

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Safety at Sports Grounds Sub Committee.
Date: 17th July 2019
Report for: Information.
Report of: Corporate Director, Place

Report Title

The Annual Match Visit of the Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee to Manchester United Football Club.

Summary

Report describing the annual match visit to Manchester United Football Club on Saturday 13th April 2019 for the match against West Ham United.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Tony Bibi (Team Leader) Regulatory Services
Extension: 3840

Background Papers: None

SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS ADVISORY GROUP

ANNUAL MATCH VISIT MANCHESTER UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Each football season the Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee is invited to carry out a match visit to Manchester United Football Club (MUFC). This visit took place for the season 2018/19 on Saturday 13th April 2019 at the Premier League fixture, Manchester United versus West Ham United which was a 17.30 hours kick off.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1. Councillor Simon Thomas, Chairman of the Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee, Councillors Amy Whyte and John Holden attended with Council Officers Nigel Smith and Tony Bibi. The Group were greeted on arrival by Gary Hebblewhite (Head of Group Property Services), and Jim Liggett (Venue Operations Director).
- 2.2. The visit commenced with entry to the bowl of the stadium where the party were informed of the Club's proposals to expand the accessible seating provision which had been submitted in detail to the Council involving separate schemes, as part of their planning application submission. The group viewed the proposed stadium areas where the changes are to be carried out. The anticipated commencement of works at the end of the season would be predominantly enabling works, followed by a full season of testing of the new seating areas prior to full implementation. There would be some loss/gain in seating across the four schemes which would affect stadium capacity.
- 2.3. The party then attended the match day stewards briefing for the steward supervisors which was presented by Phil Rainford (Head of Stadium Safety and Security) and his deputy Jon Hornby. The match was designated as a category 'C' risk due in part to the later afternoon kick off time with more than 3000 away fans due to attend. The key theme was for stewards to be vigilant due to the increased risk of disorder; and in particular to be watchful on gangways in the lower bowl for potential pitch incursions following a number of recent incidents nationally at football stadiums.

- 2.4. The Group then proceeded to the Stadium Control Room where Phil Rainford explained the '4 Stand Principle' and the match day stewarding / security operations including the responsibilities of the essential personnel who are required to be in attendance within the Control Room. An explanation of the different operational roles of the key personnel was provided covering the use of the Ski Data system to monitor real time spectator entry, CCTV coverage, monitoring of social media, incident logging, GMP and NWAS operations and Fire Safety alarm system checks.
- 2.5. The party observed the outer forecourt barrier structure erected around the away turnstile block for this fixture and the search lanes contained within the barrier system. In addition, observations included the deployment of the stewards within the concourses as well as the use of explosive detection dogs outside the turnstiles to assist in the prevention and detection of smoke grenades. The enhanced security search procedures and protocols together with the restricted bag policy were also noted by the group.
- 2.6. The visiting party were then joined by Collette Roche (Chief Operating Officer) and welcomed by the Club to refreshments and to watch the game which ended in a 2 – 1 win for the home team. There were no match day safety incidents noted of any concern with away fans being generally compliant.

3. RECOMMENDATION.

- 3.1. That the report be noted.