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NEW MODEL GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS CONDITIONS FOR LOCAL/CITY AUTHORITY LICENSING OF FESTIVAL EVENTS (MODEL conditions to be reflected in all Operating Schedules/EMP's)

*"A lot of festivals emphasise waste reduction, but if you look at the overall picture of carbon emissions, it is dominated by travel. Audience festival travel emits 11 times more climate pollution than waste does."*¹

[Professor Kimberly Nicholas – Sustainability Scientist and Principal Investigator Biodiversity and Ecosystem services in a Changing Climate² - Lund University]

Background and Rationale:

UK music festival events contribute to a wide range and increasing volume of environmental impacts, including significant greenhouse emissions related to energy used onsite, associated crew, artist, contractor, and audience travel, and serious quantities of waste³.

Despite a multiplicity of initiatives, agencies, associations and award schemes, industry-wide pledges to halve the negative environmental impacts of festivals by 2025, and a "23% reduction in relative emissions per audience day from energy, waste, and water, mainly driven by diverting waste from landfill", total music festival carbon emissions from energy, waste, and water on-site have continue to rise over the past five years⁴

¹ [Sex, drugs and ... sustainability? Music festivals struggle to go green – POLITICO](#)

² [Kimberly Nicholas | Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies](#)

³ Bottrill, C., Liverman, D., & Boykoff, M. (2010). Carbon soundings: Greenhouse gas emissions of the UK

⁴ [The future of UK music festivals \(parliament.uk\)](#)



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Several senior, large scale professional contractors to the sector have reported some practices “unchanged for more than a decade” to the ACT 1.5 project, and - in the context of an acute climate emergency (that the sector itself has used its significant public platform to raise awareness of) it is unsurprising that public scrutiny of these events is increasing, and that climate analysts have begun to identify the dense complexities of attempting to cleanly power what are often effectively pop up cities - when cleanly powering existing, grid connected cities served by public transportation networks is challenging enough.⁵

DCMS Inquiry into the Future of UK Music Festivals & future governance.

In the context of this heightened awareness, in early 2021 the UK Parliament turned its attention to UK music festivals for the first time in a decade, with the House of Commons Department of Culture Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry into the future of this sector. This module of parliamentary work included a specific inquiry element on the increasing environmental impact of UK music festivals.

As a key part of this process, many events industry NGO’s and associations provided written evidence, and musician Robert del Naja⁶ (3D – Massive Attack) & Professor Carly McLachlan⁷ were requested to provide oral evidence to the DCMS Commons Select Committee inquiry on the issue of environmental impact and decarbonisation of the live music sector. In its subsequent, concluding report published on 29th May 2021⁸, the DCMS Commons Select Committee stated: *“Despite the good intentions and countless initiatives to reduce the environmental impacts of festivals, the growth of the market has undermined the sector’s efforts to reduce overall emissions, and the legacy of the pandemic presents a further threat to those measures [...]*

⁵ <https://twitter.com/OfficialUoM/status/1550457110428778498?s=20&t=o5V5zqYRT4gr-AgvmLnzsg>

⁶ [Robert Del Naja - Wikipedia](#)

⁷ [Carly McLachlan – Projects — Research Explorer The University of Manchester](#)

⁸ [The future of UK music festivals \(parliament.uk\)](#)



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The Government and local authorities should signal their commitment to emissions targets by holding the festival sector to account on, and supporting, its pledges to reduce emissions, rather than letting it continue to mark its own homework.”

“We recommend that before the 2023 festival season the Government, the Local Government Association, and representatives from across the festival sector develop standardised environmental objectives that local authorities must adopt when licensing festivals, and that local authorities should report back to DCMS on those events’ progress at reducing emissions year-on-year.”

In direct response, the DCMS Government Department itself published a Command Paper on 17th August 2021⁹ that stated:

“The Minister for Digital and Culture made clear when giving evidence to the Select Committee that she believed it “is very important that local authorities make sure that they include strict environmental measures within their licensing framework”. This is a proposal that the DCMS will work closely with DEFRA and MHCLG to explore over the coming months.”

In light of these two important statements – **most significantly the government proposal that local authorities include clear environmental measures into their licensing regimes**, the model conditions for the licensing of new or annual/established major music events detailed in this document have been prepared in support of license issuing Local and City Authorities to prepare for faster decarbonisation of the live events sector, while allowing these vital cultural, economic and artistic occasions to continue and develop.

⁹ [E02664025 CP 511 DCMS PRINT v4 \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/liberal-democrats/other-debates/2021/august/21-08-21-command-paper-511-dcms-print-v4.pdf)



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As of January 2023, an estimated 310 District, County, Single-Tier Councils and Combined Authorities¹⁰ in the UK had officially declared a “Climate Emergency” – representing over 75% of all local authorities of this type. A significant proportion of these authorities’ issue licenses for outdoor music events, including those Local Authorities issuing licenses to all major UK outdoor music festivals.

There is presently no evidence that Local or City Authorities have introduced any form of strict environmental measures into their event licensing frameworks of the type that the DCMS government department requested, although this work may well be in development.

In Autumn 2022, various live music sector associations and companies produced and endorsed a new voluntary code, the “Green Event Code”¹¹ which asked the sector to “*Commit to a minimum of 50% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030*” – an important and credible target promoted across all territories and sectors by international bodies including The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (an intergovernmental body of the United Nations.)

Positively, this voluntary code also pledged to “... *work with the Local Government Association (LGA), LAEOG and the IoL to develop an adoption strategy for local authorities.*” However, consistent with previous pledge schemes and voluntary industry codes such as “LIVE green”¹² the Green Event Code pledge does not include specific Scope 3 emissions in its targets – the area where the majority of GHG emissions for this sector are generated; in some estimations between 65% -80% subject to the individual festival event – instead only stating that there will be “additional (unpublished) targets for Scope 3” emissions.

¹⁰ [Find a council – Climate Action Plan Explorer \(climateemergency.uk\)](https://climateemergency.uk)

¹¹ [Green Events Code - Vision 2025](#)

¹² [LIVE Green - LIVE \(livemusic.biz\)](https://livemusic.biz)



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By logical extension, no framework that seeks to pursue the vital target of a 50% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 could be credibly established with bodies such as the Local Government Association that does not include Scope 3 emissions – especially in a sector where those emissions are so great.

The five-year schedule of model licensing conditions detailed below has been specifically designed to offer Local and City Authorities a credible and authoritative framework to consult when issuing new event licenses, or the approval of renewed Operating Schedules/Event Management Plans for existing event licenses, that would allow the approval/renewal of those licenses to become compatible with individual authority declarations of a Climate Emergency, and the overall 50% reduction target by 2030, which the live music sector has collectively embraced.

Foundational Guidance for Model Licensing Conditions:

Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research “*Super Low Carbon Live Music Roadmap*” [2021] & “*Car Use, Carbon and Festivals*” [2023]

In September 2021, The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research¹³ – an internationally renowned partnership of five universities bringing together researchers from the social and natural sciences and engineering to develop sustainable responses to climate change - published the first ever Paris Agreement/IPCC 1.5¹⁴ compatible roadmap for the decarbonisation of the UK live music sector¹⁵. In relation to major outdoor events, its key recommendations include actions such as:

¹³ [Homepage -Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research](#)

¹⁴ [Global Warming of 1.5 °C — \(ipcc.ch\)](#)

¹⁵ [Massive Attack publish Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Live Music Roadmap \(manchester.ac.uk\)](#)

- “Outdoor events such as festivals should set a deadline to **phase out the use of diesel generators by 2025** and seek to at least match the contemporary carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid going forward.”
- “Offer incentives, information and/or integration with public transport travel options through ticketing [...] provide and promote lower carbon transport options for attendees - particularly in areas not served by existing public transport. e.g. provide secure bicycle storage, frequent bus/coach connection to transport hubs, arrange additional train services and incentivise car sharing
- “When good low carbon options are in place, disincentivise private car use and set year on year reduction targets for space dedicated to car parking at sites. “
- “Do not actively promote flying for live music events and develop train/coach package options for overseas visitors where possible.”

In February 2023, Tyndall Centre analysts provided an additional Briefing Paper looking specifically at “*Car Use, Carbon and Festivals*”, which presented the following key recommendations:

- “Local authorities should require a carbon impact assessment from audience travel as part of the licencing process for large festivals.”
- “Significant quantities of CO₂ can be saved just by reducing car parking by 20%. Festivals could set targets to incrementally reducing car parking use and facilitate alternatives to provide climate benefits in the next few years.”
- “More urban festivals offer a more sustainable option for audience travel. These sites have existing infrastructure advantages therefore more remote sites need to offer more car-free alternatives to lower their audience travel emissions.”
- “Incentives for car free travel to festivals have been increasing since 2018 and now is the time to quickly scale these up to combat the climate crisis.”



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Owing to the seniority and impartiality of the research institution itself, and the fact that these are the only two documents pertaining to the UK live music sector that are verifiably compatible with a transition to Paris Agreement/IPCC 1.5 emissions reductions (that include Scope 3 emissions targets), the model licensing conditions detailed in the schedule here rely principally on those two research publications for both their measures and delivery timeframe, and thus should be considered by City and Local Authorities, and local governmental bodies and associations, as a **gold standard** suite of conditions to guide the granting or renewal of event licenses or Operating Schedules/Event Management Plans.

1) GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS IMPERATIVES

TARGET: 50% emissions reduction by 2030 - IPCC (2022) [The evidence is clear: the time for action is now. We can halve emissions by 2030. — IPCC](#)

2) MANDATORY (Existing and New Event Licenses/Operating Schedules/EMP's)

Presentation to the licensing authority of a carbon impact assessment from audience travel as part of the licencing process for large festivals.

- Contracting Zero to landfill waste providers – “reducing waste, finding ways to reuse materials, increasing recycling or sending waste to energy recovery¹⁶.”
- Switch any grid power provision to a genuine a renewable energy supplier – *Which* recommend three energy providers – Ecotricity, GEUK and Good Energy as “eco providers¹⁷”

¹⁶ [Carbon Trust launches new certification for Zero Waste to Landfill | The Carbon Trust](#)

¹⁷ [Which? Eco Provider energy companies revealed for 2022 - Which? News](#)



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- Rail incentivisation initiatives (feasible options include a “rail presale” ticketing window or joint ticketing initiatives rail operators directly, or with partner schemes such as Trainhugger¹⁸ or I Came by Train¹⁹)
- For long term/mixed use sites, the exploration/implementation of substation/power-ring grid power connections.

3) **NEW EVENT LICENSES:**

≥ 50% plant-based food supply.

≥ 50% regionally sourced catering suppliers.

≥ Working with Local Authorities, the production of an approved supplier list for technical/production event contractors to reduce surface travel haulage.

≥ No participation in aviation-based ticket package promotions or marketing agencies.

≥ According to The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, “Supplying electricity via diesel generator results in greenhouse gas emissions of around 900 kgCO₂e /MWh²⁰. The average for electricity supplied by the UK electricity grid is now 233 kgCO₂e /MWh²¹, around half what they were in 2010. The UK grid is expected to have emissions below 50 kgCO₂e /MWh over the next 10 years²². As a result, there is a widening gulf in the climate change impacts of off-grid festivals relative to grid-connected festivals.”

¹⁸ [Sustainable Travel - Trainhugger](#)

¹⁹ [I Came By Train | Sustainable Travel | Green Low Carbon Trains \(thetrainline.com\)](#)

²⁰ Jones et al (2019) <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.9b06231>

²¹ [Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²² National Grid (2020) <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/future-energy-scenarios>



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≥ Therefore, licensing priority for new major events should be given to brownfield or urban festivals that – owing to existing infrastructure advantages - can offer a far greater range of sustainable options for audience travel and the opportunity for grid connected power.

4) EXISTING EVENT LICENSES:

License Application DATE	Event Staging DATE	Model Condition of License (and all annual EMP'S/Operating Schedules)			
		Audience Transportation	Power	Waste Management	Supply Chain
2023	2024	10% private vehicle capacity reduction.	50% use of clean formula power (renewable energy powered battery / green hydrogen / grid) + verified 100% waste product HVO If grid power access – switch to renewable energy supplier.	100% Zero to Landfill Provision.	30% plant-based food supply 10% regionally sourced.



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2024	2025	<p>A further 10% private vehicle capacity reduction + agreement for additional post show Public Transport provision.</p> <p>An end to any participation in aviation-based ticket package promotions or marketing agencies.</p>	<p>End of fossil fuel use in any portable power supply.</p> <p>Installation of onsite renewable power (solar)</p>	100% Zero to Landfill Provision.	<p>40% plant-based food supply</p> <p>20% regionally sourced.</p>
2025	2026	<p>Further 10% private vehicle capacity reduction + additional post show PT provision.</p>	<p>Ratio reduction 40/60 – Verified waste HVO/clean formula power</p>	100% Zero to Landfill Provision.	<p>50% plant-based food supply</p> <p>30% regionally sourced.</p>
2026	2027	<p>Further 10% private vehicle capacity reduction + additional</p>	<p>Ratio reduction 30/70– Verified waste HVO/clean formula power</p>	100% Zero to Landfill Provision.	60% plant-based food supply



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		post show PT provision.			40% regionally sourced.
2027	2028	Final 10% private vehicle capacity reduction plus full implementation of RAIL PRESALE scheme.	Ratio reduction 20/80– Verified waste HVO/ clean formula power Exploration of gov support for grid connectivity.	100% Zero to Landfill Provision.	70% plant-based food supply 50% regionally sourced.