

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Safety at Sports Grounds Sub - Committee.
Date: 23rd July 2014
Report for: Information.
Report of: Director of Environment.

Report Title

The Annual Match Visit of the Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee.

Summary

Report describing the annual match visit to Manchester United Football Club on Sunday 9th February 2014 at the match against Fulham.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Tony Bibi
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 season's visit took place on Sunday 9th February at the Premier League fixture, Manchester United versus Fulham.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1. Councillor David Higgins, Chairman of the Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee, and Councillor Paul Lally, attended with Council Officers Paul Harvey, Iain Veitch, and Tony Bibi. The Group were greeted on arrival by Guy Smith Director of Operations, Gary Hebblewhite Head of Group Property Services, and Paddy Lord Deputy Chief Operating Officer.
- 2.2. Gary Hebblewhite outlined the programme for the visit and the party proceeded to view one of the new food kiosks where no money is handled and payment is made by credit card contact swipe or card reader. This facility improved serving times and reduced the need for spectators to carry cash so that the potential risk of coin throwing may also be minimised.
- 2.3. The proposals to improve the Sir Alex Ferguson stand terrace gangways were also observed and discussed, whereby the risers to the gangway steps in the VIP section are to be reduced in height to improve ambulatory requirements. In addition, a demonstration in this area of the stadium was shown on how the emergency exit bolts are activated on the LED advertising boards to facilitate an escape route on to the pitch perimeter.
- 2.4. The Group then discussed the stadium acoustics in respect of the Clubs decision to trial a 'singing section' in the East Stand lower quadrants at the afternoons fixture. This was in response to feedback from spectator / fan groups to enhance the atmosphere within the stadium. Garry Hebblewhite explained that the height of the stadium roof was the controlling factor and that they were continuing to seek means of meeting spectators requests to improve the match day experience.
- 2.5. This was followed by a visit outside the ground to the W2 Car Park, to view the site for the proposed the erection of a VIP Marquee which will accommodate 1400 guests for dining purposes, prior to entry to the stadium.

- 2.6. The Group then proceeded to the Stadium Control Room where issues of match day safety were discussed, in particular the increasing problems of smoke bombs and flares and the Club's procedures to prohibit and prevent such use in the stadium. The proposed installation of state of the art CCTV which is currently being planned to be piloted was described as a means of identifying offenders, as well as providing an effective deterrent.
- 2.7. Charlie Coxon Stadium Safety Manager and Phil Rainford Deputy Stadium Safety Manager welcomed the tour group to the Stewards' Briefing in the Press Conference Room where the Steward Supervisors were briefed and given the specific match day intelligence, along with the routine safety management information.
- 2.8. The visiting party then walked through the ground floor concourses and observed the deployment of the stewards throughout these areas.
- 2.9. The visiting party were welcomed during refreshments by Michael Bolingbroke, the Chief Operating Officer, Manchester United Football Club.

3. RECOMMENDATION.

- 3.1. That the report be noted.

Financial Implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A
Human Resources Implications:	N/A
Asset Management Implications:	N/A
E-Government Implications:	N/A
Risk Management Implications:	N/A