

**ITEM No ...9.....**

**REPORT TO:** CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 26 OCTOBER 2020

**REPORT ON:** THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOOTBALL REVIEW WORKING GROUP (COSLA) INTO SPORTS GROUND SAFETY IN SCOTLAND

**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

**REPORT NO:** 175-2020

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report updates the Committee on work undertaken by COSLA to consider how best to support local authorities over their responsibilities for designated sports grounds and seeks approval to establish a dedicated Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to oversee sports ground safety in Dundee.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a notes the contents of this report; and
- b agrees to the establishment of a dedicated Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to cover safety at sports grounds in the city.

**3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

**4 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 was introduced following a public inquiry into the disaster at the Ibrox Stadium in Glasgow in January 1971. The Act requires that local authorities issue a Safety Certificate in respect of designated sports grounds, identified as places where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air. There are two designated sports grounds in Dundee, Dens Park and Tannadice Park.

4.2 The legislation does not apply to indoor arenas such as Dundee Ice Arena, the Regional Performance Centre or Dundee International Sports Centre.

4.3 The primary responsibility for safety at a sports ground lies at all times with the ground management. Under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, the local authority is responsible for enforcing the conditions of a Safety Certificate in respect of designated sports grounds.

4.4 The Safety Certificate sets the maximum number of people that may be accommodated in the ground as a whole and for each separate area. The management of the sports ground are responsible for calculating the safe capacity.

4.5 An Independent Review of Football Policing in Scotland identified inconsistencies in approaches to stadium safety certificate procedures across Scottish local authorities. As a result, a Local Government Football Review Working Group was established bringing together stakeholders to gather information and agree short, medium and long-term objectives. The Working Group is chaired by COSLA.

- 4.6 The Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) is the UK Government's advisor on sports grounds and a world leader in safety. The Group is funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and has a regulatory role to issue licences to the 90 Premier League and English Football League grounds along with Wembley and the Principality Stadium. Although the SGSA has no regulatory role in Scotland, it is recognised as a leading global authority on stadium safety and supports Scottish local authorities and their partners in an advisory capacity.
- 4.7 The Scottish Government and COSLA intend to fund a programme of SGSA support for all local authorities, including a visit to each authority to discuss next steps.
- 4.8 At present, Dundee City Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Council have a joint Tayside Sports Ground Safety Team (TSGST) that operates as the SAG across the region. This multi-authority arrangement is unique in Scotland. The TSGST is currently made up of officers from each Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.9 Based on the considerations of the COSLA led Working Group, the current multi-authority approach is no longer considered appropriate. It is therefore proposed that a dedicated SAG is set up to consider sports ground safety issues in Dundee City alone.
- 4.10 In accordance with the advice of the SGSA, the SAG would be properly constituted and have written terms of reference and have effective policies and procedures. The SAG should be chaired by an appropriate Senior Officer from the City Council.
- 4.11 The COSLA led Working Group noted that Glasgow City Council had received assistance from the SGSA in preparing the Terms of Reference and Policy documents for its SAG. In order to ensure consistency of approach across Scotland, the COSLA led Working Group suggests that these documents should be used as a basis by other SAGs.
- 4.12 The core members of the proposed SAG will include the Local Authority, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Scottish Ambulance Service. Other stakeholders, the sports club's safety officers and license holders, voluntary services, supporters' groups and others will be invited to attend as appropriate.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

## **6 CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

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