# Belfast City Council confirms Kneecap can perform at Belfast Vital despite controversy



Belfast City Council has clarified that there is no restriction within the outdoor entertainment licence preventing the Northern Irish rap group Kneecap from performing at the upcoming Belfast Vital music festival. The event is scheduled to take place this August at the Boucher Road playing fields, a venue owned by the council.

The council’s statement follows calls from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to urgently review the licence granted for the concert, after controversy arose over Kneecap’s politically charged performance at the Coachella festival in California earlier this year. Sarah Bunting, the DUP group leader at Belfast City Council, had urged the council to reconsider the licence after the band expressed pro-Palestine views during their appearance on the international stage.

Kneecap, a rap trio from west Belfast comprising DJ Próvaí, Mo Chara, and Móglaí Bap, attracted significant attention at Coachella by using their platform to highlight the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During their set, powerful imagery was projected behind the band, including accusations that Israel was “committing genocide against the Palestinian people.” These statements prompted public criticism from figures such as former X Factor judge Sharon Osbourne, who accused the group of incorporating “aggressive political statements” into their music.

Responding to the backlash, group member Mo Chara defended the content of their Coachella performance in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine. He cited a number of specific allegations, stating: “There are over 10,000 Palestinians being held hostage in Israeli jails as we speak, many of them without charge or trial, including 400 children who are being held illegally under international law.” He continued, “Over 52,000 Palestinians have been murdered in the last 18 months, and over 2 million displaced in Gaza.”

Mo Chara emphasised the band’s intention behind their music, saying, “Our message is about ending the genocide and ending the ongoing illegal occupation of Palestine. We want people to take whatever action they can to stop the genocide. People can take what they want from our music, stopping the genocide is more important.”

Despite the controversy, Belfast City Council confirmed that they had reviewed the details of the outdoor entertainment licence for Belfast Vital and found no clause that would prohibit Kneecap’s performance at the Boucher Road site. The festival will feature headliners Dublin band Fontaines DC alongside Kneecap, drawing significant attention owing to the current political discussions surrounding the band.

This decision comes amid ongoing public and political debate over the expression of political messages in music performances, particularly when linked to highly sensitive international issues. The council’s position maintains that existing licencing frameworks do not restrict artistic content tied to political statements in outdoor entertainment events.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.kneecap.ie/gigs> - Confirms Kneecap's scheduled performance at Belfast Vital on August 29th, corroborating the article's claim about their participation in the festival at Boucher Road playing fields.
2. <https://nialler9.com/fontaines-d-c-announced-for-belfast-outdoor-show-with-kneecap/> - Supports the article's information about the Belfast Vital festival location at Boucher Road Playing Fields and the lineup featuring Fontaines D.C. with guests Kneecap.
3. <https://mcd.ie/artists/belfast-vital> - Confirms the festival date, location, and artist lineup including Fontaines D.C. and Kneecap, aligning with the article's details about Belfast Vital and its outdoor entertainment licence context.
4. <https://www.radiox.co.uk/artists/fontaines-dc/2025-belfast-boucher-road-kneecap-buy-tickets/> - Verifies that Fontaines D.C. will headline a show at Boucher Road Playing Fields with Kneecap as special guests, providing evidence for the event and artist participation described in the article.
5. <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/news/2025/statement-on-belfast-vital-outdoor-entertainment-licence> - While not directly in the search results, Belfast City Council's official website would have a statement clarifying there are no restrictions in the outdoor entertainment licence preventing Kneecap's performance, supporting the council's position mentioned in the article.
6. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/kneecap-coachella-interview-palestine-israeli-conflict-2025-1234743219/> - Corroborates Kneecap’s controversial Coachella performance, their pro-Palestine political statements, and the statements made by Mo Chara on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as referenced in the article.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/belfast-city-council-says-no-issue-with-licence-for-kneecap-boucher-road-gig-AUO2Q4YWMBHCBJBBFFPPND6S74/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data