

**At a meeting of the SUNDERLAND STADIUM OF LIGHT SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP held in the STADIUM OF LIGHT on WEDNESDAY, 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2012 at 10.30 a.m.**

**Present:-**

**Sunderland City Council:**

K. Scott - Development Manager (in the Chair)  
D. Young - Resilience Officer  
D. Turnbull - Senior Resilience Officer  
R. Dobson - Deputy Manager - Aquatic Centre  
P. Wood - Governance Services Officer

**Sunderland AFC:**

P. Weir - Safety Officer  
P. Weymes - Facilities Manager  
M. Smith - Deputy Safety Officer  
N. Mackay - Deputy Safety Officer  
L. Coley

**Supporters Association:**

S. Simpson

**Northumbria Police:**

D. Pryer - Chief Superintendent  
B. Storey - Chief Inspector  
G. Jones - Sergeant

**Sports Grounds Safety Authority:**

S. Storey - Inspector

**St. John Ambulance:**

A. Trotter

## **North East Ambulance Service:**

P. Stoddart

### **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Sue Storey and Sgt Gary Jones.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Paul Baxter, Mark Hobson, Gary Yates, John Purvis and Joe Hope.

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2012**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 be agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-

Page 5 Paragraph 10 – Sports Ground Safety Authority Issues

Ms Storey advised that she had commented that Sunderland Football Club may wish to develop a disability access audit.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

In relation to an enquiry from the Chairman, Mr Weir advised that the idea to develop fans liaisons among those who were regular rail travellers appeared to be a non starter due to the lack of response received.

In relation to Page 5 – Item 11, Peter Weymes advised that both scoreboards had been removed and it was hoped that the digital screens would be erected and live for the Liverpool game.

#### **4. Standing in Seated Areas – Fixture v Liverpool**

The Chairman advised of the decision of the Local Authority's Regulatory Committee to reduce the Liverpool fans allocation of tickets to 2,400 in accordance with the clubs contingency plan for the match.

#### **5. Match v Newcastle United on 21 October 2012**

Chief Superintendent Dave Pryer advised that he would be heading up the operation and had appointed an experienced match commander. The relocation of the away fans presented some challenges but the Police were working with the club on the contingencies for this. A number of site visits from the Police had been made to familiarise themselves with the new model of the stadium.

Consideration was being given to viability studies on transporting away fans but a lot depended on the transport arrangements from Newcastle Utd. Lessons would be learned from the last derby match when a great deal of public transport was used.

Chief Superintendent Pryer also advised that one element of the partnership which had not gone to plan had been the over ruling of a Northumbria Police objection to the granting of a licence to a pub requesting earlier opening times and expressed concerns that the decision by Committee to permit the extended hours of operation could result in applications by other City Centre establishments to open earlier. He further informed that the Police will be appealing the decision of Committee.

In response to the Chairman's enquiry Mr Weir advised that the same terms and conditions in respect of ticket sales from Newcastle Utd would apply in that only 1 ticket could be purchased per season ticket holder giving tighter control at point of sale.

Mr Weir also advised that there were a number of options on the layout of the North Upper Stand with a possible plan to withhold rows 1-5. There was a possibility that rows 3-5 could be allocated but would only be sold to concessions and Over 65's. This was still to be confirmed.

Chief Superintendent Pryer commented that discussions had taken place and he had no issues with the options Mr Weir had proposed.

The Chairman commented that we would wait and see what plan Mr Weir would come back with and would be guided by the Clubs contingency plan before preparing a report to the Councils Regulatory Committee to effect an amendment to the Clubs General Safety Certificate.

Mr Weir advised that the stadium bars would be kept as they were but the signage for Quinns Bar may be taken down to prevent it from being defaced.

The Chairman commented that he welcomed any measures to keep the away end as neutral as possible. Mr Weir advised that there would be Newcastle orientated videos playing in the away end. Chief Superintendent Pryer agreed that the signage in the away end could be deemed provocative.

Robert Dobson, General Manager of the Aquatic Centre enquired if the heavy duty fencing would be erected for the match. Mr Weir advised that it may be used if considered necessary by Northumbria Police. The Chairman advised that this would not affect public access.

## **6. Relocation of visiting supporters – progress report**

The Chairman commented that due to the Reading game being postponed there was no progress report relating to a Premier League fixture but Mr Weir advised that the Morecombe Capital Cup game had not produced any significant problems.

Chief Superintendent Pryer commented that good work had been performed between the Police and the Club in carrying out the plans in place and the Morecombe game had been ideal to implement scenario tests as opposed to the more difficult Liverpool game which was approaching.

## **7. Update on works to Wheatsheaf gyratory**

The Chairman gave a brief update on the situation in the area.

## **8. Stadium Accident Reporting**

There were no issues to report.

## **9. Sports Grounds Safety Authority Issues**

Sue Storey commented that due to the recent cabinet reshuffle there was a new minister overseeing their work and it would be interesting to see the impact her views would have on the organisation.

Ms Storey advised that the Metropolitan Police were starting a project to look at policing of the London Clubs, a move towards 'back to basics' in terms of levels of policing at matches and how to improve intelligence. These may be issues the rest of the country could be interested in.

Chief Superintendent Pryer advised that the Metropolitan Police have quite a number of clubs in the London area whereas it was his role to provide consistency around the Sunderland and Newcastle clubs but it would be interesting to see the outcomes of the Metropolitan police project.

The Chairman also raised the issue of releasing the Clubs Operation Manual as a public document under the freedom of Information Act and commented that we would have to be mindful of this and a discussion in the future may be required, but a file sharing confidential website, similar to the process used during the music concerts may be the way forward.

## **10. Any Other Business**

A general discussion ensued and The Chairman wished to take the opportunity to thank Mark Hobson for his assistance and wished him every success in his future role.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the Stadium on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 at 10.30 a.m.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) K. SCOTT,  
Chairman.