

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham COMMUNITY SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND RESIDENTS SERVICES POLICY & ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE 16 November 2016		 hammersmith & fulham
Safety at Sports Grounds Report		
Report of the Director for Environmental Health		
Open Report		
Classification - For Policy and Accountability Review and Comment		
Key Decision: No		
Wards Affected: Parsons Green & Walham Palace Riverside Shepherds Bush Green		
Accountable Director: Nicholas Austin		
Report Author: Ann Ramage Bi-borough Head of Environmental Health (Commercial)	Contact Details: Tel: 020 7341 5612 E-mail: Ann.Ramage@rbkc.gov.uk	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Borough is home to three high profile football clubs; Chelsea FC, Fulham FC and Queens Park Rangers. The Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975, is the primary legislation that directs the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory functions. The Local Authority;
1. Issues and enforces a Safety Certificate
 2. Holds Safety Advisory Group meetings
 3. Carries out match day monitoring and
 4. Carries out an annual inspect
- 1.2 The management of the football clubs is resource intensive; however, safety issues are managed within the legislative framework using the expertise of our existing workforce.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The committee are requested to note the report and make recommendations concerning the safety management arrangements relating to the football clubs.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Over the years, legislation has been introduced in the UK to maintain public safety at various sporting events. The Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975 introduced a system of safety certification of sports grounds by local authorities.
- 3.2 All three of the Borough's football clubs require safety certification under this Act. The aim of a safety certificate is to set the safe capacity of a designated ground and set out the terms and conditions that the certificate holder must comply with at that permitted capacity.
- 3.3 Following the final report of the inquiry into the Hillsborough Stadium disaster, Lord Justice Taylor recommended that each local authority set up a Safety Advisory Group (SAG). The purpose of this SAG was to provide specialist advice and it was a means in which local authorities could discharge their functions under the Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.
- 3.4 Local authorities are required to carry out regular inspections to determine the safe capacity of each football ground, and prescribe and enforce such terms and conditions as it considers necessary or expedient to secure the reasonable safety of spectators.
- 3.5 Each club will appoint a safety officer who will be responsible for the safety of the spectators. A process of risk assessment is used to identify the conditions which are reasonably necessary to secure the safety of spectators and they are recorded in an Operations Manual for inclusion as a schedule to the Safety Certificate. These include plans for crowd management, stewarding, medical, contingency arrangements, traffic plans and fire safety etc.

4. STADIUM CAPACITY

- 4.1 The Safety Certificate states the permitted number of spectators in each stand in the stadium. There has to be a Safety Officer and a Deputy Safety Officer at every fixture and they will be qualified to a specific standard to deal with these events. Should there be no Safety Officer on a match day the stadium capacity will be made zero and this will prevent spectators entering. The term 'playing behind closed doors' is where there are no permitted spectators just Club personnel.
- 4.2 The capacity is determined using two elements known as the 'P' and 'S' factors. The 'P' (physical condition) factor is calculated by examining the physical layout and structure of the stadium and takes into account access

and egress, emergency exits, seating and spectator flow rates. The 'S' (safety management) factor is determined by the safety management arrangements that are in place and will cover things such as stewarding plans, medical arrangements and competency of the Safety Management Team.

- 4.3 The permitted number of spectators may be varied depending upon circumstances, such as crowd segregation, structural alterations, camera positions, outside broadcast vehicle locations or event specific requirements.
- 4.4 The Metropolitan Police have a system that gives each fixture a risk rating of A (low), B (medium), and C (high). The Police determine this according to the level of anticipated potential tension between away and home fans. Category C matches will generally require additional Police resources and more pre match briefings.
- 4.5 From time to time a Club may apply to seek a variation to its Safety Certificate, this may be following alterations at the ground for example. Where the Council grants a new Safety Certificate it is required to advertise these changes in a local newspaper.
- 4.6 The current permitted spectator capacities are detailed below for each club.

Football Club	current permitted capacity	Address	Ward
Chelsea FC	41,889	Stamford Bridge, Fulham Road, London, SW6 1HS	Parsons Green & Walham
Fulham FC	25,700	Stevenage Road, London, SW6 6HH	Palace Riverside
Queens Park Rangers	18,238	South Africa Road, London, W12 7PJ	Shepherds Bush Green

5.0 SAFETY ADVISORY MEETINGS

- 5.1 The SAG for each football club must be chaired by a senior council officer and is currently chaired by the Head of Environmental Health (Commercial). Meetings are held twice a year (January and July) and the minutes are published on the Council's website. There is provision for an Emergency SAG to be called at any time where the circumstances merit this and any of the SAG members can request this of the Chairman.
- 5.2 Membership of the SAG will include; the club lead officer from Commercial Services, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), Club Safety Officers, Highways, London Fire Brigade and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA), London Ambulance Services / St John Ambulance, British Transport Police (BTP), Parks Constabulary (Fulham) and Building Control.

5.3 Agenda items are wide ranging and issues relating to the sale of alcohol, persistent standing, match day transport, and traffic management arrangements can be discussed.

6.0 SPORTS GROUNDS SAFETY AUTHORITY (SGSA)

6.1 The SGSA's role is to oversee how local authorities discharge their responsibilities under the 1975 and 1987 Acts. Inspectors from the SGSA are not formal SAG members however they are invited to SAG meetings for their input. The SGSA from time to time will audit the local authority and examine match day inspection reports and any follow-up completed by the Council's Lead Officer.

7.0 COSTS TO THE AUTHORITY OF CERTIFYING GROUNDS

7.1 A lead officer and a deputy lead officer from Commercial Services are appointed and act as a point of contact for each club. The lead officer carries out a minimum of seven 'during performance inspections' during each season. This may increase depending on the Club's success within Europe or the domestic cups and also whether there is intelligence from the MPS which indicates that the visiting fans may be problematic. In addition, focussed inspections looking at specific issues such as the sale of alcohol or tube queue management will be carried out as required.

7.2 Safety management of football grounds is a statutory function and cost recovery is very limited. The authority will charge to recover its costs when applications are received from the Club to amend their Safety Certificate but in respect of all other enforcement actions there is no recovery of costs. Any charge made is based on hourly rates for the officer time spent on dealing with the application.

8.0 HILLSBOROUGH INQUESTS

8.1 In April 2016 the jurors of the Hillsborough Inquest who examined the deaths of 96 Liverpool fans who died in a crush on 15th April 1989 at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough Stadium at the FA Cup semi-final, returned a verdict of unlawful killing of all victims. The jury found that the fans did not contribute to the danger which unfolded at the turnstiles at Leppings Lane. This decision followed a 27-year campaign by the victims' families for justice into one of the country's worst sporting disasters.

8.2 The jury found that the Police match commander was 'responsible for manslaughter by gross negligence' for a breach of his duty of care.

The jury also concluded;

- Police errors caused a dangerous situation at the turnstiles
- Failures by the commanding officers caused a crush on the terraces

- There were mistakes in the police control room over the order to open the Lepping Lane end exit gates
- There were defects at the stadium which contributed to the disaster, including crowd capacity calculations, inadequacies in turnstile provision and signage / ticketing
- There was an error in the safety certification of the Hillsborough stadium
- There were delays in declaring a major incident by the emergency services
- There were delays in responding to the incident
- Club officials should have requested a delay in the kick off.

The Hillsborough disaster resulted in major changes to the country's football stadiums and safety management arrangements. This work continues and the findings of this Inquest continues to have significant ramifications on the responsibilities of local authorities in their safety certification role and the importance of close collaborative working with the clubs, police, emergency services and other key stake holders to ensure the maintenance of safety and security. We continue to try to learn from the lessons of the past, examining and challenging what we do so as to prevent any disasters happening in the future.

9.0 HEADLINES FROM LAST SEASON 2015/2016

- 9.1 **Paris attacks:** In consultation with the Police all three clubs in the Borough reviewed their existing safety and security arrangements following the terrorist attacks in Paris and in particular learning from the attempted attack made on the Stade de France.
- 9.2 **High Risk Fixtures:** there were several high risk category matches last season that required considerable Police presence to deter and deal with crime and disorder. The clubs ensured their own safety management arrangements in place were enhanced to enable the fixtures to take place safely and securely. The planning process between the Counter Terrorism branch, the authority, Police and clubs is always detailed but has been increased further when there is a higher risk fixture.
- 9.3 **Fixture scheduling:** The Borough is unique in having three football clubs in its boundary. On occasions more than one match is scheduled to take place on the Borough at one time and this can cause serious resourcing problems to the clubs, and to the Police. The impact on the Borough's own resources, road network, public transport and it's residents is also a major consideration. The Authority continues to work hard with the clubs and football authorities on fixture scheduling particularly with cup competitions to ensure that any potential fixture clashes that will have a serious impact are avoided. The Chairman of the SAG has led on this issue across London engaging with all of the football authorities to raise the importance of the issue. The Borough has also been successful in persuading the football authorities to move fixtures.
- 9.4 **Pyrotechnic devices:** The indiscriminate use of flares, smoke bombs and other pyrotechnic devices inside and outside of sports stadiums continued to

pose a serious safety and fire risk. In an attempt to combat this problem, the clubs remained vigilant with strict pre-entry searching regimes and surveillance to assist in bringing any offenders who discharge such dangerous devices inside stadiums to justice.

10.0 FOCUSED AREAS OF WORK

- 10.1 **Traffic Management Orders (TMO):** Since the Police withdrawal from the management of road closures on match days, the three clubs have had to take on additional and important responsibilities in this area. A road closure on match days facilitates the safe passage to and from the stadiums by spectators and ensures that the emergency services can respond quickly should an incident arise. The proper management of the road closures by the clubs is of key importance to the safe capacity of the stadiums and is monitored closely by the authority during its inspections.
- 10.2 **Chelsea FC:** Following a full security review, changes to the operation of the TMO resulted in the Fulham Road being closed for the duration of the match, previously it had re-opened during the first half of the fixture to local traffic. The purpose of this closure is to keep the Fulham Road as sterile as possible during the event.
- 10.3 **Tube Queue Management:** For many years the control of crowds on the highway and outside of train stations has been managed by the Police. This was deemed as not being a part of the Police's core role and responsibilities, which are to maintain law and order and to prevent crime. The SAG facilitated discussions between the MPS, football clubs and other key stakeholders with the aim to ensure that any withdrawal was managed in a planned and co-ordinated manner to ensure public safety was not compromised. The most significant impact on this policy change was with Fulham Broadway Tube Station and with the ultimate transfer of responsibilities from the Police to Chelsea FC over several seasons.
- 10.4 **Football Supporter Trusts** The authority has carried out some positive engagement work with both home and away recognised supporter trusts. This has focussed on ensuring that the views of fans are sought and it has paved the way in ensuring that the supporters have a voice into the work of the SAG. We have also set up meetings with supporter groups prior to tense derby fixtures so as to engage with the travelling away supporters and make them feel as welcome as possible.
- 10.5 **Other key focussed areas of work** have included a review of stewarding arrangements at the clubs, concourse safety management and persistent standing in seated areas.

11.0 COLLABORATIVE WORK

- 11.1 An essential component of this work is maintaining close collaboration with a large number of partners/stakeholders in relation to the match day safety arrangements.

- 11.2 **Metropolitan Police (MPS)** Close liaison occurs between the local authority and the MPS on a match by match basis to facilitate joined up planning to ensure a safe event takes place and all foreseeable risks are mitigated.
- 11.3 **Streetscene / Street Cleansing** Are required to carry out pre-match safety inspections of the streets around the football stadiums to ensure that any builder skips or refuse fly-tips are removed. This is important work to ensure footpaths and roads are not obstructed or cause safety risks to pedestrians. Likewise, materials which may be used as missiles or weapons in the event of disorder must be removed.
- 11.4 **Highways** They are responsible for the administration and review of the match day road closures and for ensuring the co-ordination of road engineering works so that it does not adversely impact match day safety arrangements.
- 11.5 **Parks Police Service** The importance of Bishop's Park on Fulham match days cannot be understated as it provides an important route to and from Craven Cottage of football supporters. The role and responsibility of the Parks Police to ensure the safety and security of park users and football supporters requires additional resources to ensure the impact on the park and its users are not adversely affected on match days. The Parks Police is a key member of the Fulham FC Safety Advisory Group.
- 11.6 **RBKC LBHF** have been working with colleagues in The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to ensure match days are safe for all supporters visiting Stamford Bridge. This includes Street Scene Enforcement and checking the highways around Fulham Road for fly tipped material, skips and illegal street trading. A national newspaper reported an offensive T shirt that was being sold by traders. Both boroughs worked together to identify the trader, who was in Kensington and Chelsea, and prevent any further items being sold.
- 11.7 **Licensing** As Fulham is experiencing a period of re-development, the number of traditional home supporter pubs has decreased especially along the North End Road and Lillie Road. This has meant that more Chelsea supporters are using Earls Court pubs pre-match. Traditionally this is the area where the Away supporters are encouraged to go and so the area is increasingly busy on match days. This area is also seeing an increase in street drinking where Away supporters purchase alcoholic drinks from local off-license premises and supporters are drinking on the streets around Earls Court Station.
- 11.8 Fulham licensed premises including off licenses around the ground have match day conditions which are all monitored. Kensington and Chelsea licensing officers have been carrying out extra match day inspections around Earls Court monitoring the situation. It is advantageous that supporters arrive at the ground in good time before kick-off as where they all arrive late and in high numbers it causes hold ups and delays the supporters' access to the

stadium. These delays can have the effect of causing poor behaviour of the spectators.

11.9 **Trading Standards** They will carry out match day inspections of existing licensed street traders to ensure compliance with trade descriptions and trade mark legislation and they will where necessary identify and seize counterfeit goods and tackle any illegal street trading.

11.10 The recent **Saudi Super Cup** fixture held at Craven Cottage, realised the importance of collaborative work particularly required between the Council departments. There were a number of lessons learnt from this fixture owing to an adverse impact caused to local residents with higher than normal level of waste generated by the lively supporters and traffic management issues encountered on the day.

12.0 THE FUTURE

12.1 **Stamford Bridge redevelopment**

The planning application has been out for re-consultation and we have commented from a Sports Ground Safety view point to our Planning colleagues. This application is for a 60,000 seated football stadium which Commercial Services will issue a Safety Certificate to admit spectators.

12.2 **Craven Cottage redevelopment**

Planning permission was given to Fulham FC several years ago for the redevelopment of the Riverside Stand which on completion would have increased the capacity of the stadium to 30,000. To date the works have not commenced and the plans are currently being reviewed by the Club to ensure that they meet the long term aspirations for Craven Cottage.

12.3 **Queens Park Rangers**

The creation of a new stadium as part of the Old Oak Common redevelopment remains a longer term ambition for QPR.

13.0 CONCLUSION

13.1 These events bring vibrancy and economic benefit to the Borough. However, we continue to challenge the clubs and all partners to operate in a way that respects the residents who live in the proximity of these stadiums and the fans who travel through the Borough to visit the stadiums.