

SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS

Committee	Residents' & Environmental Services Policy Overview
Officer Contact	Norman Stanley, Licensing Services Manager
Papers with report	Appendix A (incl. Appendix B)

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	This is the annual report to inform the Committee of the action taken by officers in respect of the Council's responsibilities under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987
Contribution to our plans and strategies	A Safer Borough
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications beyond the existing budget allocation, unless a decision is made to significantly amend the safety inspection regime.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note and provide any comments on this report, which will then be sent to the Cabinet Member for Environment for approval.

NB. The Committee may wish to draw their attention to Appendices A&B. Following any comments, the Cabinet Member will be asked to note and approve the action taken by Officers in respect of the Council's responsibilities to ensure the safety of the public (as spectators) at sports grounds within the Borough during 2009 and determines the level of safety inspections which should be implemented in 2010.

REASONS FOR OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The Council is the enforcing authority under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 and following the publication of Lord Chief Justice Taylor's report in respect of Safety at Sports Grounds, the Council agreed a protocol and liaison procedure between the other agencies involved with sports grounds, being the Metropolitan Police Service, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the

London Ambulance Service. This group is known as the Safety Advisory Group. The SAG identified the enclosed sports grounds detailed in Appendix A, as premises that should be inspected by representatives of the SAG at least once a year.

Alternative options considered

To increase, decrease, or maintain the same level of safety inspections in 2010.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee

To be provided by the Committee and reported to the Cabinet Member.

Supporting Information

1. Following Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations after the Hillsborough Stadium disaster, local authorities were advised to review their arrangements for discharging their responsibilities under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987. In addition, local authorities were advised to ensure that an accountable structure was in place, whereby the enforcing department/personnel were regularly and effectively supervised by Senior Officers who would then report direct to elected Members on the action instigated. The object is to ensure that Senior Officers and elected Members are fully aware of the action being instigated on their behalf in discharging the Authority's duties.

In Hillingdon we seek accountability via the relevant Policy Overview Committee and also more formally via the relevant Cabinet Member.

2. The principal instruments aimed at achieving a framework for safety of spectators at sporting events are:
 - a) Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975
 - b) The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987
 - c) The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (5th edition Department of Culture, Media and Sport).
3. The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 makes provision for the safety of stands at sports grounds. It requires the local authority to issue a 'Safety Certificate' in respect of covered spectator stands which accommodate 500 or more people. There is only one stand within Hillingdon's boundaries which comes into that category, being the North Stand at Hayes Football Club
4. The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 makes provision for safety at sports stadia and other sports grounds. It governs the issue of safety certificates in respect of "designated sports grounds". It is for the Secretary of State to set the criteria for designation and in the case of football grounds the trigger spectator capacity for designation is 5000 and for other sports stadia it is 10,000. The Act also empowers a local authority to issue a prohibition notice in respect of all or part of any sports ground, irrespective as to whether or not it is a "designated" ground, where it feels that spectators cannot be accommodated

safely. The legislation also requires the local authority to consult the police and fire authorities in respect of safety at sports grounds within their boundaries, it also places a duty on the Council to conduct periodic inspections of any “designated” sports ground and at any sports ground at which there is a regulated spectator stand which is subject to a Safety Certificate.

5. None of the sports grounds listed in Appendix A are ‘designated’ and are therefore not subject to a safety certificate. However, if the Council or a member of the Safety Advisory Group were of the opinion that the unrestricted admission of spectators to a ground for a particular game or event, could present a significant safety risk, then the Council has a duty to use its powers under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 to serve a ‘Prohibition Notice’. The Prohibition Notice would stipulate the numbers of people that the Council has determined that could be safely accommodated within the sports ground.
6. The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds advises the managers/owners of sports grounds to consult with its Local Authority, the Fire Brigade, the Ambulance Service and the Metropolitan Police in regard to safety issues. In order to ensure good liaison between all the responsible authorities, the Council agreed to set up a Safety Advisory Group, which should co-ordinate the input, observations and advice from each Authority, which could then be transmitted in a single communication to the managers/owners of the sports grounds. The Licensing Service Manager acts on behalf of the Council as the Senior Liaison Officer for the Safety Advisory Group.
7. Whenever the Safety Advisory Group becomes aware that a particular game or event may attract large numbers of spectators (normally in excess of 1,000), the club’s officials are contacted and requested to submit their risk assessments, emergency contingency plans etc for consideration and approval prior to the proposed event. The Safety Advisory Group then advises the Club’s management team on any additional safety precautions that need to be put into place (additional stewards etc;) and the maximum number of persons who may be admitted into the stadium or ground.
8. If the Safety Advisory Group were concerned that the Club’s management were not going to follow their advice, then the Licensing Service Manager would, on behalf of the Council, be requested to serve a ‘Prohibition Notice’ accordingly.
9. The procedures and inspections detailed in this report and as set out in Appendix A are considered as reasonable and correct in discharging the Council’s responsibilities under the afore-mentioned legislation. These procedures and inspections were implemented in 2009.
10. The Cabinet Member for Environment can decide whether to maintain these procedures and inspections in 2010. Alternatively, the level of inspections can be increased, or decreased.

Conclusion

The Cabinet Member for Environment will be advised that the regular inspections, reviews and reporting procedures (as detailed in Appendix A) would appear to comply with the recommendations and guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Financial Implications

The recommendation to approve the report and action taken has no direct financial implications beyond the existing budget allocations.

CORPORATE CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Corporate Finance

A corporate finance officer has reviewed the report and is satisfied that the content and recommendation has no direct financial implications on the service concerned or for the Council's resources in total, unless Members opt to significantly amend the safety inspection regime away from the status quo.

Legal

Members will note from the contents of the report that the Council is responsible for regulating the safety of sports grounds. There are 2 pieces of legislation which govern this area. Both Acts impose a duty on the Council to carry out periodic inspections of the grounds to ensure that they are complying with the requirements of the legislation.

As indicated in the report, officers are required to advise members of the inspections they carry out. This requirement stems from guidance which was issued following inquiries into the Bradford Stadium fire and the Hillsborough Stadium disaster.

If the Council failed to carry out inspections of the relevant sports grounds it would be in breach of its statutory duties under the 2 pieces of legalisation covering this area.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

The Metropolitan Police Service
The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The London Ambulance Service

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Published

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975
Interim Report on Hillsborough Stadium Disaster
Final Report on Hillsborough Stadium Disaster
The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987
Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds

Home Office Statutory Guidance under Section 26(8) and 34(2) of the
Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987
Home Office Circular 11/1990
Guidance on Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 published by
The Department Culture Media and Sport– November 1995
The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (5th edition issued by the Department of Culture Media
and Sport)

Not published

The annual committee reports on this subject to the relevant committees from June 1987.

APPENDIX A

Standard Procedures Currently In Place Under The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and The Fire Safety And Safety Of Places Of Sports Act 1987

1. The following enclosed sports grounds are inspected once a year and recommendations are made to the management of each club on measures that they should implement to improve safety. Brief details of each club are set out in Appendix B
 - a) AFC Hayes (formally know as Brook House) Football Club
 - b) Gaelic Athletic Association sports ground
 - c) Harefield Football Club
 - d) Hayes and Yeading Football Club
 - e) Hillingdon Athletics Stadium
 - f) Hillingdon Borough Football Club
 - g) Northwood Football Club
 - h) Uxbridge Football Club
 - i) Wealdstone (formally Ruislip Manor) Football Club
 - j) Yeading Football Club (now used as Hayes and Yeading Reserves ground)
2. The spectator stand detailed below, which is subject to Safety Certificate, is inspected once a year and the terms and conditions of the Safety Certificate are reviewed to ensure that they are still appropriate.
 - i) The North Stand at Hayes and Yeading Football Club
3. Whenever it becomes known that a larger than average number of spectator (normally over 1,000) may be attracted to a special game/event, then the Licensing Service Manager contacts the SAG representatives from the Fire Brigade, the Metropolitan Police Service and the Ambulance Service to seek their requirements. The SAG's requirements/recommendations are then communicated to the club's management committee. If necessary, enforcement action is instigated to ensure the safety of the spectators who may be attracted to that particular game/event.
4. Whenever possible, an officer from the Licensing Service attends the special game/event to ensure that the Safety Advisory Group's requirements/recommendations are being implemented.
5. When considered necessary, an officer from the Licensing Service inspects any temporary spectator stand, or marquee etc; which may be erected in connection with special sporting events, to ensure that it is safe and will not put the public at risk.

Reporting Procedures

- a) The Council's Licensing Services Manager is responsible for ensuring the matters detailed above are implemented and reports directly to the Deputy Director of Environment and Consumer Protection.

- b) An annual report is prepared by the Licensing Service Manager and it is then submitted to the Deputy Director of Environment and Consumer Protection.
- d) Once approved by the Deputy Director of Environment and Consumer Protection, this report is submitted to the Policy Overview Committee.
- e) Following scrutiny by the Policy Overview Committee the report is passed to the Member with the Portfolio for Environment for formal approval on behalf of the Council.

APPENDIX B

Guidance in regard to the safety of spectators at sports grounds is detailed in the publication **Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds**. This publication has 20 chapters and contains 223 pages of very detailed specific safety requirements, consequently the following is just a very brief resume of each ground. If required full detailed information on each ground can be obtained from the Licensing Service.

AFC Hayes (formally known as Brookhouse) Football Ground

This ground is not suitable for large numbers of spectators in that it does not have:-

- a) An emergency lighting system.
- b) A public address system with a secondary source of power.
- c) A suitable alternative means of escape route
- d) Crush barriers.

Gaelic Athletic Association's Sports Ground

This ground does not have:-

- a) An emergency lighting system.
- b) A public address system.
- c) A suitable purpose made alternative means of escape route.
- d) Crush barriers.

In addition to its normal weekly games the ground is usually used once a year for a "special" game between two professional Gaelic Football Clubs. Such games normally attract approximately 3000 to 4000 spectators. Prior to this "special" match, the club notifies the Licensing Service's Manager who then consults members of the Safety Advisory Group.

Following consideration of the club's safety proposals by the SAG, the Licensing Service's Manager notifies the club of any additional safety measures that may be required in order to safe guard the large numbers of spectators that are to be accommodated within the ground.

At the Special Match in May 2009, a Licensing Officer was in attendance to monitor the number of spectators present and to check that specific safety requirements from the SAG were implemented by the club.

Harefield Football Club

This ground could accommodate about 1000 spectators however additional safety measures should be implemented in the event of a game that would attract that number of people.

- a) The public address system is not to the required standard.
- b) The installed emergency lighting system is limited and does not cover all the public areas
- c) Crush barriers have not been installed.

Hayes and Yeading Football Club

This ground can accommodate 4000 spectators, however if the proposed number of spectators were to exceed 4000 then additional safety measures would have to be implemented.

The covered spectator stand located on the north side of the ground is a *Regulated Stand* and is therefore subject to a *Safety Certificate*.

Some crush barriers have been installed on the North side of the ground.

The side and rear barriers to some of the spectator standing areas do not comply with the safety standards required.

The emergency lighting system does not cover the whole stadium.

Hillingdon Athletics Stadium

The stadium's public address system does not have a secondary source of power.

The stadium does not have a designated alternative means of escape route for spectators.

Hillingdon Borough Football Club

Exit A and Exit B are located immediately adjacent to the main social club-house building and consequently a fire or suspect package would effectively take out those two exit routes.

Exit C is remote from the social club-house, however this alternative means of escape pathway is routed up to and adjacent to the social club-house.

The installed public address system does not have a secondary source of power.

The ground has not been provided with crush barriers.

Northwood Football Club

This ground is not suitable for large numbers of spectators in that it does not have:-

- a) An emergency lighting system.
- b) A public address system with a secondary source of power.
- c) The main entrance/exit to the ground, and the alternative means of escape from the grounds are not clearly identified..
- d) Crush barriers have not been installed.

Occasionally this ground is used for a "special" game that attracts many more spectators than the normal league games, for example, Northwood sometimes play a pre-season friendly match against a Championship side and such games attract large numbers of spectators. On being notified that such a match is to be played, the Licensing Service Manager will contact the other

members of the Safety Advisory Group in regard to what additional safety measures should be implemented and then those requirements are passed onto the club's management committee.

Wealdstone (formally Ruislip Manor) Football Club

This ground is not suitable for large numbers of spectators in that it does not have:-

- a) An emergency lighting system
- b) A public address system with a secondary source of power.
- c) Crush barriers have not been installed.

In addition the changing rooms, the refreshment hut and all the outbuildings are constructed from wood. These buildings are surrounded by vegetation and if the leaves, litter, twigs etc, are not removed on a regular basis then there is a significant fire risk.

A number of pre-season friendly matches have been played at the ground this year, namely Watford F.C and Leeds United F.C. In accordance with the agreed procedure with the club's management committee, the Licensing Service's Manager was notified he consulted the SAG representatives to obtain their requirements/recommendations. The Licensing Service's Manager then conveyed the SAG's requirements/recommendations to the club officials and they were implemented accordingly.

A Licensing Officer attended the large match between Wealdstone F.C and Leeds United F.C ensure that the SAG's requirements were implemented and also to monitor the number of spectators within the ground.

Uxbridge Football Club

This ground is not suitable for large numbers of spectators as it does not have:-

- a) A comprehensive emergency lighting system
- b) The public address system does not have a secondary source of supply.
- c) Crush barriers have not been installed.

Yeading Football Club (now used as Hayes and Yeading Reserves ground)

This ground is not suitable for large numbers of spectators in that it does not have:-

- a) A comprehensive emergency lighting system.
- b) The public address system does not have a secondary source of supply.
- c) Crush barriers have not been installed.

Notes:-

The safe accommodation of spectators depends on all the factors, set out in the **Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds** document. Particular consideration must be to be given to each individual ground's infrastructure such as the pitch perimeter fence, the structural stability of walls and fences, the disposition and size of exits and the experience, competency and training of the management team and stewards.

All the above clubs are advised to consult with the Licensing Service's Manager Norman Stanley before they stage any match that will attract more than the normal match day numbers.