# Tim Leiweke steers Co-op Live from rocky launch to UK’s top arena with Bruce Springsteen headline



Inside Co-op Live, anticipation is palpable as the final preparations are underway for a series of concerts featuring none other than Bruce Springsteen. This marks a significant moment, as the venue has recently been crowned the top arena in the UK and Europe after a stellar first year, during which it sold over one million tickets and generated £87 million in revenue. However, the path to this success was fraught with challenges, as Tim Leiweke, CEO of the Oak View Group which operates Co-op Live, can attest.

The arena's launch was notably tumultuous, enduring several postponements due to technical issues and safety concerns that led to the last-minute cancellation of high-profile shows, including those by comedian Peter Kay and pop star Olivia Rodrigo. These setbacks were labelled one of the most significant corporate communication disasters of the year, sparking questions about the project's viability. “Everyone was wondering whether we were going to get it open or not,” Leiweke stated, highlighting the atmosphere of uncertainty. Despite a hefty £450 million investment, the venue faced daunting hurdles including labour shortages and incomplete electrical systems, which pushed the opening date beyond its originally scheduled timeline.

Nevertheless, Leiweke's extensive experience in the entertainment industry proved invaluable. He had a track record of navigating similar crises, playing key roles in developing iconic venues like London’s O2 Arena. His ability to leverage personal relationships helped regain momentum during the difficult launch period. "Paul McCartney did us a favour and played two nights in December," Leiweke recalled, reflecting on the support he received from eminent artists who recognised the potential of the venue.

Co-op Live prides itself on being environmentally friendly and community-focused, operating entirely on electricity with a significant portion generated from solar panels. The arena also features food and water recycling initiatives and aims for zero waste to landfill. This commitment to sustainability resonates strongly with local stakeholders; nearly £200 million has been invested in the community throughout the arena's development, with 40% of suppliers located within five miles of the site. The local economy has already benefitted from an estimated £1.3 billion boost as concertgoers frequent Manchester's bars and restaurants.

As Leiweke looks to the future, his ambitions do not stop at Co-op Live. He aims to develop an even larger venue in London, citing a stark contrast between the number of major arenas in cities like New York and Los Angeles compared to the UK capital. His belief in the enduring appeal of high-quality entertainment spaces is unwavering, despite the challenges faced in Manchester. Referring to the occasional setbacks inherent in venue openings, he remarked, "When you get knocked down, get back up and keep on fighting." This resilience is a testament to the spirit with which Leiweke and his team have approached the creation of what they hope will be a world-class entertainment destination.

With the future looking brighter, Leiweke’s narrative suggests a return to form for Co-op Live, from chaotic beginnings to a position of acclaim. The arena's success also serves as a reminder of the power and perseverance required to bring ambitious visions to fruition—even amidst the uncertainties that pepper the journey of constructing a landmark venue.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5f3f9a22-1eac-46a4-be35-14894ff1e9c8), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/c3080c64-bc91-414d-a3c0-bb5be2a0f3ba), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/45433d9d-2222-4418-99d2-9361f33ade6d)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://news.pollstar.com/2024/04/16/co-op-live-the-building-manchester-deserves-inside-and-outside/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.cooplive.com/pQYVvIG/first-artist-announced-for-co-op-live)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5f3f9a22-1eac-46a4-be35-14894ff1e9c8), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/45433d9d-2222-4418-99d2-9361f33ade6d)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5f3f9a22-1eac-46a4-be35-14894ff1e9c8), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/45433d9d-2222-4418-99d2-9361f33ade6d)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14767581/Man-music-Tim-Leiweke-hits-right-notes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/5f3f9a22-1eac-46a4-be35-14894ff1e9c8> - An article from the Financial Times discusses the challenges faced by Co-op Live, Manchester's new arena, including delays due to labour shortages and technical issues. Tim Leiweke, CEO of Oak View Group, expressed frustration over the postponements and public criticism. The venue, originally set to open in April 2023, 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. However, he noted increased caution regarding future ventures, including plans for an arena in West London, given the challenges experienced in Manchester.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/c3080c64-bc91-414d-a3c0-bb5be2a0f3ba> - This Financial Times article reports on the postponed opening of Co-op Live, the UK's largest indoor arena in Manchester, due to safety concerns stemming from an unfinished electrical system. The venue, funded by American investors, was set to open with a show by comedian Peter Kay but was delayed to ensure a stable power supply. The postponement also aimed to ensure the proper functioning of systems crucial for public safety. The pre-opening event's capacity was reduced due to regulatory concerns about fire safety, taking place in a limited part of the venue. Co-op Live stated that the rescheduling was necessary to comply with rigorous regulations. The incident resonates particularly in Manchester, where a 2017 attack highlighted failures in emergency communications. The scheduled Saturday event, reduced to a capacity of 10,000 people, will continue, and resilience tests of the venue will be conducted. Manchester City Council and the fire service are working closely to ensure the venue's safety, with the police declining to comment.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/45433d9d-2222-4418-99d2-9361f33ade6d> - An article from the Financial Times details the significant challenges faced during the opening of Co-op Live, the UK's largest indoor arena in Manchester. Following a chaotic soft launch on April 23, marked by last-minute cancellations, safety concerns, and the resignation of the venue's general manager, the planned public launch was further delayed when part of an air-conditioning unit fell during a sound check. Co-op Live, a £365 million venture by Oak View Group and City Football Group, encountered issues involving incomplete electrical systems and emergency communication failures, leading to the cancellation of comedian Peter Kay's performances. The problems have tainted the arena's reputation, caused frustration among fans of artists like Olivia Rodrigo, 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.
5. <https://news.pollstar.com/2024/04/16/co-op-live-the-building-manchester-deserves-inside-and-outside/> - This article from Pollstar News provides an in-depth look at Co-op Live, Manchester's new arena, highlighting its commitment to sustainability and community engagement. The venue is powered entirely by electricity, with a significant portion generated from solar panels on the roof. It features food and water recycling programs, heat recovery systems, and aims for zero waste to landfill. The construction process involved substantial investment in the local community, with nearly £200 million spent and 386 local suppliers involved, 40% of which were based within five miles of the development. The article emphasizes the arena's dedication to environmental responsibility and its positive impact on the local economy.
6. <https://www.cooplive.com/pQYVvIG/first-artist-announced-for-co-op-live> - Co-op Live, the UK's largest live entertainment arena, announced the Jonas Brothers as the first global artists to perform during its opening season. The trio, known for their successful career and numerous accolades, are set to bring their 'FIVE ALBUMS. ONE NIGHT.' tour to Manchester. This announcement marks a significant step towards the venue's opening in April 2024, with plans for 25 programmed events in the first month, showcasing a diverse range of talent on the UK's biggest stage.
7. <https://ukandireland.bam.com/media-centre/news/2023/7/co-op-live-celebrates-topping-out-with-exclusive-event> - BAM and its project partners celebrated the 'topping out' of Co-op Live, marking the final stage of roof construction for the UK's largest and most sustainable live entertainment arena. The event was attended by partners, venue stakeholders, and BAM's team, who signed the final acoustically treated roof cassette, making their signatures part of the permanent structure. The ceremony highlighted the positive impact the arena will have on communities both locally and nationally, with construction alone generating more than 3,350 jobs and a further 2,000 roles set to be filled ahead of the venue’s opening.