



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Strategic Licencing Committee
20 th June 2018

<u>Item</u>
8
Public

SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS – ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITY (JULY 2018)

Responsible Officer:

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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
- The New Saints Football Club, Park Hall, Oswestry.

4 Shrewsbury Town Football Club (Montgomery Waters 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 2017 the club started to develop proposals around the installation of dual purpose seating in the South Stand at the Montgomery Waters Meadow stadium. Dual purpose seating can be used to create a safe standing during football matches.

4.4 Originally, the stadium was classed as an all seater stadium and the application was made on the grounds of both enhancing customer experience at football matches and improving safety in relation to spectators who currently stand in seated areas of the stadium.

4.5 The dual purpose seating, replaces 555 fixed seats within the South stand. As a difference from traditional terraced approaches to standing, a fixed rail is placed in front of the spectators to prevent the forward movement of spectators standing in the area. When necessary the dual purpose seating can be turned into a seated area where seats can be unlocked in the area to meet an all seater requirement.

4.6 Further to a licence being granted by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority to allow the installation of dual purpose seating at STFC, considerable work has

been carried out by the Regulatory Services team to ensure the appropriate safety management of spectators who plan to use the safe standing area.

4.7 The installation of the dual purpose seating started on the 14th May and was completed and signed off by Building Control on the 29th May 2018.

4.8 As this is the first club in England to introduce dual purpose seating, close monitoring of the safety management operations will be undertaken by the Council. Monitoring will also be undertaken to see the what effect this installation has had on standing in other areas of the stadium.

4.9 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:

Shrewsbury Town vs Bristol Rovers 17.10.2018

Shrewsbury Town vs Charlton Athletic 17.04.2018

The match day safety management operations were observed and no significant safety concerns were identified. Matters requiring attention and opportunities to make improvements are reported back to STFC and discussed at SAG meetings.

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

- Rod Stewart concert 7th June 2017. This resulted in an attendance of fourteen thousand people. Officers reviewed the event safety management plans associated with the concert and monitored the safety management arrangements during the event. The event was generally well run and no significant safety concerns were raised.
- England under 19s vs Brazil under 19 on 1st September 2017
- A Special Safety Certificate has been granted for another concert to host Lionel Richie at STFC on 13th June 2018.

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 took place on the 17th November 2018. The event was generally well run and no significant safety concerns were raised.

5.3 A review of the existing safety certification process for the premises has resulted in a proposal change to certificates from a General Safety Certificate for the whole course to a Regulated Stands Certificate applicable only to covered stands for 500 or more spectators in line with the requirements of the

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sports Act 1987. This will be changed before the start of 2018/19 racing season.

6 The New Saints Football Club, Oswestry

6.1 A match day inspection was carried out by the service to view the clubs operational procedures in action and to assess compliance on the 17th July 2017. This was a UEFA Champions League qualification fixture vs HNK Reijeka from Croatia. The safety management operation was generally satisfactory albeit there was a minor breakout of disorder between opposing spectators which was dealt with quickly by security staff. Advice has been given to the Club on improvements to maintain spectator segregation.

6.2 A General inspection of the ground has taken place to review the P&S factors with an S factor of 0.5 being maintained giving a capacity of to 1500 spectators including hospitality areas.

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

6.4 An inaugural SAG group has been set up and the first meeting took place in January 2018 to review and improve the safety management operations at the club.

6.5 Following a review of the safety certification process for the ground a new Regulated Stands Certificate applicable only to 2 covered stands at the ground was issued on the 22 March 2018. This is in line with the requirements of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sports Act 1987.

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.

7.3 Following an audit of the Councils service by the SGSA in 2016 the service have introduced a new policy and process in relation to how the service discharges its function.

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. Joyce Barrow

Local Member: The report is applicable Countywide.

Appendices None