

**Planning and Regulatory Committee**  
**20 May 2014**

**8. SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW 2013/2014**

**Local Councillors**

Mr N Desmond, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr A P Miller, Mr A Roberts

**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 2013/2014.

**Background Information**

2. This is the fourth 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:

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

5. The "Regulated Stands" within Worcestershire – stadia with stands that provide covered accommodation for 500 or more spectators being:

- 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 recently opened Worcester Arena is neither "designated" nor "regulated". Consequently, these venues are not subject to

## Safety Certificates

Safety at Sports Grounds legislation due to the nature of definitions contained within that legislation. For example a sports ground 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 5000 (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.

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 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 grounds 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 Designated Ground and stadiums with a Regulated Stand. 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) 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

**Sixways Stadium,  
Worcester Warriors  
RFC**

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 2013/14 SAG's met at each stadium based on three meetings per year programme of "before", "during" and "after" season meetings.

12. Worcester Warriors' RFC have had some changes in staff and staff responsibility during the past year with a change to the Safety Certificate holder. There have been three incidents which have been investigated.

- Fireworks from an organised display landing on roof of main stand.
- Extreme problems with parking and pedestrians outside the ground
- Loss of hydraulic pressure on an outside broadcast 'cherry picker' which then lowered itself onto the North Stand causing damage to the roof.

13. The results from the investigations are as follows:-

- The fireworks display was well managed by a professional company, (and overseen by the Safety Officer). The weather and wind direction had been monitored every hour, on the day of the display (as advised by the SAG) from early morning, this had been continuously south westerly. This monitoring continued during the display. During the last 10 minutes of the display the wind suddenly changed direction leading to some fireworks landing on the top of two stands. This led the Safety Officer to immediately stop the event
- Pedestrian safety in Pershore Lane has been an issue since the opening of the stadium. Through SAG advice and Warriors management this issue has been mitigated by park and ride, media management and other traffic management solutions. However, on this occasion the pedestrian issue was made worse by inconsiderate parking causing pedestrians to walk into the roadway. The parking problem has emerged due to lack of traffic orders/signage, a change over in enforcement responsibilities and a consequent lack of enforcement itself

The enforcement and signage matters were in the process of being followed up at the time of the parking/pedestrian issue. Once the signage and enforcement were established and media warnings distributed, a number of car parking prosecutions followed

- The hydraulic failure of a cherry picker was an issue

for the broadcaster which impacted on the live broadcast. It worked as it was supposed to and slowly descended as its inbuilt safety systems took over. This caused a tear in the Canvas roofing. Spectators were moved to other areas of the ground.

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

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.

16. The Aggborough Stadium continued to be managed by the Kidderminster Harriers FC safety management team to meet current safety management criteria. Collaboration with the County Council and the SAG remains excellent.

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

18. 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.

**The Grandstand,  
Worcester Racecourse**

19. Worcester Racecourse is owned by Worcester City Council and is operated by Northern Leisure on a long term lease following their recent acquisition of Arena Leisure. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation.

20. 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.

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

22. A new safety certificate has been issued to cater for a change in the safety officer.

**Victoria Ground,  
Bromsgrove Sporting FC**

23. Bromsgrove Sporting FC leases the Victoria Ground on a long term basis from Bromsgrove District Council which owns the freehold. The main stand is treated as a Regulated Stand 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.

## Other Advice

24. A new certificate has been issued to account for a change in Safety Officer.

25. The ground maintenance is carried out with cooperation from a number of agencies including Bromsgrove DC and West Mercia Probation Trust. The average gate at Bromsgrove Sporting is 225 persons. During Performance Inspections have taken place and found to be satisfactory.

26. The Planning and Regulatory Committee may wish to visit a sports ground on a match day. Worcester Racecourse is the only option during the summer, however from August until November all of the sport ground options are available. The Emergency Planning team will arrange a site visit to a sports ground venue for Committee members to see first-hand safety management practices in operation. This will necessitate giving the chosen ground(s) notice to arrange access for members.

27. The multi-agency members of the SAG have been asked collectively to give advice to The Three Counties Showground and Throckmorton Air Show. There has also been an appointment of a Safety Officer to Worcestershire County Cricket Club who has spoken to members of the SAG.

## The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

28. This duty is currently administered by the County Council through a Service Level Agreement provided by H&W F&RS. There were no significant FSO issues at sites managed through the SatSGs legislation during 2013/14.

## Recommendation

**29. The Director of Adult Services and Health recommends that the 2013/14 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted.**

## Contact Points

### County Council Contact Points

Worcester (01905) 763763, Kidderminster (01562) 822511 or Minicom: Worcester (01905) 766399

### Specific Contact Points

Nick Riding, Emergency Planning Officer  
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## List of Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director Adult Services and 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).