

Planning and Regulatory Committee
19 May 2015**9. SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW**
2014/2015**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an annual review of activities carried out by the County Council to discharge its duties under the Safety at Sports Grounds (SatSGs) and related legislation during 2014/2015.

Background

2. This is the fifth SatSGs annual review presented to the Committee. Members will recall that the legislative background for the Council's responsibilities for SatSGs is based on the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005.

3. The County Council therefore has a particular interest in all sports grounds in the County but more specifically those that are formally "designated" and stadia that have "regulated stands" as follows:

4. "Designated" stadiums within Worcestershire as defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 are:

- Sixways Stadium – home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club
- Aggborough Stadium – home of Kidderminster Harriers Football Club used by Worcester City Football Club.

Aggborough Stadium will revert from a Designated Stadium to regulated stands for 2015/16 Season as it has been de-designated by the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

5. The "Regulated Stands" within Worcestershire – stadia with stands that provide covered accommodation for 500 or more spectators and covered by the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005 are:

- The Grandstand – Pitchcroft Race Course, Worcester
- The Victoria Ground – home of Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club

6. The Worcestershire County Cricket New Road ground or the Worcester Arena are neither "designated" nor

"regulated". Consequently, these venues are not subject to Safety at Sports Grounds legislation due to the nature of definitions contained within that legislation. For example a sports grounds having the following will require a safety certificate:

- a capacity of more than 10,000 spectators
- a football club competing in the Football League or the Premiership having a capacity of at least 5,000 (the legislation provides for the Secretary of State to designate such grounds)
- a covered stand that can accommodate 500 spectators or more (a regulated stand)

Sports Ground

Any place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the **open air** and where accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures or of natural structures artificially modified for the purpose

Safety Certificates

7. In discharging its responsibilities WCC must consider applications for, and issue to qualified persons, Safety Certificates for designated sports grounds with the aim of:

- **Securing reasonable safety** at the sports grounds
- **Serving a Prohibition Notice** in respect of a sports ground if the Council consider that "the admission of spectators to a sports ground or any part of a sports ground involves or will involve a risk to them so serious that, until steps have been taken to reduce it to a reasonable level, admission of spectators to that part of the ground ought to be prohibited or restricted"
- Issuing a **Safety Certificate** for Designated Stadia or Regulated Stands in the County to "secure reasonable safety in the Stand when it is in use for viewing the specified activity or activities at the ground".

8. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO) 2005 ensures a risk based approach to fire safety. The County Council is the enforcing authority for the FSO to ensure that all necessary fire risk assessments have been made at all five locations and their premises covered by the SatSGs legislation.

Safety Advisory Groups

9. Management and discharge of SatSGs legislation is administered through a site specific Safety Advisory Group (SAG) based on each premises under that legislation. SAG meetings are convened regularly throughout the year under County Council (Emergency Planning Unit) Chairmanship. Membership is composed of Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, District Council (Building Control), Worcestershire Regulatory Services

(Environmental Health, Licensing Health and Safety) representatives and the host stadium Safety Officer.

10. All SAG decisions are taken on a multi agency basis under the chairmanship of the County Council. Under the terms of the Scheme of Delegation and Policy statements the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning and Regulatory Committee are made aware of and consulted on any significant alterations and modifications to General and Special Safety Certificates issued.

11. During 2014/15 SAG's met at each stadium based on three meetings per year programme of "before", "during" and "after" season meetings.

**Sixways Stadium,
Worcester Warriors
RFC**

12. Worcester Warriors' RFC have had a more successful season and have qualified for the 'play-offs' to the Rugby Premiership. This success has led to increased crowds with the likelihood that the ground will be at full capacity for the home legs of the home and away play offs.

13. The parking issues have been reduced dramatically due to the enforcement from Wychavon District Council.

14. Sixways stadium continues to be managed (from a safety perspective) in a manner that meets current legislation.

15. Members of the SAG have carried out "during performance inspections" and found the safety systems to be satisfactory.

**Aggborough Stadium,
Kidderminster Harriers
FC and Worcester City
Football Club**

16. The Aggborough Stadium continued to be managed by the Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (KHFC) safety management team to meet current safety management criteria. The Department of Culture Media and Sport have recently 'de designated' the stadium. This is in response to the government's wish to reduce bureaucracy and cut back on what is believed to be unnecessary regulation.

17. Worcester City Football Club has been involved in a ground sharing agreement with KHFC. They have hired the ground from KHFC. The safety responsibilities are for KHFC to oversee as the certificate holders and for Worcestershire County Council to enforce as the issuing authority.

18. It should be noted that WCFC had a good FA Cup run which resulted in a capacity crowd versus Scunthorpe in a second round replay. The preparation for this match did involve the SAG due to crowd problems in the first match.

19. During the current season members of the SAG carried out "during performance inspections" examining the spectator safety standards set by the club. These were noted as satisfactory. Collaboration with the County Council and the SAG remains excellent.

The Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse

20. Worcester Racecourse is owned by Worcester City Council and is operated by Arena Racing Company. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation.

21. The Racecourse SAG has again approved site specific working practices to meet the special safety considerations of horse racing courses. These arrangements recognise that crowd behaviour and dynamics at horse racing is very different to that found at football or rugby grounds.

22. During the season members of the SAG carried out "during" performance inspections and the satisfactory spectator safety standards set were noted.

23. Special Safety Certificates were also issued to the racecourse for a Military Event which occurred in August 2014 and The Run Bike Run Event which occurred in September. Again SAG advice was given to ensure safe events.

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC

24. Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club is leasing the Victoria Ground on a long term lease from Bromsgrove District Council which owns the freehold. The Main stand and North stand are treated as a Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation. The Directors of Bromsgrove Sporting have demonstrated a willingness to ensure that safety arrangements meet current safety management criteria and manage a schedule of maintenance works.

25. Significant finance has been injected to the club which has seen new floodlighting installed and better facilities for spectators and most importantly further training for safety officers.

26. The ground maintenance is carried out with cooperation from a number of agencies including Bromsgrove District Council. During Performance Inspections have taken place and found to be satisfactory.

Other Advice

27. The multi-agency members of the SAG have been asked collectively to give advice to:

- The Three Counties Showground.
- Worcester Indoor Arena
- Worcester Run Bike Run
- Military Event Worcester Racecourse
- Throckmorton Air Show.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

28. The Regulatory Reform duty is currently administered by the County Council through a Service Level Agreement provided by Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service. There were no significant FSO issues at sites managed

through the SatSGs legislation during 2014/15.

29. Worcester Warriors and Kidderminster Harriers stadia were visited in January 2015 by members of this Committee as part of a guided tour arranged by the WCC Emergency Planning team to raise local Members' awareness of the safety management role.

Recommendation

30. The Director of Adult and Social Health recommends that the 2014/15 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted.

Contacts

Contact Points for this Report

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List of Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director Adult Social Health) the following papers relate to the subject matter of this item:

WCC Safety at Sports Grounds Policy (2010),
WCC Protocol for the Delegation of Decision Making relating to Safety at Sports Grounds (updated 2013).