

**SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REPORT BY: Director of Housing, Operations and Development**

**TO: REGULATORY PANEL - LICENSING  
OF 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026**

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**SUBJECT: ANNUAL INSPECTION AND REVISED SAFETY CERTIFICATES  
FOR SOMERSET PARK, AYR**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To advise the Panel of the outcome of the annual technical inspection of Somerset Park, Ayr, and to seek approval for the issue of revised Safety Certificates for the ground.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 agrees that the current Safety Certificate remains in force until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026, provided that no adverse reports are received at the meeting; and

2.1.2 agrees that the revised Safety Certificate will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026, and that it will include the new Regulated Stand to the North Area.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Under the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975 Somerset Park is designated as a ground requiring a General Safety Certificate. In addition to the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 the ground is covered by the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987, and related Safety of Sports Grounds Regulations. Main guidance is given by the "Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds", (the "Green Guide"). Although the guide has no statutory force, many of its recommendations are made statutory by their inclusion in the General Safety Certificate.
- 3.2 Currently Somerset Park had a General Safety Certificate issued by South Ayrshire Council to Ayr United Football Club (AUFC). Under the terms of the Certificate AUFC are defined as "Holders" of the Certificate. The Certificate set the ground capacity of Somerset Park at 10,203.

- 3.3 The current Certificate is valid until 30th June 2026, unless withdrawn by the Council. The Safety Certificate states that all assessment, surveys and reports required should be completed by 28th February each year, with any remedial works carried out to the satisfaction of the Council by 14th July, prior to the beginning of the new football season.

## **4. Detail**

### **Technical Reports**

#### **4.1 Building Standards Services, South Ayrshire Council**

4.1.1 The annual site inspection was made to Somerset Park on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026. It can be reported that all the required assessments, surveys, certification, and reports are now in place. The annual Structural Report has been received by the Council along with required Structural Safety Certificate. Within the Report there is a number of maintenance works required and as such a schedule of works has been prepared and issued to AUFC for completion prior to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026. A further inspection will be scheduled by Building Standards to confirm that all necessary works are completed by the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

4.1.2 Major development works were carried out to the stadium with the completion of the new North Stand with seated area and hospitality suite to the rear in June 2024. The new North Stand and associated terracing to the front was included within the current Safety Certificate, issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. This gave an amended ground capacity figure of 10,203.

4.1.3 The highest attendance in the 25/26 season was against Partick Thistle in the Championship, on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026 with an attendance of 3253.

Match day inspections were carried out at several games throughout the season as required by the Green Guide. This included a match against Dunfermline on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025 which was televised on BBC Scotland. There were no major home matches in the Cups that would have required a multi-agency meeting Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for Stadia to be held.

4.1.4 One of the challenges for Somerset Park is that access can currently only be gained from sets of turnstiles, on two sides of the stadium (Somerset Road & Tryfield Place). This was due to the land adjacent to the stadium on other two sides of ground not being owned by the Club.

The area adjacent to the Railway End of the stadium was purchased last year by the Club, who have recently carried out extensive development works. This includes a new training pitch with changing facilities, a gym, Padel courts and future proposal for a Wellness facility. Each of which have been or are required to go through the Planning and Building Warrant approval process.

Meetings have been held with the Club, and representations have been made to include additional turnstiles within any new proposed plans for this area. This would not only improve access to the Railway End but, could also facilitate away fans access to the North Stand area which is currently temporary closed off. The issue of additional turnstiles was also raised at the Safety Advisory Group meeting in May 2026. A further meeting is scheduled with the Club to discuss the overview of this area in more detail.

- 4.1.5 The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent in April 2025. There is an implementation period of at least 24 months, from 3 April 2025, before the Act comes into force and this is to give sufficient time for venues to understand their new obligations.

This legally requires sports stadia and major event venues to implement proportionate security and preparedness measures against terrorist threats on tiered approach, based on capacity.

Initial discussions have been held with Club as to the obligations of this new legislation and how this relates to the Zone Ex requirements of the Green Guide. This will not affect the issuing of the Safety Certificate this year but will be required to be included in the certificate issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2027.

It is proposed that further discussions on requirements of the Legislation will be held through the Safety Advisory Group for Stadia (SAG) This will require consultation with ARA, as there may be a requirement for some formal road closures dependant on the attendances.

An interim review of the Safety Certificate will be made against the Legislation and any amendments required will be incorporated into Safety Certificate that will be issued next year. If additional measures are required to be implemented prior to the issuing of the certificate a Temporary Certificate may be required to be issued.

## **4.2 Safety Advisory Group (Stadia)**

4.2 This was the first year that the Safety Advisory Group (Stadia) and meetings were held during the certification process. Members of the SAG group attended a stadium inspection on the 6<sup>th</sup> May and the formal SAG to review the issuing of the Safety Certificate was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026. All attendees were asked for any comments on the issuing of the Safety Certificate.

### **4.2.1 Environmental Health Services, South Ayrshire Council**

No adverse comments received.

### **4.2.2 Scottish Fire & Rescue**

No adverse comments received

### **4.2.3 Police Scotland**

No adverse comments received

### **4.2.4 Scottish Ambulance Service**

No adverse comments received

### **4.2.5 NHS & Arran**

No adverse comments received.

## **5. Legal and Procurement Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 The cost of staff time spent on inspections and on the preparation of revised Safety Certificates was met from existing Planning and Building Standards revenue budget.

## **7. Human Resources Implications**

Not applicable.

## **8. Risk Implications of adopting the recommendations.**

### **8.1 Risk Implications of adopting the recommendations.**

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

### **8.2 Risk Implications of rejecting the recommendations.**

8.1.2 Rejecting the recommendations may impact on the reputation of the Council.

## **9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)**

9.1 This report is required in order for the Panel to make a determination under existing legislation, and is not in relation to any policy or procedure of the Council, therefore an integrated impact assessment is not required

## **10. Sustainable Development Implications**

10.1 Considering Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## **11. Options Appraisal**

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

## **12. Link to Council Plan**

12.1 This work contributes to Priority One Spaces and Places, Priority Two Work and Economy Priority Three Pride in South Ayrshire.

## **13. Results of Consultation**

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this paper.

13.2 Consultation has taken place through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) Stadia with SAC Environmental Health Services; Scottish Fire and Rescue; Police Scotland; Scottish Ambulance Service; and the NHS and Arran.

**Background Papers**      Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.  
Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.  
Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) (“The Green Guide”).  
Safety Certificate for Somerset Park, Ayr.

**Author and Person to Contact**

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**Date.** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026