

**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL
COMMITTEE: VIRTUAL ROOM NOVEMBER 2007**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

**SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS ACT 1975 (As Amended)
FIRE SAFETY AND SAFETY AT PLACES OF SPORT ACT 1987
TRANMERE ROVERS F C, PRENTON PARK, BIRKENHEAD,
WIRRAL**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Members are requested to note the activities of Technical Services in the application and monitoring of the general safety certificate, together with the administration of the Safety Advisory Group, and the performance of the certificate holder in respect of the safety aspects of spectator provision at Tranmere Rovers Football Club, Prenton Park stadium.

2.0 REPORT

2.1 During 2006/2007, building control officers have continued to implement a strategic project plan to facilitate the satisfactory discharge of the Council's Safety at Sports Grounds responsibilities. They have carried out an annual inspection of the ground and review of the general safety certificate. Amendments were made to the certificate to reflect current standards including, overall steward numbers, provision for the problem of persistent standing in seated areas and more formal steward training requirements. A pre season inspection was undertaken together with a significant number of pre, post and during match inspections. The ongoing safety of spectators was closely monitored throughout, with particular regard to stewarding arrangements and crowd control. It has been noted that, to date, all arrangements have worked well throughout the ground and that the certificate holder is operating the premises in a highly responsible manner. Overall the ground has been maintained in a reasonable condition and management have co-operated fully with building control staff.

2.2 Also during the 2006/2007 season, one special certificate was issued to permit the annual, Bebington Roundtable Firework display on Sunday 5 November 2006 and two temporary amendment notices were required to allow an attendance and display, prior to kick off, of a local territorial army band and artillery unit.

2.3 Towards the end of 2006, Mr Charlie Taylor, advised both the Council and the football club of his intention to leave his post as safety officer. The certificate holder has advised that, Mr Keith Bailey, has been appointed as his replacement. Mr Ray Newnes, has accepted the position of deputy safety officer. Mr Bailey served with Merseyside Police for a considerable number of years and has carried out match day duties at all of the Merseyside football stadia. Mr Newnes was formerly the Merseyside Police Football Intelligence Officer, with responsibility for Tranmere Rovers. It was agreed that Mr Taylor

would provide full support to Mr Bailey during the period of handover. Both Mr Bailey and Mr Newnes have been accepted as members of the Football Safety Officers Association and have now completed the necessary safety officer training course. Building Control officers have observed the performance of the new safety officer and deputy both on a daily basis and on match days. I can advise that they are satisfied with the progress being made.

2.4 There were no significant changes to the ground during the close season and there are no current plans for alterations, which would impact upon the safety management of the stadium.

2.5 It is the club's intention to appoint a stadium maintenance manager.

2.6 Arrangements have been made by the certificate holder, during the summer, to facilitate the introduction of the national smoking ban, as appropriate, throughout the ground. Cognisance was taken of all available guidance, including information issued to clubs by the Football League. The stadium became effectively non-smoking with effect from the first game of the new season on 11th August 2007. Sympathetic, effective and efficient safety management ensured that this potentially difficult period was overcome with limited risk to public safety within the stadium.

2.7 Throughout the season the certificate holder has continued to facilitate the active pursuit of recognised stewarding qualifications and is to be commended on the progress being made. The training course is validated by Telford College with the majority of the stewards working towards an award.

2.8 Merseyside Police reported that they had no major issues with the club and maintained a good working relationship.

2.9 Merseyside Fire Service had no problems or issues to report.

2.10 The Ambulance Service had one concern with regard to SKY TV, who were inclined to use the paramedic accommodation as an equipment store. The club will ensure this doesn't happen in the future.

2.11 The Environmental Health Officer has advised that all food hygiene matters and certification had been satisfactory throughout the season.

2.12 The Football Licensing Authority confirmed that both the football club and local authority had been audited during the 2006/2007 season, with particular emphasis on the training of stewards and associated records. The FLA congratulated the club and local authority on their performance during the past season

3.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct Financial or Staffing implications arising as a result of this report.

4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Tranmere Rovers, Prenton Park stadium, is accessible to both ambulant and non-ambulant disabled spectators.

4.2 An induction loop and headphones are in operation in the main stand to enable visually impaired spectators to receive match commentary.

4.3 The Administration of the general safety certificate function, together with the appointment of any necessary consultants and contractors, which includes the club's stewards, fully embraces the requirements of the Council Equal Opportunities Policy.

5.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct Planning implications arising as a result of this report.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Building Control service will continue to contribute, as it's top priority, to the provision of the highest standards of safety for the public.

7.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As a consequence of the Human Rights Act, local authorities and other public bodies will need to ensure that their decisions and procedures do not infringe convention rights. In some circumstances, local authorities will need to act positively to protect these rights.

7.2 The participation of the Building Control service in the Council's corporate 'Enforcement Concordat', will ensure equity and fairness in the application of the Authority's Safety at Sports Grounds responsibilities.

8.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Dedicated sections of the building regulations specifically require measures to be taken with regard to the Conservation of Heat and Power. In addition, where possible, the certificate holder will be actively encouraged in the use of recycled materials, importantly contributing to the concept of sustainable development.

9.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

9.1 The following background information has been used in the preparation of this report:

- 9.2 The verbal reports of
- Chief Executive and Safety Officer, Tranmere Rovers
 - Constable Steve Roberts, Merseyside Police

- Paul Townley, Merseyside Ambulance Service
- Andy Anderson, Merseyside Fire Service
- Norman Whibley, Football Licensing Authority
- Building Control and Environmental Health Officer

9.3 Building Control Safety at Sports Grounds files

9.4 The General Safety Certificate for Prenton Park

9.5 Current (and draft revised) Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds

9.6 Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1975 (as amended)

10.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Tranmere Rovers Football Club is located within the Egerton Ward

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 That the report of the Director of Technical Services be noted

**DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES**

This report was prepared by Paul Grey who can be contacted on 606 2128