

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

11 JULY 2017

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW 2017

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an annual review of activities carried out by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Directorate of Public Health Emergency Planning team to discharge statutory duties under the Safety at Sports Grounds (SatSGs) and related legislation during 2016/2017.

Background

2. This is the seventh SatSGs annual review presented to this 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 follows:

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

- Sixways Stadium – home of Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club

5. The "Regulated Stands" in 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, Worcester Race Course,
- Aggborough Stadium – home of Kidderminster Harriers Football Club
- The Victoria Ground – home of Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club, also used by Worcester City Football Club.

6. It should be noted that the Worcestershire County Cricket, New Road ground and the Worcester Arena are neither "designated" nor "regulated". Consequently, these venues are not subject to SatSGs legislation due to the nature of definitions contained within that legislation.

Safety Certificates

7. In discharging its statutory 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 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 venue. SAG meetings are convened regularly throughout the year administered by WCC Emergency Planning Unit. Membership is composed of Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Midlands Ambulance Service, District Councils (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 2016/17 SAG's met at each stadium based on a three meetings per year programme of "before", "during" and "after" season meetings.

Sixways Stadium, Worcester Warriors RFC

12. Worcester Warriors' RFC had a successful season and retained their status in the English Rugby Premiership. This success has led to increased crowds during the season.

13. Sixways stadium continues to be managed (from a safety perspective) in a manner that meets current legislation. Collaboration between the Club and its SAG members remains excellent.

14. The safety certificate holder is the Worcester Warriors RFC Chief Executive. The Sixways stadium Safety Officer is progressing satisfactorily towards attaining relevant safety management qualifications and experience.

15. A Special Safety Certificate has been requested to enable a performance by Bryan Adams to take place at Sixways on 14 July 2017

16. Members of the SAG have carried out during performance inspections throughout the season and found the safety systems at the Sixways stadium to be satisfactory.

Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers FC

17. The safety management at Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (KHFC) is provided by a contracted out safety management team. However, the Chairman remains responsible for safety as the certificate holder. KHFC meet current safety management criteria and collaboration between the Club and its SAG members remains excellent. All four stands are managed as a Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation.

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.

19. However, prior to the new safety management team being appointed, a breach in the safety certificate was notified to WCC. On 5 April 2017 the Worcestershire FA Senior Urn Final took place at Aggborough in front of over 600 spectators. However, shortly before the match was due to start it became clear that spectator stewarding had not been arranged. The match was only able to go ahead as scheduled and meet the expected safety management expectations when a qualified safety officer and stewards were brought in at short notice.

20. This incident was investigated by WCC and inadequate match booking arrangements were identified. Revised match booking procedures are now in place.

21. A verbal warning was issued to KHFC for potentially breaching the safety certificate and this was recorded in the End of Season notes.

The Grandstand Worcester Racecourse

22. Worcester Racecourse is owned by Worcester City Council and is operated by the Arena Racing Company on a long term lease. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation. Collaboration between the Club and its SAG members remains excellent.

23. The Racecourse SAG approves 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.

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

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC and Worcester City Football Club

25. Bromsgrove Sporting FC leases the Victoria Ground on a long term basis from Bromsgrove District Council who own the freehold of the Victoria Ground. The Main and North stands are treated as Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation.

26. The Directors of Bromsgrove Sporting FC have demonstrated a willingness to ensure that safety arrangements meet current safety management criteria and manage a schedule of maintenance works for the ground. Collaboration between the Club and its SAG members remains excellent.

27. Worcester City FC is currently involved in a sharing agreement for the Victoria Ground whereby they effectively hire the stadium and its facilities from Bromsgrove Sporting FC. The safety responsibilities for the venue remain with Bromsgrove Sporting FC to oversee as safety certificate holder. Worcestershire County Council continues to enforce the conditions of the safety certificate as the issuing authority.

28. Maintenance of the Victoria Ground facility is carried out with the cooperation of Bromsgrove District Council. Significant finance has been expended by Bromsgrove Sporting FC recently with new floodlighting installed, improved facilities for spectators and perhaps most importantly, further training for safety officers and stewards.

29. During Performance Inspections have taken place and these have been found to be satisfactory. However, there was an incident during the season that led to a breach in the Safety Certificate.

30. Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service carried out an inspection during a match in February. On the announcement of the spectator attendance figures it was identified that the number of safety stewards on duty was inadequate. This breach was reported and investigated by WCC.

31. The investigation found that the all-ticket match took place on a Bank Holiday Monday on a day when there was limited other local football matches taking place. This led to a higher than expected attendance with spectators paying at the gate and rendering the intended stewarding arrangements inadequate.

32. This incident highlighted the need for the following improvements which will be implemented in readiness for next season:

- The turnstile counters require updating to enable pay on the day and ticket stubs to be recorded
- Provision and analysis of match day spectator intelligence information

Other Event Safety Management Advice

33. The multi-agency members of the SAG also provide safety management advice to major public events taking place in the county where spectator attendance is likely to be high. This can involve the sharing of industry best practice between event organisers/managers/stewards. The co-ordination of safety guidance and advice developed by the County Council Emergency Planning staff has become regarded as 'best practice' by our professional partners. The provision of advice and guidance is

administered through event specific SAGs co-ordinated and Chaired by WCC. The following sites/events were provided with advice during the past year:

- The Three Counties Showground
- Worcester Run Bike Run
- Worcestershire County Cricket Club music event
- Worcester Christmas Street Fayre
- Worcester Carnival

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

34. 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 2016/17

Recommendation

35. **The Director of Public Health recommends that:**

- a) The 2016/17 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted; and**
- b) The Council has successfully met its statutory duty in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds legislation during 2016/17 be noted.**

Contact Points

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Background Papers

36. In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Public 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).