

Report

Report to:	Finance and Corporate Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 November 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Safety at Sports Grounds – Re-issue of General Safety Certificate for the Foy's Stadium
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) because of the timescales involved, to re-issue the reviewed General Safety Certificate for the North and West Stands, Hamilton Academical Football Club, Foy's Stadium, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to re-issue the General Safety Certificate for the North and West Stands, Hamilton Academical Football Club, Foy's Stadium, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. In terms of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987, a General Safety Certificate is required for a stand at a sports ground which can accommodate at least 500 spectators under cover to view the activities at the ground. A stand which falls within this classification is referred to as a "regulated stand". The Foy's Stadium (formerly known as New Douglas Park) had previously been identified as sports grounds with regulated stands.
- 3.2. The revised format of the General Safety Certificates for New Douglas Park was approved by the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee at its meetings on 11 December 2013 and the Certificates required to be reviewed and re-issued annually.

4. COVID-19 Pandemic

- 4.1. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, all fixtures during the 2020/2021 season were played behind closed doors.
- 4.2. The General Safety Certificate was not re-issued, however, the sports ground management and the safety team produced a Match Day Operations Plan for Behind Closed Doors, including risk assessments, which was distributed to representatives of the South Lanarkshire Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group.

- 4.3. A representative of the Council's Fleet and Environmental Services, the Council's lead Service in terms of COVID-19 compliance, reviewed the documentation provided by the Stadium Management/Safety Team and attended a site visit at the Foys Stadium on 29 July 2020. The Technical Officer made an observation regarding the isolation room procedures which were covered in the Operations Plan. Advice was also provided regarding mitigation procedures in relation to the use of the gym by the away team coaches and this had also been reflected in the Operations Plan. The Technical Officer had also enquired as to what the Club's procedures were in relation to positive COVID-19 tests and the Deputy Safety Officer had undertaken to update the risk assessment.
- 4.4. On the basis of the feedback received from the Safety Advisory Group representatives and the outcome of the site visit, the Council had confirmed in writing that it was satisfied with the arrangements and that suitable and appropriate measures, in terms of COVID-19 compliance, were in place to ensure the reasonable safety of persons attending the Foys Stadium for fixtures behind closed doors.

5. Re-issue of the General Safety Certificate

- 5.1. At the annual safety inspection which took place on 11 August 2021, the North and West Stands at the Foys Stadium were found to be well maintained and the Council's Planning and Building Standards Service was satisfied as to the condition of the primary structural elements of both the North and West Stands.
- 5.2. All of the relevant inspection certificates and test records were available for inspection with the exception of the turnstiles and PA system, copies of which have since been provided to the Council.
- 5.3. The certificate for the engineer's structural inspection had not identified any apparent structural defects. A number of observations had been made on minor defects and the Stadium Manager has since advised that all of the recommended actions have been completed.
- 5.4. A small number of actions and housekeeping issues had been identified during the inspection, the majority of which the Stadium Manager had advised were completed or were being progressed. The Council would continue to liaise with the Stadium Manager to ensure that all items were completed.
- 5.5. No match day inspection was carried out last season due to all matches being played behind closed doors.
- 5.6. Ground management and the South Lanarkshire Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group have reviewed the General Safety Certificate and the safety management arrangements at the Foys Stadium and the following changes have been made to the Certificate:-
- ◆ separate Certificates had previously been issued for the North and West Stands and both Stands were now covered by the same General Safety Certificate
 - ◆ the geographical extent of the terms and conditions of the Certificate were now included
 - ◆ the Certificate now specified a period of 2½ hours immediately prior to the commencement of the specified activity and 1 hour immediately following completion of the specified activity when the Holder should ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Certificate

- ◆ the capacity of the West Stand, as specified in Appendix 2 of the General Safety Certificate, had been increased from 3,264 to 3,288 to include the provision for 24 disabled spectators within the seating deck area
- ◆ the operational manual has been reviewed and updated and now includes Zone Ex and COVID-19 arrangements

5.7. The Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, approved the reviewed General Safety Certificate for the North and West Stands at the Foy's Stadium to allow it to be issued with immediate effect.

6. Employee Implications

6.1. None.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The Council is authorised by regulations to charge fees for work reasonably done as a result of an application for the issue, amendment, replacement, transfer or cancellation of a safety certificate.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

8.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications arising from the information presented in this report.

9. Other Implications

9.1. There is a risk to the Council as the body responsible for administering safety certificates for sports grounds that any incident involving public safety where proper guidelines have not been followed could damage the Council's reputation. This risk is mitigated by the requirements and conditions contained within the General Safety Certificates on ground management to implement measures within the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Sixth edition) to ensure the reasonable safety of persons attending the sports ground.

9.2. In addition to this, annual inspections and annual event inspections will be carried out at the Foy's Stadium which include checks of safety procedures, physical inspections of the Stands and checks of inspection and test certificates of various installations and equipment.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

10.2. Consultation has taken place with ground management at the Foy's Stadium and the South Lanarkshire Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Group which comprises of representatives of the following:-

- ◆ relevant services within South Lanarkshire Council
- ◆ NHS Lanarkshire
- ◆ Police Scotland
- ◆ Scottish Ambulance Service
- ◆ Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

19 October 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable

Previous References

- ◆ Finance and Corporate Resources Committee – 7 August 2019

List of Background Papers

- ◆ General Safety Certificate for Regulated Stands – North and West Stands, Foy's Stadium, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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