



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Strategic Licencing Committee
25 th January 2017

<u>Item</u>
5
Public

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS – ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITY (JANUARY 2017)

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1. Summary

1.1 On 15th December 2009 it was agreed that an annual report be given to members of the Strategic Licencing Committee detailing the exercise of delegated functions in respect of the safety of sports grounds, undertaken by the Public Protection service over the past year.

1.2 There are no financial, environmental or health and safety implications associated with this report.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Strategic Licencing Committee note the activities in respect of safety of sports grounds at designated sports grounds and regulated stands in Shropshire.

REPORT

3. Background

3.1 The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order are enforced by Public Protection.

3.2 Under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, the Council is required to issue Safety Certificates for designated sports grounds which are defined as:

A place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air and where accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures or of natural structures artificially modified for the purpose.

3.3 Safety certificates are required in sports grounds that can accommodate more than 10,000 spectators (5000 in the case of Football League grounds) or have a covered stand that holds more than 500 spectators.

3.4 The primary purpose of the safety certificate is to set a limit on the safe capacity of a designated ground or regulated stand. The capacity of a sports ground or stadium is calculated on the physical condition of the stadium (the P factor) and the level of safety management (the S factor).

3.5 The safety certificate will also detail conditions in respect to safety matters with which the certificate holder must comply if that capacity is to be maintained.

3.6 The venues within Shropshire which hold safety certificates are:

- Shrewsbury Town Football Club
- Ludlow Racecourse
- New Saints Football Club, Park Hall, Oswestry.

4 Shrewsbury Town Football Club (Greenhous Meadow)

4.1 An annual regime of during performance inspections (DPI's) and site visits have been conducted to verify the safe capacity of the stadium taking account of the physical condition of the stadium and the safety management operations in place (P and S factors). The calculations have been verified and the capacity of the club has been retained at a maximum of 9875 people.

4.2 A Safety Advisory Group (SAG) consisting of West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire and Rescue, West Midlands Ambulance Service, The Safety of Sports Grounds Authority, Emergency Planning and Public Protection has met twice (March and November) to routinely address any safety issues associated with football matches at the stadium.

4.3 In February 2016, a planning application was received notified in relation to the location of a Lidl supermarket within the grounds of STFC. Representations were made on behalf of Regulatory Services in relation to recommending that restrictions were placed on deliveries during match days, review of the arrangements for safe access and egress of supporters to and from the ground and the location of stewards around the proposed site.

4.4 The following official match day inspections (DPI's) were carried out by the service and representatives of the Safety Advisory Group to view the clubs operational procedures in action and to assess compliance with the General Safety Certificate:

4.5 Shrewsbury Town vs. Manchester United (22nd February 2016). A visit was undertaken to view the safety management operation during a full capacity high risk game. Overall a very high standard of safety management was seen however concerns were raised in relation to obstruction of the emergency vehicle access route on Oteley Road and issues in relation to inappropriate placement of TV camera cables and advertising hoardings as this game was broadcast live. These issues were followed up with the safety officer and through the SAG by Regulatory Services.

4.6 Shrewsbury Town vs Sheffield United (Tuesday 18th October 2016). This was police-free match and a well-controlled safety management system was implemented. Issues noted related to requirements highlighted in the fire risk assessment, evacuation training of

hospitality staff on non-match days and housekeeping issues. The fire risk assessment is currently under review and items are currently being followed up in accordance with an agreed action plan.

4.7 A further non match day inspection was conducted on the 17th November to determine compliance with the general conditions of the safety certificate. A legal requirement was identified to remedy the follow-up items detailed in their fire risk assessment. Subsequent to this an action plan has been agreed to ensure that these items are addressed.

4.8 The General safety certificate was re-issued on the 23rd November 2016 without any changes to the existing conditions

4.9 Special safety certificates were granted for the following events over the past twelve months:

- RAF vs Navy (March 2016)
- Celebrities Match (April 2016)

4.10 Further to a question raised by Cllr. Dean Carroll at the Strategic Licencing Committee meeting in January 2016 regarding the training and competency of stewards, this has been followed up directly with the Safety Officer of the club and it has been confirmed that all 97 stewards (100%) have achieved NVQ Level 2 in Spectator Safety. The club also have links with Telford College to put any prospective stewards through the Level 2 training. Any extra stewards that are required at extraordinary fixtures are provided by external companies where Level 2 qualifications are required.

5 Ludlow Racecourse

5.1 A General inspection of the ground has taken place to review the P&S factors with an S factor of 0.5 giving a capacity of 8655 in total covering all viewing areas. The average attendance of the ground at regular race meetings is around 2000 spectators per event.

5.2 A race day inspection was due to take place on the 6th January 2017, however this had to be postponed as the race meet was cancelled due to bad weather. The inspection will now take place in February 2017.

5.3 A non-during performance inspection was conducted on the 27th October 2016. Good standards were seen but some minor maintenance issues and the requirement to review their fire risk assessment was raised.

5.4 Shropshire Council Regulatory services plan to hold a specific Safety Advisory Group with Ludlow Racecourse before the start of the 2017/18 season to bring key partners into the safety management regime.

6 New Saints Football Club, Oswestry

6.1 A full review of the safety management operation has taken place during the year by Regulatory Services.

6.2 Match day inspections were carried out by the service to view the clubs operational procedures in action and to assess compliance with the General Safety Certificate on the 28th June 2016 (UEFA Champions league qualifier vs. Tre Penne of San Marino) and 12th July 2016 (UEFA Champions league qualifier vs. Apoel Nicosia of Cyprus). The inspections found that levels of compliance were satisfactory.

6.3 Following the site visits and match inspections the application of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) has resulted in the S factor remaining at 0.5 keeping the capacity of the ground to 1500 spectators including hospitality areas.

6.4 The capacity remains sufficient for regular fixtures at the club, which typically attracts less than 500 spectators at each fixture.

6.5 Shropshire Council Regulatory services recommend that a specific SAG is set up to involve key stakeholders in the safety management regime. It is advised that this takes place before the UEFA games outside the main football season in June 2017.

7. Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA):

7.1 The Sports Ground Safety Authority regulate the council in relation to how it exercises its licencing functions in relation to Sports Grounds.

7.2 Shropshire Council also sit on the West Midlands Sports grounds safety advisory group whereby good practice is shared with other regulators, clubs and the SGSA.

8. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

None

9. Financial Implications

None

10. Additional Information

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) None
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr. Malcolm Price
Local Member
Appendices None