

SPORTS GROUND ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

ABERDEEN, 2 November 2012. Minute of Meeting of the SPORTS GROUND ADVISORY GROUP MEETING. Present:- Councillor Boulton, Convener; and Councillors Corall, Forsyth, Malik and Malone.

Also in attendance:- Eric Anderson, Arlene Dunbar (Litigation and Licensing), Kevin Coutts and Chay Ewing (GFRS), Keith Henderson and David Patterson (Grampian Police), Gordon Ritchie and Paul Hendry (Aberdeen Football Club), Andrew Gilchrist (Environmental Health), Grant Tierney (Building Standards) and John McCulloch (Scottish Ambulance Service).

INTRODUCTIONS

1. Eric Anderson explained the remit and purpose of the Sports Ground Advisory Group, which was established as a Sub Committee of the Licensing Committee. He further advised that the only sports ground which currently meets the relevant statutory requirements is Pittodrie Stadium.

In previous years, due to the technical nature of the work involved, the Sports Ground Advisory Group had established a working group made up of officers to deal with relevant matters arising and in particular to prepare the safety certificate for renewal each year. It was suggested that Elected Members consider continuing this practice. The minutes of the Working Group would be presented to the Licensing Committee for approval.

The Group resolved:-

to re-establish the Sports Ground Advisory Working Group.

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2. The Group resolved to approve the minute.

SAFETY CERTIFICATE - RENEWAL TIMETABLE

3. Eric Anderson explained the role of the Safety Certificate. The certificate is renewed on an annual basis and a number of inspections are carried out at the stadium during the year. The certificate requires to be in place before the commencement of each new football season.

Gordon Ritchie added that should the Club qualify for European football, UEFA require the certificate in May/early June.

The Group was reminded that Aberdeen Football Club had produced a renewal timetable for the Working Group to follow.

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Paul Hendry said that the Club wanted to adhere to this timetable and had begun the process of carrying out maintenance work. He advised that the Club had employed tradesmen to complete the maintenance work around the stadium.

Gordon Ritchie invited members to attend an inspection at the stadium, which could be arranged in addition to the regular match day inspections.

The Group resolved:-

- (i) to invite members of the Licensing Committee to attend an inspection at Pittodrie; and
- (ii) that Aberdeen Football Club should provide a fixtures list to Litigation and Licensing so that a date for the said inspection could be arranged.

NEW STADIUM

4. It had been previously agreed by the Sports Ground Advisory Group that the new stadium would be a standing item on its agenda.

Paul Hendry circulated the following statement which explained the Club's position:

“following on from Aberdeen City Council's decision to reject the Calder Park application, Aberdeen Football Club can confirm the Club is now in the process of identifying various other options and has recently held initial discussions with a number of interested parties in this regard.

Commenting on progress made to date, Aberdeen FC Vice Chairman George Yule said although I can confirm that the Club has received several expressions of interest from potential/ alternative stadium sites, we are still at a very early stage of carrying out a full review of these options. There is a considerable amount of preliminary diligence to be undertaken before we can decide on the best suited outcome for AFC. We will take whatever time is required to complete this review in the very best interests of AFC and its supporters.

When any meaningful progress has been made we will communicate information between the Club, its supporters and other stakeholders as appropriate but in the meantime the main focus is on our immediate priorities, i.e. first team results, youth policy and efficiently running the day to day business of a football club in a challenging environment whereby SPL central funds are under pressure and falling central income”.

It was agreed that, in light of the developments in respect of the new stadium, that this item be removed from future agendas until there is any new information forthcoming.

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The Group resolved:-

to remove the new stadium as a standing item on the agenda of the Sports Ground Advisory Working Group.

- **COUNCILLOR BOULTON, Convener.**