

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2025

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture – Cllr Nelson

Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG)

SUMMARY

The Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) brings together a range of professionals to scrutinise and advise upon event safety processes and systems for outdoor events. The ISAG looks at plans for a wide range of events and festivals in Stockton on Tees, focusing on events of a significant scale or complexity. All events of scale on Stockton Council land are subject to review by the ISAG, and where requested ISAG will review event safety plans which are hosted on private land.

The ISAG does not take decisions on whether or not an event should go ahead but provides specialist advice and recommendations to landowners, including the Council to enable them to make informed decisions to allow an event or require changes to an event plan. The ISAG provides practical advice and guidance to event organisers and aims to drive up the quality of event plans/safety planning.

The ISAG's independent Chair produces an annual report for information, to highlight significant findings and make recommendations for areas of further work.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The ISAG Chair's report is presented to Cabinet to allow them to see the level of scrutiny and challenge being brought to bear in relation to events to ensure the public are properly protected. Cabinet are also able to see and comment upon the areas of further work recommended by the ISAG in relation to safety at public events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet note the ISAG's annual report 2024/25
2. Cabinet note the resignation of the current ISAG Chair, and agree to formally acknowledge and thank the Chair for his service.

DETAIL

1. The ISAG was convened nine times during 2024/25 and reviewed 27 event safety plans which is comparable to 2023/24, with the majority of plans coming from external and community event organisers, who want to host events on Council land.

2. The ISAG report confirms that there haven't been any changes to the membership for the group this year and all key organisations have a dedicated resource identified to the ISAG. Whilst this is positive, the report does highlight that attendance by ISAG reps has shown a downward trend from 2023/24, with some meetings operating without all services being represented. This matter has been included as an improvement action for 2025/26.
3. A high number of event safety plans continue to be submitted on time (70% 2024/24, 69% 2023), however despite this, the ISAG have reported delays in the assurance process. There has been an overall increase in the number event safety plans that were being reviewed/updated within 5 days of the event as initial information was incomplete. Multi reviews of event safety plans, together with plans that are submitted late puts pressure on the ISAG to review and provide feedback
4. The ISAG recognises that it is difficult to balance dates for submitting plans and date for review and response. Further recommendation is made to the Council regarding submission dates.
5. The standard and quality of events safety plans is a key focus for the ISAG. The ISAG have highlighted that 6 (22%) event safety plans have not reached full safety assurance this year and whilst this does not mean that an event is unsafe, there is a potential added risk to public safety. The ISAG have highlighted this matter to the Council and continue to encourage event organisers to have early conversations with ISAG, to help the event organiser understand expected safety standards and documentation.
6. The ISAG has delivered focused work of three largescale complex events this year including Yarm Fair, Festival of Thrift and Remembrance Sunday Events, all of which have specific safety challenges and attract large audiences.
7. The ISAG have reported good progress against the Improvement Action plan by the Council, which includes access to event safety information and guidance for event organizer. ISAG note that workshops are programmed in Spring 2025, which are aimed to develop event safety planning skills.
8. The ISAG acknowledge the importance and level of support and advice provided by Council and other emergency service stakeholders who are integral to the success of safe outdoor event planning.
9. To assist event organisers in early planning, ISAG meeting dates for 2025 are included in the ISAG Chair's report, they are;

Tuesday 15 April
Tuesday 20 May
Tuesday 3 June
Tuesday 24 June
Tuesday 22 July
Tuesday 12 August
Tuesday 9 September
Tuesday 30 September
Tuesday 21 October
Tuesday 25 November
10. The full ISAG Annual Report, including an improvement plan, is attached as Appendix 1.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The ISAG report review of activity in 2024 will not impact on any communities. Where the future approach to events is altered for safety reasons, including for reasons arising from ISAG advice, the potential impact of those changes on any affected communities will be assessed.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

This report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ISAG report review of activity in 2024 does not have any financial implications. Where the future approach to events is altered for safety reasons, including for reasons arising from ISAG advice, the potential financial implications of those changes will be assessed on a case by case basis.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

It is the policy of Stockton Borough Council to uphold reasonable standards of public safety at all events in the Borough and to encourage the well-being of all residents and visitors at those public events. The ISAG provides specialist advice to the Local Authority to help it discharge its functions under public event legislation

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Independent Safety Advisory Group is a key part of system that ensures that public events can take place safely and successfully and has robust assurances processes in place to assess and advise on safety risks at outdoor events.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

Not ward specific. This report does not require any consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) Debrief Report 2024/25

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