

PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 2023

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS ANNUAL REVIEW

2022/2023

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an annual review of activities carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of the Directorate of Public Health (Emergency Planning) to discharge statutory duties under the Safety at Sports Grounds (SatSGs) and related legislation during 2022/2023.

Background

2. 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 (WCC) therefore has an interest in all sports grounds in the County but more specifically those that are formally designated and grounds that have regulated stands as follows:

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

- **Sixways Stadium** –Worcester Warriors Rugby Football Club

5. The "**Regulated Stands**" in Worcestershire – grounds 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 Racecourse,
- **Aggborough Stadium** –Kidderminster Harriers Football Club
- **The Victoria Ground** –Bromsgrove Sporting Football Club

6. 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. The SatSGs function including Safety Advisory Group (SAG) co-ordination was transferred, under a legal agreement, from WCC Public Health to Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) in August 2020. WCC retains its statutory duty in relation to the legislation with WRS acting on its behalf to deliver the function and service.

Safety Certificates

8. WCC has duties under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975. Its role is to consider applications for and issue Safety Certificates for the designated sports grounds in the county. Safety certificates set capacity and have terms and conditions that the holder must follow to operate the ground at capacity when it is being used for the sport concerned. Responsibility for safety of spectators always rest with the sports ground management. WCC is able to serve prohibition notices if the authority consider that letting in spectators would put them at a serious risk – also allows restrictions in capacity. There are similar duties under the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sports Act 1987 for those grounds with regulated stands

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. This assessment is carried out by HW FR on behalf of WCC.

Safety Advisory Groups

10. Management and discharge of SatSGs legislation is administered through a site-specific Safety Advisory Group (SAG) based on each sports venue. SAG meetings were convened regularly throughout the year and co-ordinated and administered by WRS. The core Agency membership of SAG is composed of:

- Worcestershire County Council (WRS Senior Practitioner or nominated representative)
- West Mercia Police,
- Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service,
- West Midlands Ambulance Service,
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Environmental Health, Licensing, Health and Safety) and,
- the host stadium Safety Officer and Club representatives.

With additional agencies as required

- District Councils or District Council Shared Services(Parking Enforcement, Building Control)
- National Highways

11. All SAG decisions are made on a multi-agency basis under the chairmanship of the County Council (WRS). 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 any significant alterations and modifications to General and Special Safety Certificates issued.

Venue Summaries:

Sixways Stadium, Worcester Warriors RFC

12. Until the club went into administration in September 2022 Warriors played in the English Premiership. The SAG group were able to ensure that safety documentation

and professional reports were up to date and in good order to permit the remaining home game to be played at the ground.

13. Collaboration between the Club's Safety Officer and its SAG members was maintained and a Special Safety Certificate was able to be issued for the fireworks display in November 2022.

Aggborough Stadium, Kidderminster Harriers FC

16. During this season Kidderminster Harriers Football Club (KHFC) won promotion to the National League (5th tier of English Football and the lowest level with a single nationwide league) . Matchday safety management at KHFC Aggborough Stadium is carried out by qualified Stadium Safety Officers. The stadium safety certificate holder is the Club Chairman with safety managements the responsibility of its Safety Officer. supported by a deputy.

17. All four of the stadium's stands are managed as individual regulated stands. KHFC meet current safety management criteria and collaboration with the SAG has remained excellent throughout the 2202 2023 season.

18. During the season members of the SAG carried out inspections examining the spectator safety standards and records set and maintained by the club. These inspections were noted as being satisfactory.

19 KHFC were the hosts for a match night visit by members of the Committee in March 2023. The members were briefed by the Clubs Safety Officers and given a tour of the ground.

The Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse

20. Worcester Racecourse is owned by Worcester City Council with the Grandstand and surrounding area together with the racecourse is operated by Arena Racing Company on a long-term leasing arrangement. The Grandstand is managed as a Regulated Stand under the SatSGs legislation. The Racecourse has a designated safety certificate holder and safety officer.

21. Worcester Racecourse SAG operates site specific working practices that meet the special safety considerations of horse racing and its spectators recognising that crowd behaviour and dynamics at horse racing is very different to that found at football or rugby grounds. The Racecourse employs trained stewards and provides one per 250 attendees (increasing to 1 per 100 where necessary).

22. Worcester Racecourse holds jump racing meetings during the summer between April to October. The SAG meeting for the racecourse was held virtually however, an in-person site visit was conducted during the season.

Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove Sporting FC

23. Bromsgrove Sporting leases the Victoria Ground on a long-term arrangement from Bromsgrove District Council who own the freehold. The Main and North stand are Regulated Stands under the SatSGs legislation. The Club plays in the Southern League Premier Division Central.

24. The Bromsgrove Sporting FC safety certificate holder remained the chairman and the club has a suitably qualified safety officer. The in-match inspection took place in November 2022 and identified safety issues that the Club has worked with local police to resolve.

25. SAG members in particular the Fire Safety Inspector and the Officer and West Midlands Ambulance Service continue to work with the club to ensure the terms and conditions of their General Safety Certificate are being adhered to.

Non-Statutory Event Safety Management Advice

26. The multi-agency members involved with the SAG's also provide safety management advice to several well-established venues and events that take place throughout the year. This process ensures that best practice is shared with organisers, safety managers and stewards many of whom work at the designated or regulated grounds. Some of the venues and events where advice has been offered include:

- Malvern, Three Counties Showground.
- Worcestershire County Cricket Ground
- Worcester's Victorian Christmas Fayre
- Tri County SAG for the 3 Shires car rally
- Passion Play Worcester
- Hanbury Show
- Queens Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games
- Events including the Tom Jones concert, Sunshine and Mello Festivals.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (FSO)

27. 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 2022/2023.

Recommendation

27. The Director of Public Health recommends that:

- a) The 2022/23 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 further noted that the Council has successfully met its statutory duty in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds legislation during 2022/23**

Contact Points

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 Planning and Regulatory Committee Terms of Reference 2020

WCC Planning and Regulatory Committee SAG Policy 2020

WCC Enforcement Policy Relating to Safety at Sports Grounds 2020