

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

17 MAY 2016

SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW 2016

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 2015/2016.

Background

2. This is the Sixth 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. WCC 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 defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.

4. Within Worcestershire there is currently just one venue that is formally "designated":

- Sixways Stadium – home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club

5. "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 as follows:

- The Grandstand – Pitchcroft Race Course
- Aggborough Stadium – home of Kidderminster Harriers Football Club and also used by Worcester City Football Club
- The Victoria Ground – home of Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club.

(The Victoria Ground will be the "home" ground of Worcester City Football Club as from the start of the 2016/2017 season)

6. The Worcestershire County Cricket Club New Road ground and the Worcester University Arena are neither "designated" nor "regulated" and therefore these venues are not subject to Safety at Sports Grounds legislation due to the nature of definitions contained within that legislation.

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 four stadia and their premises covered by the SatSGs legislation.

Safety Advisory Groups

9. Management and discharge of SatSGs legislation is administered through stadia 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) and the host stadium Safety Officer.

10. It should be noted that points 8 and 9 of the recent Hillsborough Report relate specifically to Certification issues and thereby the responsibility of the local authority. Point 8 relates to changes made to the fabric of the stadium with capacity figures remaining unaltered. Point 9 relates to the lack of update relating to the Safety Certificate itself and its associated safety related content.

11. 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 Chairman and Vice Chairman 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.

12. During 2015/16 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

13. Worcester Warriors' Rugby FC has had a successful season during 2015/16 and has retained its status in the Rugby Premiership. This success has led to increased attendances.

14. Car parking issues have been reduced significantly due to parking enforcement carried out by Wychavon District Council.

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

16. During the last year there has been a change in Safety Officer and a specialist safety management consultancy complying with legislation has been carrying out this function. Worcester Rugby Club intends to recruit and appoint a new safety officer in the near future.

17. A Special Safety Certificate has been requested to enable a performance of 'Nitro Circus', a motor cycle and bicycle stunt team to take place at the stadium on 3rd June 2016.

18. Members of the SAG have carried out during performance inspections during 2015/16 and found the safety systems to be satisfactory.

Aggborough Stadium – Kidderminster Harriers FC and Worcester City FC

19. 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.

20. During the past year the Department of Culture Media and Sport have 'de designated' Aggborough stadium. The reason for this is to reduce bureaucracy and encourage local decision making.

21. Worcester City FC is currently party to a ground sharing agreement to hire the venue and its facilities from Kidderminster Harriers FC. The safety responsibilities are overseen by Kidderminster Harriers FC as the certificate holders with Worcestershire County Council as the issuing and enforcing authority.

22. However, Worcester City FC intend to end their ground sharing arrangement with Kidderminster Harriers FC at the end of the current season and will at the start of next season ground share at the Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove courtesy of Bromsgrove Sporting FC.

23. During the current season members of the SAG carried out "during performance inspections" examining the spectator safety standards set by Worcester City FC. These were noted as satisfactory.

The Grandstand - Worcester Racecourse

24. 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.

25. 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.

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

27. Special Safety Certificates were also issued to the racecourse for a concert involving the pop group James, which occurred in August 2015 and for the Worcester City Run Bike Run Event which occurred in September. Again SAG advice was given to ensure safe events.

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC

28. Bromsgrove Sporting FC is leasing the Victoria Ground on a long term lease from Bromsgrove District Council who own the freehold of the Victoria Ground. 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.

29. Significant finance has been injected to the maintenance of the facilities at the Victoria Ground which has seen new floodlighting installed and better facilities for spectators and most importantly further training for safety officers and stewards.

30. The ground maintenance is carried out with co-operation from a number of agencies including Bromsgrove DC. During Performance Inspections have taken place and found to be satisfactory.

Additional Safety Management Advice

31. Members of the multi-agency SAG have been invited to provide advice to a number of significant spectator events during the past twelve months. This has enabled safety management principles to be implemented and monitored at the following events:

- The Three Counties Showground.
- Worcester Run Bike Run
- Worcestershire County Cricket Club
- Worcester Christmas Street Fayre.
- Alvechurch FC

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

32. This duty is currently administered by the County Council through a Service Level Agreement provided by H&W Fire and Rescue Service. There were no significant FSO issues at sites managed through the SatSGs legislation during 2014/15.

Recommendation

33. The Interim Director of Public Health recommends that the 2015/16 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

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Email: worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk

Specific Contact Points for this report

Nick Riding, Emergency Planning Manager

Tel: (01905) 844511

Email: nriding@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Interim Director of Public Health) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

WCC Safety at Sports Grounds Policy (2010),

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