



<u>Committee and Date</u>

Strategic Licencing Committee

6 th January 2016

<u>Item</u>

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Public

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS – ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITY (DECEMBER 2015)

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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:
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 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).
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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 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 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 to routinely address any safety issues associated with football matches at the stadium.
- 4.3 Since the last report there have been changes to the deputy safety manager at the ground and also a new electronic ticketing system has been installed and the club have changed their match day first aid and ambulance cover back to West Midlands Ambulance Service. A revised general safety certificate was issued on the 23rd November 2015 to reflect these changes.
- 4.4 The following official match day inspections 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. Both evening and weekend matches were selected:
- 4.5 Shrewsbury Town vs. Oxford United (21st March 2015). A visit was undertaken to view the safety management operation during a weekend match of a high risk game. No issues were found regarding the operations in place. Overall a very high standard of safety management was seen.
- 4.6 Shrewsbury Town vs Doncaster Rovers (Tuesday 20th October 2015). This was police-free match and a well-controlled safety management system was implemented. Feedback was given regarding minor housekeeping issues relating to the storage of items in protected fire escapes and a damaged fire door.

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

- RAF vs Navy (11th March 2015).
- Celebrity Football Match (30th August 2015)
- England under 20's vs Czech Republic (7th September 2015).

5. **Ludlow Racecourse**

- 5.1 A General inspection of the ground has taken place to review the P&S factors and work is ongoing to review the implementation of an operations manual to ensure compliance with the requirements of the of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide).
- 5.2 A race day inspection was undertaken on the 21st April 2015. There were no significant concerns regarding the operations on the day. Feedback was given regarding minor housekeeping issues and compliance with their own policies regarding admittance of spectators to certain viewing areas. A further inspection has been arranged for 16th December 2015.
- 5.3 The safety certificate is currently under review. The current capacity of the designated viewing areas is 3065, with an S factor of 0.5 applied. Improvements made to safety management at the course are likely to result in an increased capacity being permitted.

6. **New Saints Football Club, Oswestry**

- 6.1 A full review of the safety management operation has taken place during the year by the public protection team.
- 6.2 Following site visits, during performance inspections and follow up meetings with the management of the club; the application of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) has resulted in the S factor being reduced to 0.5 and limiting the capacity of the ground to 1320 spectators. The reduction is comprised of the following matters:
- 6.3 The entry capacity of the ground, determined by the maximum number of people who can pass through the turnstiles within an hour.
- 6.4 The designation of a suitable Safety Officer who is occupationally competent with sufficient training, experience and knowledge to be able to carry out their duties during a football game. It has also been recommended that a suitable deputy officer is assigned also.
- 6.5 Qualifications of stewards who should have a level 2 stewarding qualification or be undergoing training and assessment for the qualification.
- 6.6 The restriction of the capacity should not affect the regular fixtures at the club with average spectator attendance being below the 1320 capacity.

- 6.7 The Council are working closely with the club to ensure that the above matters are addressed if the club wishes to increase its capacity in the future.

7. Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA):

- 7.1 A desktop audit of the Councils Sports Ground Safety Licencing function was carried out in July 2015 by the SGSA.
- 7.2 The outcome of the desktop audit was that the Councils operational function in relation to the regulation of the three sports grounds was satisfactory but recommended that the Council considers developing written procedures in relation to how premises are certified and that a Safety Advisory Group for Ludlow Racecourse and the New Saints Football Club is convened.

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
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Local Member

Covers all areas of the Council

Appendices None
