckworth, Team Leader Environmental Health (Safety at Sports Grounds Lead).
 - b. Mrs. Alison Acton, Environmental Health Officer.
 - c. Mr. Graeme Dixon, Environmental Health Officer.
 - d. Mrs. Georgia Herbert, Environmental Health Regulatory Support Officer.
4. When we arrived, Mrs. Duckworth introduced herself to the stewards and two supervisors stood at the entrance gates of the 'E3' carpark – the main entrance being used for the event that day. Mrs. Duckworth stated that we were all officers from Trafford Council and that we were there to conduct an unannounced inspection. The members of staff at the gate informed us that they had a radio, but it was broken. We therefore had to wait a short while whilst the message that we had arrived was relayed to management. Once management were informed of our arrival, an individual known as Manos Chatzakis lead us into the venue and into a management office.
5. In the management office, we were introduced to:
 - a. Russell Taylor-Toal, Venue Manager
 - b. Phil Noe, Project Manager and Head of Security at Compact Security Services.
6. Mrs. Duckworth explained the reason for our visit and requested a copy of all the documentation relating to the event being held that night.
7. My colleagues and I left the management office to review the documentation.
8. My colleagues and I split up into groups so that we were able to cover differing core aspects of the event. I joined Mr. Dixon in reviewing the stewarding and security for the event. We were informed by management that we were due to be supervised at all times

whilst on site. Mr. Dixon and I were therefore escorted around the premises by Phil Noe from this point forward.

9. To start the review of the stewarding and security, Mr. Dixon and I began speaking to the stewards and supervisors at the front gate of the car park. Phil Noe informed us that staff wearing the red hi-vis jackets were stewards/SIA staff and the staff in blue jackets were the designated supervisors.
10. I first accompanied Mr. Dixon in the questioning of [REDACTED]. Mr. Dixon asked the questions and made notes on [REDACTED] answers, I only listened. I refer you to the statement of Mr. Dixon. [REDACTED] started talking about the use of an overflow lane if it was needed for the event, outside of the normal queuing area in the 'E3' carpark. I witnessed a male individual calling [REDACTED] away from myself and Mr. Dixon during our conversation. The male individual looked to be working for the venue as he was wearing a body camera. The male individual said something to [REDACTED] and was shaking his head at the same time. After this incident, [REDACTED] no longer spoke about the overflow lane that was mentioned previously.
11. I then went away and spoke with [REDACTED] SIA licensed security staff. When questioned, he stated his role was primarily to check for intoxication and refusal of entry if deemed too intoxicated. He informed me that he had sufficient training in first aid, counter terrorism and physical intervention. He had been employed with Victoria Warehouse for roughly 2 months and had previous experience working in a security role for 'G4S'. He informed me that a pre-show briefing had taken place and that it had covered the venue capacity, expected crowd, vulnerable people and accessibility requirements. He was suitably able to state that he would alert his nearest supervisor in an emergency situation and was able to point towards his nearest supervisor. I recorded in my PACE notebook all the details that the staff provided when questioned. Mr. Dixon was speaking with other members of staff during this time.
12. I then also spoke with [REDACTED] at the front gates. He stated that his role involves crowd control and directing people to the correct locations. He informed me that he was SIA licensed but was waiting for his badge to be sent to him and so was working as a normal steward in the meantime. He told me that he had training in counter terrorism, first aid and had been employed for roughly 6 months. [REDACTED] said that he had attended the briefing and that they were informed of the expected crowd type. He was also able to state that he would alert his nearest supervisor in an emergency situation and was able to point towards his nearest supervisor.
13. Mr. Dixon and I moved on from the front gate and spoke with Mrs. Duckworth who was nearby and observing the searching of attendees at ingress. I then headed inside of the venue with Mr. Dixon and Phil Noe.
14. Inside of the venue, we spoke to [REDACTED] stewarding the female toilets. I refer you to the statement of Mr. Dixon.
15. We then headed into the outside yard with the smoking area. In the smoking area, I spoke to [REDACTED] steward. When questioned, [REDACTED] informed me that his only role for the entire event is crowd control of the smoking area. [REDACTED] stated that he has only been an employee for 2 months and when asked, he stated that he had no counter terrorism training.
16. I then moved on and spoke to [REDACTED] SIA licensed security staff. [REDACTED] was in the yard, guarding the gate that lead through to an office and a first aid area. He stated that he has received his counter terrorism training and is also working towards a CCTV qualification. He was suitably able to state that he would alert his nearest

supervisor in an emergency situation and was able to point towards his nearest supervisor.

17. Before we moved back inside, Mr. Dixon came and informed me that he had just dealt with an urgent issue involving the emergency gates in the yard. I refer you to the statement of Mr. Dixon.
18. When I entered the building, I interviewed [REDACTED] a steward monitoring the male toilets and corridor activity. He stated that he has received counter terrorism and first aid training. He had attended the briefing and was able to inform me of the emergency procedure and his nearest supervisor. He also informed me that the toilet checks are carried out every 30 minutes and when they are completed, he will then send a text message to a supervisor detailing any issues found.
19. We were escorted up to the mezzanine level as it was closed for this specific event. Whilst upstairs I questioned [REDACTED] SIA licensed security. He informed me that his role was to ensure that no attendees enter the staff only door and to also ensure the safety of the attendees who were in the accessible seating. [REDACTED] told me that he had been employed for 2 months and had received counter terrorism training. He had attended the briefing and was able to inform me of his nearest supervisor. I asked him what his specific role would be in the case that an amber or red alert was called and he wasn't able to tell me. He informed me that he was sure that other members of staff on the mezzanine will know of what to do but he personally did not.
20. I, Mr. Dixon, Mrs. Duckworth and Mrs. Herbert all met up and discussed the findings of the visit so far. We observed the crowd and the security from the balcony whilst the 'Sleaford Mods' began their act.
21. Mr. Dixon and I then conducted checks on all of the bar areas in the venue. All bars had suitably hot water in their wash hand basins. Some wash hand basins only had hand sanitiser and not hand wash available. There were also no disposable towels available for staff to dry their hands at any of the bars within the venue. My colleagues and I regrouped and left the site.
22. I then returned at 10:15pm with Mrs. Duckworth and Mr. Dixon to observed egress of attendees from the venue. I observed that Trafford Wharf Road had begun to be closed with traffic cones. However, several hackney taxi cabs were already present outside of the venue as they had arrived before the road closure had taken place. Opposite the venue there was a large collection of parked cars, many of these were attendees of the event and proceeded to drive very close to pedestrians as they navigated out of the road closure. A bus was also allowed through the road closure after being granted permission by Manos Chatzakis.

Statement of Truth

23. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

06/12/23


Max Martin