



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Application to provide outdoor musical entertainment beyond 11.00 pm at Falls Park</b>
<b>Date:</b>	17 June 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning & Building Control, Ext. 2300
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Hipkins, Lead Building Control Surveyor, Ext. 2444

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To consider a request from the organisers of Féile an Phobail to permit the planned entertainment to run beyond 11.00 pm on up to eight nights during the festival event within Falls Park, running from Friday 24 July to Sunday 9 August 2026.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
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"> <li>1. Agree that all eight of the events should be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am; or</li> <li>2. Agree that only on specified nights will entertainment be permitted to take place beyond the standard hours of licence to 1.00 am and that the other requested nights be permitted to take place to an earlier specified extended hour; or</li> <li>3. Refuse to extend all of the hours as requested.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b>
3.1	Falls Park has a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and a 7-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence for a Marquee and both have been used to hold events in the past, primarily for this event. The Licences are held by the City and Neighbourhood Services Department and are transferred to the organisers for the duration of their event.
3.2	A Site Location Map is attached as Appendix 1.
3.3	The days and standard hours during which entertainment may be provided both outdoors and in a marquee are Monday to Sunday from 11.30 am to 11.00 pm.
3.4	<p>In addition, the following Special Conditions are attached to both the Marquee and Outdoor Entertainments Licences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum numbers will be agreed at the discretion of the Building Control Service and will vary depending upon individual concert set up proposals.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Any requests to provide entertainment later than 11.00 pm must be considered by the Licensing Committee and therefore must be made at least 3 months in advance of the proposed event.</li> <li>• Should an application to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 pm be granted and the Council then receive a significant number of complaints regarding noise or the complaint is of such significant impact, authority is granted to the Director of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to reduce the finishing time for any subsequent nights of the event, in which case the promoter will be required to make contingency arrangements.</li> </ul>

3.5	The Special Conditions mean that this request to provide entertainment later than 11.00 pm must be considered by the Licensing Committee.
3.6	As this is not an application to vary the terms of the Outdoor licence, but a request for Council's permission to extend the hours under an existing Licence Condition, there is no requirement for public advertisement in this case.
3.7	The event organiser has indicated that outdoor music events are scheduled for Friday 24, Saturday 25, Friday 31 July, Saturday 1, Thursday 6, Friday 7 and Saturday 8, and Sunday 9 August 2026. The request is to provide entertainment beyond 11.00 pm on all of these nights.
3.8	The event organiser has indicated that it is intended only to operate to 1.00 am on three occasions. These dates have been identified as Friday 7, Saturday 8 August and Sunday 9 August.
3.9	The Service await confirmation from the organisers on actual finish time of the remaining events for which extension beyond standard hours has also been requested.
3.10	<b><u>Rationale for extended hours:</u></b> A rationale for extended hours beyond 11.00 pm has been provided by the event organiser and is attached as Appendix 2.
3.11	The event has been running for over 30 years as a community festival and in recent years organisers have consolidated the music events hosted at Falls Park to six nights. This decision was motivated by a desire to limit disruption to the community in close proximity to Falls Park. However, the request for entertainment to go beyond 11.00 pm for 2026 would be to increase the number of occasions to eight evenings.
3.12	The applicant has indicated that it is intended that entertainment will go on no later than 1.00 am for the events on Friday 7, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 August, with this request for extended hours on these nights being due to the diversionary nature of the events.
3.13	Members are reminded that in 2025 the Committee agreed to grant the organisers permission to operate on 6 nights of the event beyond the standard hours of 11.00 pm to 1.00 am and on all these nights entertainment did continue beyond 11.00 pm.
3.14	A significant factor, which is unique to this year's event, is the operation of a campsite for the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann at a neighbouring location within Falls Park. Féile an Phobail have a stated aim to deliver, in conjunction with Belfast City Council, a safe, accessible and well-managed facility for visitors to the city for the Fleadh Cheoil.
3.15	A representative of the event organiser has been invited to attend your meeting.
3.16	<b><u>PSNI:</u></b> The Police have been contacted by the Service in relation to the event, however, a response has not yet been received.
3.17	Should Members be minded approve the extended hours requested, this should be subject to a satisfactory response from the PSNI on the matter.
3.18	<b><u>NIFRS:</u></b> The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service have been consulted in relation to the application, however, a response has not yet been received.
3.19	Should Members be minded approve the extended hours requested, this should be subject to a satisfactory response from NIFRS on the matter.

3.20	<b>Health, safety and welfare issues:</b> Officers have engaged with the event organisers and colleagues in City & Neighbourhood Services in relation to the festival and will participate in the multi-agency meeting to be held in advance of the event with the event organisers.
3.21	An Event Management Plan in support of the event has been received and is being evaluated by the Service and shared with other colleagues.
3.22	Officers from the Service have carried out during performance inspections at previous events organised by Féile an Phobail and found that the organisers have adhered to the health, safety and welfare management requirements during that time.
3.23	<b>Noise issues:</b> A significant consideration for Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) will be the proposal to provide outdoor entertainment after 11.00 pm. Members are reminded that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 gives councils additional powers in relation to entertainment noise after 11.00 pm.
3.24	In 2025, 17 noise complaints were received over the period of the festival, a reduction from the approx. 76 noise complaints received in 2024.
3.25	Complaints received during the course of the festival in 2025 were brought to the attention of the event organisers and following conclusion of the festival a summary of all noise complaints was provided for their consideration. No formal action was undertaken in respect of the noise complaints received.
3.26	During this year's festival there will be an increase from six to eight nights on which musical entertainment will go beyond 11.00pm. The cumulative impact of disturbance resulting from this musical entertainment and congregation of large numbers of patrons attending the park has the potential to give rise to community annoyance.
3.27	Significantly, Falls Park is also one of three campsites which will be in operation across the city during the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. The Fleadh will run from Sunday 2 to Sunday 9 August. During this period the organisers of Feile an Phobail have sought permission to provide musical entertainment beyond 11.00pm on 4 occasions. Given the proximity of the campsite to the event space under consideration for extended hours, it is foreseeable that noise disturbance arising from musical entertainment provided as part of the Féile an Phobail will impact upon residents of the campsite.
3.28	The event organisers will, as for last year, again be required to engage with an acoustic consultant and requested to document a noise mitigation strategy for each night of entertainment. The purpose of the strategy will be to demonstrate that noise from the event will not cause unreasonable disturbance to commercial and residential premises. Once received by the Service this strategy will be provided to EPU for appraisal.
3.29	The noise mitigation strategy will be discussed at the pre-event multi-agency meeting. Last year Members requested the sound consultant had a site presence on the nights of entertainment to carry out sound testing, and this could again be a beneficial mitigation this year.
3.30	The organisers will also be required to produce a suitable residents pre-notification letter containing a nominated event organiser contact that that residents may refer concerns or make complaints to. The extent of the letter's distribution, which will take place prior to the event will be agreed with the event organiser by the Service in consultation with EPU officers.

3.31	The event organisers will be reminded of the standard licence condition that receipt of significant complaints may lead to further late nights being curtailed. However, it can be impracticable during the festival to curtail further nights at short notice, and as complaints are not all received on the nights that are the subject of the complaint a full picture does not emerge until all complaints are collated, by which time the events can be concluded.
3.32	Members may therefore wish to consider the number of complaints received last year in making a decision on whether to grant or refuse the request for extended hours to 1am for some or all of the eight nights requested, or in specifying an earlier extended hour for all or some of the nights.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>  None. Officers will carry out inspections before and during the events which will be catered for within existing Service budgets.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>  There are no issues associated with this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 – Site Location Map</li> <li>• Appendix 2 – Applicant’s rationale for extended hours</li> </ul>