

Report to:	Licensing and Regulatory (Urgent Referrals) Committee	Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 30 November 2022
Subject:	Re-issuing of Southport FC's General Safety Certificates		
Report of:	Chief Planning Officer	Wards Affected:	Kew;
Portfolio:	Planning & Building Control		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

Request for the General Safety Certificates for two regulated viewing grandstands at Southport FC's Haig Avenue stadium to be re-issued to include a new holder, new Safety Officer and a requirement for the Club to maintain a Safety Policy

Recommendation:

- (1) That Members agree to re-issue the General Safety Certificate's for the Main Grandstand and for the Jack Carr Stand at Southport FC's Haig Avenue stadium.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To ensure that Southport Football Club has a valid Safety Certificate for each of its two 'regulated' grandstands and that both the Club and the Council comply with the requirements of the Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Any costs associated with reissuing the safety certificates will be met from existing budgets.

(B) Capital Costs - Nil

There are no direct capital costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Any costs associated with reissuing the safety certificates will be met from existing budgets.	
Legal Implications:	
None	
Equality Implications:	
There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Y/N
Have a neutral impact	Y/N
Have a negative impact	Y/N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y/N
The subject matter of this report is considered to be neutral in terms of Climate Emergency implications.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Contributes to the continued safety of sports spectators attending Southport FC's football stadium
Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: Not applicable
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable

Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD..7004/22....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD..5204/22...) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Merseyside Police have been consulted over Southport FC's current Board of Directors and have no objection to them being considered fit and proper persons to be holders of the Clubs Safety Certificate.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- (1) Draft General Safety Certificates for the Main Grandstand and the Jack Carr Stand

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Southport FC's stadium in Haig Avenue contains two 'regulated' grandstands, namely the Main Grandstand and the Jack Carr Stand. Grandstands are deemed 'regulated' if they are capable of holding more than 500 spectators. In accordance with the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 and the Fire Safety and Safety of Places Sports Act 1987 the Club has previously been granted a Safety Certificate for each of those stands.

- 1.2** Once issued, Safety Certificates remain valid until such time as there is a material, physical alteration to the fabric of the stand, or there is an amendment to the holder of the Certificate. In such circumstance, Safety Certificates have to be re-issued in order to reflect the change in circumstance.
- 1.3** Southport FC have confirmed that the previous holder of the General Safety Certificates, Frank Hughes has left the Club. Accordingly, Club officials have indicated that they wish to transfer the Certificates to a new holder. Southport FC have also confirmed that they have appointed Stephen Scott as the Clubs new Safety Officer.

2.0 Current position

- 2.1** In accordance with Section 29(5) of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987, Club officials have formally requested that the Safety Certificates at Southport FC are both re-issued to show that the specified holder of the Certificates is the Board of Directors of Southport FC. The Club have also asked that their newly appointed Safety Officer – Stephen Scott, be named within the Safety Certificates.
- 2.2** Officers have sort advice on whether a ‘body corporate’ can be the holder of a Safety Certificate and have consulted with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) over this specific issue. The SGSA are the UK Governments advisers on safety at sports grounds and have a regulatory role in overseeing local authorities fulfilling their role under safety at sports grounds legislation. The SGSA have issued guidance in one of their documents which states that ‘as well as a named person, Safety Certificates can also be held by a ‘body corporate’ - in which case the Board of Directors, or other similar entity, would take responsibility for compliance with the safety certificate and with the management of the sports ground’. The SGSA who have also stated that if a Safety Certificate is issued to a Board of Directors – then it is vitally important that the Clubs own safety policy clarifies who of the Board of Directors has overall responsibility for safety matters.
- 2.3** Accordingly, a requirement has been added to the Safety Certificates for the Club to produce a Safety Policy, stating who of the Directors has overall responsibility for safety.
- 2.4** In accordance with the above-mentioned legislation, Merseyside Police have been consulted in respect of the re-issuing of the Clubs Safety Certificates and they have no objections to the proposed change to the certificate holder.
- 2.5** Both Safety Certificates have been amended (in draft format) for consideration by the Councils Regulatory and Licencing Committee.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1** That Committee agree to reissue the General Safety Certificates for the Main Grandstand and for the Jack Carr Stand at Southport FC’s stadium.

4.0 Future actions

- 4.1** Should Members agree to re-issue the Safety Certificates, Officers will take the necessary steps to issue those certificates and will undertake annual, statutory inspections of both stands, in order to verify that the contents, requirements and conditions contained within the issued Safety Certificates are being met. Those inspections will be carried out jointly with the three emergency services.