

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

3 JULY 2018

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW 2017/18

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 2017/2018.

Background

2. This is the eighth 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 Public Health. 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 2017/18 SAG's met based on a three meetings per year a programme of "before", "during" and "after" season meetings.

Sixways Stadium, Worcester Warriors RFC

12. Worcester Warriors' RFC have had a successful season avoiding relegation from the Rugby Premiership. This season has led to fluctuating attendance but at certain times having almost capacity crowds at times during the year.

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 Safety Officer Gene Willis has passed her qualification. However a suitably qualified deputy is now required and is in the process of being trained.

15. A Special Safety Certificate will be required for their annual fireworks display. But no further additional events are scheduled for this year.

16. Members of the SAG have carried out during match inspections and found the safety systems to be satisfactory. Worcester Warriors Limited Company is in the process of being sold it is not known who the buyer will be at present. Following inspection Worcester Warriors meet current safety management criteria and collaboration remains excellent.

Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers FC

17. The Kidderminster Harriers Football Clubs (KHFC) Aggborough Stadium is now managed by an in-house Stadium Safety Officers following the decision to discontinue with a contracted provider Thin Blue Line. The stewarding is however now contracted to Spears Worldwide a stewarding company known in the Midlands. KHFC meet current safety management criteria and collaboration again remains excellent.

18. During the current season members of the SAG carried out during match 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 Arena Racing Company. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation.

20. Worcester 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. Worcester Racecourse meets current safety management criteria and collaboration remains excellent.

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC and Worcester City Football Club

22. 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 and North stand are treated as a Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation. Following inspections 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.

23. Worcester City FC is involved in a ground sharing agreement with Bromsgrove Sporting. They in effect hire the ground from Bromsgrove Sporting. The safety responsibilities are for Bromsgrove to oversee as the certificate holders and for Worcestershire County Council to enforce as the issuing authority.

24. A new safety officer has been employed by Bromsgrove Sporting and will be undertaking his qualification.

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

26. Some smoke bombs have been set off during some matches but only one flare inside the ground. The safety officer and other management figures have been working with spectators to eliminate this.

27. With turnstiles being an issue last year, the club has been unable to replace them. However sufficient stewarding will now be on hand to cater for this.

28. Following inspections both Bromsgrove Sporting and Worcester City meet current safety management criteria although volunteer stewards remain a mixed blessing for Bromsgrove Sporting.

29. Following consultation with The Sports Ground Safety Authority, and with this Committees permission it is intended to include in all of the certificates the need for a Counter Terrorism Plan and a Disorder Plan. This is to ensure a standard response across all of the certificated grounds.

Other Event Safety Management Advice

30. The multi-agency members of the SAG have been asked collectively to give advice to the below events. This is in the main due to the sharing of best practice between organisers/managers/stewards many of whom work at the designated or regulated grounds and have found that the safety principles developed by County Council EP staff have become 'best practice'

- The Three Counties Showground.
- Worcester Half Marathon
- Worcester County Cricket Club
- Worcester Christmas Street Fayre
- Worcester Carnival

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

31. The Fire Safety RRO 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 issues at sites managed through the SatSGs legislation during 2017/18.

Recommendation

32. The Director of Public Health recommends that:

- a) The 2017/18 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted;**
- b) It be noted that the Council has successfully met its statutory duty in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds legislation during 2017/18; and**
- c) The intention to include in all of the safety certificates the need for a Counter Terrorism Plan and a Disorder Plan be noted.**

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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 Policy and Regulatory Committee Terms of Reference 2018

WCC Policy and Regulatory Committee SAG Policy V8

WCC Enforcement Policy Relating to Safety at Sports Grounds 2018