# Tim Leiweke calls for tougher ticket touting laws amid Co-op Live's costly launch



Tim Leiweke, chief executive of Oak View Group, one of the co-owners of Co-op Live in Manchester, is calling for more stringent regulations to combat ticket touting, which he argues undermines the integrity of the live music industry. As the co-owner of the UK's largest indoor arena, Leiweke has witnessed first-hand the challenges posed by the secondary market for ticket resales, which he claims exploits fans.

In recent comments, Leiweke stressed the necessity of legislative action to empower venues to deny entry to individuals possessing tickets acquired from touts. “The biggest problem in our industry is secondary scalpers that have no skin in the game,” he remarked in conversation with a news agency. He added that such practices not only deprive artists and venues of revenue from legitimate ticket sales but also degrade the overall experience for fans.

Leiweke's call for action comes amidst reports detailing the considerable financial and operational hurdles faced by Co-op Live since its inception. An independent report published by planning consultancy Lichfields highlighted that the venue has contributed over £1.3 billion to the local and national economy since construction began in 2021. However, the venue's opening has been marred by a series of setbacks, including substantial cost overruns—initial projections of £365 million ballooned to over £450 million—and repeated delays attributed to technical and safety issues. The venue ultimately launched on May 14, 2024, with a concert by British band Elbow, following multiple cancellations of earlier high-profile events due to ventilation and electrical issues.

The financial implications of these delays were significant. Reports indicate that Bam Construction, the main contractor, faced substantial losses and difficulties tied to the arena's inflated construction costs. Issues such as incomplete electrical systems and emergency communication failures hindered operations, prompting critical public scrutiny.

Further complicating the picture was the broader context of staffing shortages and supply chain disruptions exacerbated by Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. Leiweke expressed frustration over these challenges, noting that a lack of skilled workers has stifled progress on vital projects, even in the face of increased wages.

Reflecting on the path to opening, he admitted, “Most people don’t get to go to hell and back in one year, but we’ve certainly been in both places.” Despite this tumultuous journey, Leiweke remains optimistic about the venue’s future and is seeking additional investment to enhance its offerings. He has further indicated intentions to establish a new, larger arena in London, promising a world-class venue that could rival existing facilities.

Nonetheless, the debate surrounding ticket touting and its impact on both the economy and fan experience looms large over the industry. Leiweke insists that a regulated platform for ticket resale is crucial, suggesting that such a system would help ensure that ticket sales remain fair and transparent. “Secondary ticket scalpers are not good for the economy, not good for the industry and sure as hell aren’t good for the fans,” he asserted.

As the live music sector continues to navigate these choppy waters, the call for regulatory intervention could signal a bigger shift towards protecting both consumers and legitimate businesses in what has become a fraught marketplace.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraph 3, 4, 5
3. Paragraph 2, 4, 5
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5. Paragraph 3, 4, 5
6. Paragraph 3, 4, 5
7. Paragraph 4, 5

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/coop-live-coowner-calls-for-regulation-to-help-stop-ticket-touts-b2750932.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/45433d9d-2222-4418-99d2-9361f33ade6d> - The opening of Co-Op Live, the UK's largest indoor arena in Manchester, faced significant challenges, including last-minute cancellations, safety concerns, and the resignation of the venue's general manager. The £365 million venture encountered issues with incomplete electrical systems and emergency communication failures, leading to the cancellation of performances by artists like Peter Kay. These problems have tainted the arena's reputation and sparked concerns about its impact on Manchester's cultural image. Efforts are ongoing to address safety concerns, and several upcoming shows have been canceled as the venue works to resolve the issues.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/5f3f9a22-1eac-46a4-be35-14894ff1e9c8> - The Co-Op Live arena in Manchester faced multiple delays in its opening due to Brexit-induced labor shortages and the pandemic. Tim Leiweke, CEO of Oak View Group, expressed frustration over the postponements and public criticism. Originally set to open on April 23, the venue encountered construction issues, safety concerns, and equipment failures, leading to cancellations. Despite attempts to expedite the project, a shortage of skilled workers hindered progress, even with increased pay offers. Leiweke remains committed to the project and insists on its quality, highlighting its private funding and sold-out suites.
4. <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/buildings/bam-takes-co-op-live-loss-on-the-chin-15-05-2024/> - Bam Construction faced significant financial losses on Manchester's Co-op Live arena after delays caused costs to spiral by £85 million. Project costs increased from £365 million to £400 million and were expected to reach £450 million. Despite the financial hit, Bam honored its commitment to complete the project. The arena finally opened on May 14, 2024, after multiple delays due to construction issues, including incomplete electrical systems and safety concerns. The opening concert by Elbow marked the end of a series of missed deadlines caused by these issues.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/manchesters-co-op-live-arena-finally-opens-after-weeks-of-cancellations-and-setbacks-13135966> - Manchester's Co-op Live arena officially opened after weeks of setbacks, cancellations, and postponements. Initially set to open with two Peter Kay stand-up shows on April 23, the venue faced multiple delays due to technical issues, including problems with the air conditioning system. The opening night was rescheduled to May 1, but this was also canceled at the last minute. After further delays, the arena finally opened its doors to fans, with Manchester band Elbow performing the inaugural concert.
6. <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/co-op-live-opens-as-costs-set-to-reach-450m/> - Co-op Live, the UK's largest indoor arena, opened its doors on May 14, 2024, after a series of high-profile delays. The venue, initially set to cost £365 million, saw costs increase to £400 million and were expected to reach £450 million. The opening concert by Elbow marked the end of a saga of missed deadlines caused by construction issues. The arena is now fully focused on delivering a world-class live entertainment experience in the UK's largest live entertainment arena.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/204231e8-6125-4f21-8db1-3a5b8ec5bc61> - Manchester’s new Co-Op Live arena canceled its opening concert for the third time due to safety concerns. The £350 million venue was scheduled to host US rapper A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, but a technical issue related to the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system led to the last-minute postponement. This issue resulted from a separation of a component from the ductwork during soundcheck, prompting concerns about similar defects. Subsequently, upcoming shows by US singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo were also postponed. The 23,500-capacity arena has faced multiple setbacks, including delays due to concerns about electrical systems and previously pushed-back events. The venue's general manager recently resigned amid ongoing challenges. Oak View Group's CEO emphasized that safety remains the top priority, expressing regret to ticket holders for the disruption.