

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

4 April 2023

Report from the Director – Environment, Transport and Planning

Safety at Sports Advisory Group – Policies & Procedures and Terms of Reference

Summary

1. This report seeks members' approval for the revised Policies and Procedures, and Terms of Reference for the Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is asked to:
 - Approve option 1 approve the Policies and Procedures, and Terms of Reference.

Reason: To assist the council in its statutory duty under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (as amended) and Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.

Background

3. Safety at sports legislation was introduced, and has been amended, following major disasters such as:
 - Ibrox Stadium (Glasgow) 1971 – 66 Rangers fans were killed and over 200 injured in a crush during the last minutes of the match.
 - Valley Parade (Bradford) 1985 – 56 fans were killed and over 265 injured when a blaze engulfed the main stand.
 - Hillsborough Stadium (Sheffield) 1989 – 96 Liverpool fans killed and over 750 injured in a crush at the start of the match. This is the worst disasters in British sporting history.
4. In the final Report of the inquiry into the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster, Lord Justice Taylor, recommended that each local

authority set up an advisory group, more generally known as Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

5. The purpose of the SAG is to assist the local authority in exercising its statutory functions under the:
 - Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (1975 Act)
 - Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987
 - Safety of Sports Grounds Regulations 1987
6. To achieve this the SAG will consist of appropriate members of its own staff, and representatives of the police, fire, ambulance and building authorities.
7. This function sits with City of York Council as it is a unitary authority. The council formed its SAG in 1996, when it became a unitary authority, as this is a regulatory function the council has delegated its powers under the above legislation to the Corporate Director of Place. Licensing officers take the lead roles on SAG matters.
8. The role of the SAG is to consider and review safety certificates for designated sports grounds and regulated stands.
9. There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to set policies and procedures, and terms of reference for their SAG. It is however a best practice recommendation from the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, who audit local authorities in relation to how they exercise their statutory functions. The proposed Policies and Procedures can be found at Annex 1 and Terms of Reference at Annex 2.

Consultation

10. A consultation on the Policies and Procedures and Terms of Reference took place between the 6 September to 1 November 2022, the following organisation and people were consulted:
 - North Yorkshire Police
 - North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Yorkshire Ambulance Service
 - Sports Grounds Safety Authority
 - Highways Authority
 - Safety Certificate Holders
 - City of York Council Chief Operating Officer
 - City of York Council Corporate Director of Place

- City of York Council Assistant Director Environment, Transport & Planning
- City of York Council Assistant Director Customer Services & Digital
- City of York Council Head of Legal
- Other relevant council officers

11. Two responses were received to the consultation. Both responses requested the removal of LNER when referring to the Community Stadium.

Options

12. Option 1 – Approve the Policies and Procedures, and Terms of Reference.
13. Option 2 – Approve the Policies and Procedures, and Terms of Reference with alternative wording agreed by members.
14. Option 3 - Take no further action.

Analysis

15. Under the provisions of section 1 of the 1975 Act the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport may designate as requiring a safety certificate any sports ground that has accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators, or 5,000 in the case of Premier League and Football League grounds in England and Wales. These sports grounds are referred to as designated grounds. Under the 1975 Act, the council is responsible for issuing a safety certificate in respect of sports grounds designated by the Secretary of State.
16. The Safety of Sports Grounds (Designation) Order 2015 sets out those grounds which are designated grounds.
17. The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 (s26 Part III) states that a safety certificate is required for a regulated stand which is defined as any covered stand at a sports ground with accommodation for 500 or more spectators, whether seated or standing.
18. A sports ground is defined by Section 17 of the 1975 Act as a place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air, where accommodation has been provided for spectators,

consisting of artificial structures or natural structures artificially modified for the purpose.

18. The council currently issues safety certificates in respect of:
- York Racecourse (Horse Racing) – regulated stands
 - York Community Stadium (Association Football and Rugby League) – regulated stands
19. The SAG meets approximately three times a year. Additional meetings are held as and when required.

Council Plan

20. The provision of regulated sports grounds supports the council plan of safe communities and culture for all.

Implications

21. The implications arising from this report are:
- **Financial:** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.
 - **Human Resources:** There are no Human Resources implications associated with this report.
 - **Equalities:** There are no equalities implications associated with this report.
 - **Legal:** There are no statutory requirement for a Safety Advisory Group to set Policies and Procedures, and Terms of Reference for a Safety Advisory Group, however it is considered best practice in accordance with the recommendations of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority.
 - **Crime and Disorder:** There are no prevention of crime and disorder implications associated with this report.
 - **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications associated with this report.
 - **Other:** There are no other implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

22. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Contact Details

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Director (Environment, Transport and Planning)

**Report
Approved**



Date 8 March 2023

Specialist Officer Implications: none

Wards Affected:

All

Background Papers:

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975

Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987

Safety of Sports Grounds Regulations 1987

Annexes

Annex 1 – Policies and Procedures

Annex 2 – Terms of Reference