

## **PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

### **9 JULY 2019**

## **SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an annual review of activities carried out by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Directorate of Public Health (Emergency Planning) to discharge statutory duties under the Safety at Sports Grounds (SatSGs) and related legislation during 2018/2019.

### **Background**

2. This is the ninth 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 an 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 Ground at New Road 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.

7. Members of this Committee visited Bromsgrove Sporting and Worcester Warriors during matches last season providing an opportunity to view the challenges facing these two differently resourced venues.

## **Safety Certificates**

8. 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".

9. 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**

10. 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 (Emergency Planning). 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.

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 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.

12. During 2018/19 SAG's met based on three meetings per year, a programme of "before", "during" and "after" season meetings.

## **Sixways Stadium, Worcester Warriors RFC**

13. Sixways stadium continues to be managed 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's new Operations Director. The Safety Officer is now fully qualified. A suitably qualified deputy is in the process of being trained.

15. During the 2018/19 season Worcester Warriors experienced a mixed campaign finishing in 10th place and avoiding relegation. Attendances fluctuated during the season.

16. The club has applied for a Special Safety Certificate for a performance of the musical 'We will Rock you' on 7 September and for the annual fireworks display taking place on 2 November 2019. There is also a Sevens Competition taking place in June with around 2,000 competitors expected, with the surrounding pitches at Wanderers and Cummings Farm being used, with the final in the stadium itself. No further additional events are scheduled for this year.

17. Members of the SAG have carried out during match inspections and found the safety systems to be satisfactory. Following these inspections Worcester Warriors meet current safety management criteria and collaboration with key safety management staff remains excellent.

### **Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers FC**

18. Matchday safety management at the Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (KHFC) Aggborough Stadium is now managed by an in-house Stadium Safety Officers. All four stadium stands are managed as regulated stands. The stewarding is however now contracted to Spears Worldwide a stewarding company based and well known in the Midlands. KHFC meet current safety management criteria and collaboration with key safety management staff remains excellent.

19. 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**

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. The Safety Officer and deputies are fully qualified.

21. Worcester Racecourse SAG has approved site specific working practices to meet the special safety considerations of horse racing. 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. Worcester Racecourse meets current safety management criteria and collaboration remains excellent.

23. During 2018/19 the racecourse recorded attendance for the annual Ladies Day event of 9,717.

### **Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC and Worcester City Football Club**

24. 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 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.

25. Worcester City FC has a ground sharing agreement with Bromsgrove Sporting for the use of the Victoria Ground. Worcester City hire the ground from Bromsgrove Sporting. The safety responsibilities for all Worcester City fixtures are for Bromsgrove Sporting to oversee as the certificate holders and for Worcestershire County Council to enforce as the issuing authority.

26. The safety certificate holder is the Chairman. The safety officer holds an NVQ 3 safety qualification and is working towards an NVQ4. During 2018/19 Bromsgrove Sporting gained promotion. Attendances averaged 857 and the highest gate was recorded as 2,943.

27. The ground maintenance is carried out with co-operation from several agencies including Bromsgrove District Council. During match inspections have taken place and found the ground to be satisfactory.

28. During the 2018/19 season there have been two incidents of disorder both of which have been dealt with by the security arrangements made by the club.

29. Last season the SAG identified a safety issue with the turnstiles. However, the club has been unable to upgrade the turnstiles. A system is in place to ensure no overcrowding which was used successfully in the recent Evo Stick Play Off Final between Bromsgrove and Corby Town.

30. Following inspections both Bromsgrove Sporting and Worcester City FC meet current safety management criteria

### **Other Event Safety Management Advice**

31. 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'. Events include:

- The Three Counties Showground.
- Worcester Half Marathon
- Sunshine and Mellow Festivals
- Worcester Christmas Street Fayre
- Worcester Roundtable Fireworks display

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

32. 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 2018/19.

## **Recommendation**

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

- a) The 2018/19 Annual Review of activities carried out by the Council to manage and implement the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation be noted; and**
- b) It be noted that the Council has successfully met its statutory duty in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds legislation during 2018/19.**

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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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