

## Scrutiny Topic Registration

<b>Name of person proposing topic:</b>	<b>Date:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2007
Councillor C Coleman	
<b>Contact:</b>	
<b>Suggested title of topic:</b> Christmas Lights in Cheltenham	
<b>What is the issue that scrutiny needs to address?</b>	
To improve the quality and quantity of Christmas lights in Cheltenham both in the town centre and other community areas	
<b>What do you feel could be achieved by a scrutiny review?</b>	
We can investigate the budget implications to the council and moreover the ability/willingness of local businesses to support us.	

## Priority and urgency

<b>Is the topic urgent?</b>	✓
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If so, please consider which of the following might apply:

<b>Is there a strict time constraint?</b>	✓
<b>Is there currently high media coverage?</b>	
<b>Is there high public pressure to respond?</b>	✓
<b>Does it involve a high risk to the council?</b>	
<b>Any other reasons:</b>	
This, of course is an annual event. We work so hard on other aspects of our community life – festivals etc. The lights are important for our town as we are a major festive destination	

## Issues

Please consider whether the following might apply:

<b>Is the topic important to the people of Cheltenham?</b>	✓
<b>Does the topic involve a poorly performing service or high public dissatisfaction with a service?</b>	✓
<b>Is it related to the Council's corporate objectives?</b>	
<b>Is it directly related to an item on the council workplan?</b>	
<b>Has there been media interest in the topic?</b>	
<b>Can scrutiny help in the development of council policy?</b>	
<b>Any other issues or details:</b>	
This may be a subject that could benefit from both the setting up of a working party and a future agenda item discussion	

## **Officer Implications (for office use)**

*Please give your comments on this proposed topic, for example is there any other similar review planned or in progress, are there any potential resource constraints etc*

No review of Christmas Lights is planned or underway. I detail below, the current situation for members information.

For 2006 / 2007, the council provided a budget of £24,100 for the main task of erecting, removing and storing the town's Christmas decorations. In addition, a sum of £5,100 was provided for the rolling replacement of light bulbs in the trees in the Promenade. This also provides a small dilapidations budget for other maintenance items.

Some four years ago, an additional budget of £5,000 per annum was agreed to fund a rolling replacement of decorations. The old lights had gone past their useful life and several were in need of scrapping. Lack of funds had prevented any new lights being provided for the High Street from Boots Corner down to Ambrose Street since 2000.

In addition to funds provided by the Council, sponsorship and contributions have been raised from the private sector. This adds a further £8–9,000 per annum to the total budget. These funds have been used to purchase new decorations, contribute towards the cost of erection and removal, provide the town's Christmas tree, and contribute towards meeting the cost of the switch-on event.

The main priority and focus for the Christmas lights display has always been the Promenade from Montpellier island to Boots Corner. We have maintained this display with the limited funds available and have purchased new fixtures to enhance the display in the last 2-3 years.

Additional fixtures were obtained for the High Street, in 2004, following the erection of three additional lamp columns outside the Beechwood Shopping Centre. Thanks to generous sponsorship from The Brewery, new lights were also provided for the High Street from Boots Corner down to Ambrose Street in 2006.

We have followed a policy of removing old cross-street lighting features as they reached the end of their useful life. Catenary wires have been removed to improve the appearance of the High Street and Promenade. We have followed a policy of installing features mounted on lamp columns. As new lamp columns have been installed, the Christmas lights budget has funded the provision of power supplies to enable them, to be equipped with light fittings. This programme will be completed once the current street lamps in the Promenade near Boots Corner are replaced.

As a result of these combined efforts, the lights display for 2006 was the best that has been provide in over a decade, with more features and new features extending the display area.

In addition to these efforts, traders also make their own efforts in parts of the town not covered by the council. In Montpellier, for instance, the businesses provide a Christmas Tree and arrange for lighting in highway trees, plus additional lights on their own premises.

For the future, once the Civic Pride proposals for the Town centre are agreed, we plan to improve the lighting display at Boots Corner, as this is the focal point of the High Street.

<b>Links to Business Plan and Corporate Objectives or Risk Register</b>	
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Completed by

Ken Jennings Assistant Director Entertainment and Tourism

Date ...2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007.....