

Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet – 14th September 2021 Christmas Ice Rink

Accountable member	Cllr Victoria Atherstone, Cabinet Member for Culture, Wellbeing & Business
Accountable officer	David Jackson, Manager, Marketing Cheltenham, Place & Growth
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>Plans for there to be a Christmas ice rink in Imperial Gardens have been in development via Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID) with these plans both well developed in terms of financial modelling and appropriate consents agreed and in place. In 2020, these plans however fell victim to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cancellation of live events.</p> <p>Though there is now hope that an ice rink can finally come to Cheltenham for what will be a vitally important 2021 festive period, the timing of the BID's recent renewal ballot and resulting constitutional changes and restructuring mean that the BID is no longer in a position to commit to an ice rink this year.</p> <p>This paper therefore sets out the business case and financial implications for the ice rink and a recommendation that, in advance of planning permission being approved, the Council now takes on the contract with the operator and provides full financial underwriting to ensure the event can proceed.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees to waive the Authority's contract rules pursuant to contract rule 6.1.1 for the appointment of 11th Hour Events Limited to supply and deliver the Christmas ice rink in 2021 on Imperial Gardens; 2. Approves, in advance of planning permission being considered by the Planning Committee on 14th October 2021, and noting the costs and risks set out in this report, the Authority appointing 11th Hour Events Limited to supply and deliver the ice rink on behalf of the Authority; 3. Approves a total potential financial commitment of £335,575 plus VAT 4. Delegates authority to the Director of Planning, Place & Growth to agree the terms of the contract and the entrance fees; 5. Agrees to pay £80,302.50 plus VAT as a non-refundable deposit to secure the contractor before planning permission is determined and the contract entered into.

<p>Financial implications</p>	<p>CBC will be required to enter into a contract with the ice rink operator to the value of £267,675 + VAT. A further £67,900 + VAT in additional costs are also anticipated, meaning a total financial commitment of £335,575 + VAT.</p> <p>Whilst it is forecast that revenue from advertising and ticket sales will off-set these costs and result in an at/close-to break-even point at worst, there will nevertheless need to be a financial commitment in place to cover these total costs.</p> <p>With regard to any net losses that may result, in the 2020/21 outturn report, a sum of £75,000 was identified for the creation/contribution towards an event in Cheltenham in 2021/22 in support of the town’s economic recovery. Authority for use of this budget was delegated to the Director of Finances and Resources. Approval has subsequently been confirmed that this budget will be available if required to off-set any net losses up to £75,000.</p> <p>Contact officer: Gemma Bell, Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264124</p>
<p>Legal implications</p>	<p>Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants a wide power to local authorities to provide entertainment. The powers also permits the charging of admission fees and the setting aside of areas of parks or ‘pleasure grounds’ for that purpose.</p> <p>We have been informed that Cheltenham BID previously undertook a procurement exercise in order to select 11th Hour as their preferred supplier. However, the exercise was not undertaken in accordance with the Authority’s contract rules so a waiver approved by Cabinet due to the contract value is required. The Authority must carry out the usual financial due diligence it would do when carrying out a procurement.</p> <p>The nature of the contract is such that it falls within the “light touch regime” and as the value of the contract is below £663K, it did not need to be tendered in accordance with the requirements Chapter 3 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.</p> <p>The Authority has been advised that there is limited scope for Covid-related insurance for an event of this nature. The Contract will need to clearly state the costs the Authority will still be expected to pay if the event cannot go ahead due to implications of Covid-19 or adverse weather. The Authority will need to negotiate the position with 11th Hour. If cancellation is required, refunds on tickets sold to the public will be necessary and the Authority is at risk of losing income.</p> <p>The Authority is required to pay a large non –refundable deposit before planning committee in October. Therefore, it is recommended that a break clause is inserted into the contract with 11th Hour permitting the Authority to terminate the contract if planning permission is not received.</p> <p>Contact officer: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk, 01684 272696</p>

<p>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</p>	<p>There are no HR implications to be considered</p> <p>Contact officer: Clare Jones, clare.jones@publicagroup.uk, 01242 264364</p>
<p>Key risks</p>	<p>See risk assessment attached as Appendix 1</p>
<p>Corporate and community plan Implications</p>	<p>Through Cheltenham Borough Council's Recovery Strategy and the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force, supporting the reopening, reinvention and revitalisation of the town centre has been identified as a clear strategic priority in helping to drive the town's economic recovery. Creating more compelling reasons for people to come into the town, including a wider range of experiences that are able to stimulate increased footfall – such as a Christmas ice rink - have been recognised as an important way of achieving this.</p> <p>Historically there have been calls from the wider community for Cheltenham to have a Christmas ice rink. Evidence from the recent Summer Big Screen illustrates the welcome addition for these type of activities both supporting local residents and visitors.</p>
<p>Environmental and climate change implications</p>	<p>As set out in the risk assessment, environmental impact will be minimised where possible, although by its very nature, at times an ice rink inevitably requires a relatively high power supply to maintain the temperature and integrity of the ice.</p> <p>By using a covered structure (reducing the effect of outside temperature fluctuations) and low-audible/quiet generators, we will ensure this impact is kept to a minimum.</p> <p>We have budgeted for the provision of additional bins, recycling and collection services in and around the rink/Gardens.</p> <p>Alternative travel and access plans will also be put in place, including joint comms with stagecoach for local bus and P&R services including potential ticket incentives.</p>
<p>Property/Asset Implications</p>	<p>The ice rink will be located on Council land and as such a licence application should be made to agree the conditions of using the Gardens. This would include repair of any damage to the land once the ice rink and infrastructure is removed.</p> <p>As part of the licence application, Marketing Cheltenham would be required to complete a full risk assessment, method statement and provide evidence that Public Liability Insurance was in place for the event.</p> <p>There will need to be sufficient budget and resource included in the financials to cover these requirements.</p> <p>Contact officer: Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 Since 2018, Cheltenham Business Improvement District (BID) has been working towards bringing an ice rink to the town for the Christmas period. Planning permission for a Christmas ice rink – to be sited in the North West quadrant of Imperial Gardens – was subsequently secured for two years in 2019 and an operator (11th Hour) procured by the BID to provide, build, operate and manage the rink.
- 1.2 The plan was – and remains - for the rink to be in operation from the third Thursday of November through to the first Sunday in January - a total of 45 days. The rink will be covered and 20m x 25m in size, with a closed marquee and skate hire area, doubling up as the reception/front of house.
- 1.3 Like so many other events, plans for the rink's first year of operation in 2020 fell victim to the Covid-19 pandemic. Though there is now hope that an ice rink can finally come to Cheltenham for the 2021 festive period, uncertainty caused by the timing of the BID's renewal ballot in 2021 has contributed to delays in contracting with 11th Hour. Whilst the BID's second term has now been secured, uncertainty has remained around the BID's capacity and financial resource to be able to take on the delivery of an ice rink this year, given it is currently restructuring both its Board and executive and operating to a shortened financial year in 2021/22.
- 1.4 Equally, the creation of the new Plaza as part of the Quadrangle redevelopment, along with the installation of the extended Garden Bar and new orangery at the rear of the Town Hall has meant that the area of Imperial Gardens on which the ice rink was to be sited is no longer large enough to accommodate the rink and supporting structures. The square footage that has been lost as a result of these developments means that an ice rink of significantly reduced size and capacity would only now be possible. Unfortunately, this would render it commercially unviable to proceed. As a consequence, a revised planning application has recently been submitted to move the site of the proposed rink to the adjacent South West quadrant, bordered by the Promenade and Queens Hotel. The outcome of this application will be determined at CBC's Planning Committee on the 14th October 2021.
- 1.5 On 20 July, Informal Cabinet agreed that Marketing Cheltenham should enter into discussions with Cheltenham BID to understand the level of financial support that may be required from CBC in order to ensure that the ice rink could proceed.
- 1.6 The conclusions of these discussions is the proposal for CBC to take on the contract with 11th Hour and provide full financial underwriting of the event – freeing the BID up to focus on other supporting priorities and events. Due to the lead in time of the procurement, the timing of decision making is critical to enable 11th Hour to place orders for the rink and associated structures and staffing etc. without further delay.
- 1.7 With full, updated costs now confirmed therefore – and with the associated risks set out - this paper is seeking formal approval from Cabinet for CBC to proceed with this commitment and to take on the full financial liability for the delivery of the ice rink.

2. Reasons for recommendations

Business Case – Strategic

- 2.1 Following on from the challenges of the past eighteen months, the 2021 Christmas period is likely to be one of the most important and therefore competitive trading periods for a generation. The prospect of Cheltenham having an ice rink as a central feature to its Christmas offering (alongside an extended Christmas Market) has the potential to be a major driver of footfall, providing an opportunity to significantly enhance and elevate the town's seasonal offer, play a vital role in

supporting its economic recovery and positioning Cheltenham proactively against its competitors within the visitor economy.

- 2.2** It's also important to recognise the role such an attraction will be able to play in giving back to the community. The ice rink will provide a unique opportunity to engage young people and families from across the borough and wider county, and, through a proposed partnership with No Child Left Behind, the aim will be to ensure that as many members of the Cheltenham community as possible have the opportunity to experience and enjoy this spectacular event.
- 2.3** It is naturally difficult to predict with any certainty the number of people that will visit the ice rink – or for that matter, the number that will choose to visit as a consequence of the ice rink being here. However, based on recent examples and case studies from other Christmas ice rinks and then overlaid on the size and duration of the proposed rink in Cheltenham, anticipated footfall/visitor numbers would be in the region of 30 to 40,000 - with the associated direct and secondary spend in the town.
- 2.4** With the ice rink set to form part of a more ambitious and town-wide Christmas offering - including the newly extended Christmas Market – there is a clear opportunity for Cheltenham to begin to compete with other regional destinations, not just within the county, but with some of the larger cities and more established Christmas destinations.

Business Case - Financial

- 2.5** The nature of temporary ice rinks, or any event installations of this nature, are that they are inherently high-cost - yet also offer the potential for high return through the revenue generated by ticket sales. Inevitably however, the costs are almost entirely fixed, whilst the income from ticket sales cannot be guaranteed. Therein lies the financial risk.
- 2.6** Based on an updated proposal from 11th Hour, the table below summarises the costs and expenditure for the ice rink, together with the forecast revenue from ticket sales and advertising. This is based on our expected mid-range sales forecast, which results in a (close to) break-even position (-£355.80). A full breakdown, including lower and higher ticket sales projections is included in Appendix 2.

Costs	Cost/Revenue
11 th Hour (Hire of Ice Rink and all supporting equipment and staffing)	-£267,675
Additional costs (insurance, security, waste, marketing etc)	-£67,900
Total Costs	-£335,575
Income	
Advertising & Sponsorship	£40,000
Revenue from Ticket Sales (average of 46.5% capacity across the 45 days)	£295,219.20
Total Income	£335,219.20
Profit/Loss	-£355.80

*Sales revenue is based on an average ticket cost of £8, rink capacity of 160, minimum of 10/maximum of 12 sessions per day, over 45 days

- 2.7** The above projections reflect a conservative, mid-range (and break-even) estimate on ticket sales of 46.5% of rink capacity on average across the 45 days. Based on the performance of similar ice rinks (and operated with/via 11th Hour – see Appendix 3), this 46.5% break-even sales figure (equating to sales of £295,219.20) is seen as being very achievable in the context of the market and surrounding catchment of Cheltenham. This would result in a break-even position (negligible loss of £355).
- 2.8** Included in Appendix 2 is a more detailed breakdown of the costs together with income projections that consider three different scenarios - a low level of sales (average of 30% of rink capacity across the 45 days), mid (and break-even) of 46.5% and a high of 60%. This low-sales scenario, whilst unlikely, would expose CBC to a potential net loss of £105,111. The high-sales scenario would result in a net profit to CBC (for reinvestment) of £85,353 `sales cannot be guaranteed. Therein lies the financial risk.

Waiver

- 2.9** Whilst Cheltenham BID has previously undertaken a formal procurement exercise in order to select 11th Hour as their preferred supplier, this exercise was not carried out in accordance with the Authority's contract rules so a waiver approved by Cabinet due to the contract value is required. This waiver is justified according to reason 6.1.1 of the contract rules, with the supply of the rink and supporting services being of a unique or specialised nature.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1** A joint venture/shared cost approach has been discussed with Cheltenham BID, yet this has been ruled out by the BID Board given their limited capacity and resource this year. CBC supports this decision, which ensures that the BID is able to focus its resources on delivering both the newly extended Christmas Market this year and the Christmas Lights and related switch-on event/activity.

4. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan

- 4.1** Through Cheltenham Borough Council's Recovery Strategy and the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force, supporting the reopening, reinvention and revitalisation of the town centre has been identified as a clear strategic priority in helping to drive the town's economic recovery. Creating more compelling reasons for people to come into the town, including a wider range of experiences that are able to stimulate increased footfall – such as a Christmas ice rink - have been recognised as an important way of achieving this.

5. Consultation and feedback

- 5.1** Whilst no public announcement has yet been made regarding the ice rink, there has been a great deal of expectation, excitement and positive anticipation over the prospect of a Christmas ice rink finally happening in Cheltenham.
- 5.2** There continues to be active liaison with local residents and ward councillors in and around Imperial Gardens. Both Marketing Cheltenham and Cheltenham BID have also been in regular dialogue with town centre businesses regarding the prospect of an ice rink for a number of months, with similarly positive feedback. Should the rink go ahead, businesses will continue to be engaged with opportunities to collaborate and develop partner packages as well as advertising opportunities.

6. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 6.1** Commercial and operating terms are currently being scoped in consultation with both the operator and One Legal. These terms will include performance expectations with appropriate review and

monitoring procedures in place.

Report author	Contact officer: David Jackson, david.jackson@marketingcheltenham.co.uk, 01242 264233
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Risk Assessment2. Financial table3. Comparisons to other ice rinks4. Supporting statements
Background information	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk					
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register	
1	Financial – Potential loss of £80,302.50 (non-refundable deposit) should planning permission be denied	CBC	14/09/21	5	3	15	Reduce	Ongoing liaison with planning team and consultees, including local residents and ward councillors. Noise, traffic and anti-social behaviour impact mitigations to be implemented where required and able.	14 Oct 2021	David Jackson		
2	Financial – Potential cumulative loss of £160,000+ (the sum of the first two instalments to operator) - should the rink be unable to proceed or is forced to close once open due to an unforeseen event, poor weather, new Covid restrictions etc	CBC	14/09/21	5	3	15	Accept	Rink is an all-weather structure with a roof and will therefore continue to operate during spells of poor weather. Public access to the site/rink will be via existing (hardened) Imperial Gardens' footpaths. Limited scope for Covid-related insurance for an event of this nature, however, CBC will need to agree the position with 11 th Hour about payment of costs should the event need to be cancelled at any stage before or during the event -	Dec 2021	David Jackson		

								although there will inevitably be some costs to that point that will be lost and refunds on tickets sold will be necessary.			
3	Financial – potential loss of £100,000+ due to poor/lower than expected ticket sales	CBC	14/09/21	5	3	15	Reduce	Robust sales and marketing strategy and ticketing/box office system to be implemented, supported by comprehensive and professional marketing communications delivery led via Marketing/Visit Cheltenham.	Dec 2021	David Jackson	
4	Financial – As a result of CBC/Publica undertaking a renewal of their insurance provider, insurance for the event (including cover for the event equipment and public liability) may not be in place before 1 st November 2021	CBC	14/09/21	5	2	10	Reduce	Advice from our insurance lead at Publica and via insurance brokers is that cover can be resolved. It is just a matter of timing given Publica's client-wide procurement of a new insurance provider is happening simultaneously.	Nov 2021	David Jackson/Jason O'Loughlin	
5	Reputational – Should the rink go ahead, there is the potential that local residents/ community and businesses in/around Imperial Gardens will be negatively impacted	CBC	14/09/21	3	3	9	Reduce	Ongoing liaison with planning team and consultees, including local residents and ward councillors. Noise, traffic and anti-social behaviour impact mitigations to	Dec 2021	David Jackson	

								be implemented where required and able. Neighbouring businesses to be engaged in collaborative package/value-add opportunities.			
6	Reputational – Ice rink does not go ahead resulting in a negative public and business reaction and potential reputational damage to CBC	CBC	14/09/21	3	2	6	Reduce	CBC has acted as quickly as possible to step in and try to ensure that the ice rink does go ahead. Communications and messaging will need to explain decisions in light of the risks but with commitment to alternative event/support and wider Christmas offering.	Sept 2021	David Jackson	
7	Environmental – requirement for generators due to insufficient power supply in Imperial Gardens; additional waste and additional pressure on local roads/traffic; potential damage/impact on Gardens and flower beds	CBC	14/09/21	3	2	6	Reduce	Use of generators to be minimised. Where used, these will be quiet/low audible, positioned and shielded away from the public. Budget includes provision of additional bins, recycling and collection services. Alternative travel and access plans will be put in place, including joint comms with stagecoach for local	Nov 2021	David Jackson	

								bus and P&R services including potential ticket incentives. Budget for reinstatement of any damaged ground/flower beds has been built into the budget			
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Explanatory notes

Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)

Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6

(1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)

Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close

Item	Income	Expenditure
Ice Rink Hire (11th Hour)		
Ice Rink		£49,250.00
Structures		£46,790.00
Power & Generators		£15,200.00
Fuel		£9,300.00
Chiller System		£15,150.00
Additional Plant Equipment		£1,600.00
Operational Staff		£46,995.00
Lighting and Sound		£4,500.00
Ticketing		£2,950.00
Signage		£4,300.00
Décor		£5,000.00
Zambonie		£13,250.00
Flooring for skate hire		£2,900.00
CCTV		£2,500.00
Overnight Security (Build & Break)		£5,950.00
Electrical Testing		£375.00
Medical Provision		£6,500.00
Installation Crew		£9,570.00
De-rig Crew		£9,570.00
Accommodation		£9,225.00
Fencing		£1,800.00
Delivery & Collection		£5,000.00
Ice Rink Hire Sub-total		£267,675.00
Other expenditure		
Event Insurance		£5,000.00
Water Supply		£650.00
Staff Welfare cabin/toilet		£2,000.00
Waste		£4,500.00
Security		£16,000.00
Reinstatement		£4,750.00
Branding & Marketing		£25,000.00
Contingency		£10,000.00
Other expenditure Sub-total		£67,900.00
TOTAL COSTS		£335,575.00
Sponsorship & Advertising		
Advertising	£25,000.00	
Penguin sponsors	£5,000.00	
Hospitality Partner	£10,000.00	
Sponsorship Sub-total	£40,000.00	£295,575.00
Scenario 1 LOW TICKET SALES (Based on average of 30% capacity)		
Weekday sessions	£84,480.00	
Weekend sessions	£46,080.00	
Christmas Break	£59,904.00	
General Sales Sub-total	£190,464.00	
Net Profit/Loss		-£105,111.00
Scenario 2 MID TICKET SALES (BREAK EVEN) (Based on average of 46.5% capacity)		
Weekday sessions	£130,944.00	
Weekend sessions	£71,424.00	
Christmas Break	£92,851.20	
General Sales Sub-total	£295,219.20	
Net Profit/Loss		-£355.80
Scenario 3 - HIGH TICKET SALES (Based on average of 60% capacity)		
Weekday sessions	£168,960.00	
Weekend sessions	£92,160.00	
Christmas Break	£119,808.00	
General Sales Sub-total	£380,928.00	
Net Profit/Loss		£85,353.00

*Sales revenue is based on an average ticket cost of £8, rink capacity of 160, minimum of 10/maximum of 12 sessions per day, over 45 days

- The ticket prices proposed for Cheltenham are currently lower than the prices 11th Hour would typically charge at their rinks (see below). However, the proposed prices are based on those charged at Gloucester Quays ice rink which would likely be the main competitor – and customer comparator - to Cheltenham.
- 11th Hour have shared rink figures from some of their other recent rinks, which are solely operated by them. Though they work with other local authorities they are unable to share this data due to commercial sensitivity:
- **Cardiff Winter Wonderland**
 - o 9 week project (November 2019 - January 2020)
 - o Rink capacity – 340
 - o Total skaters – 91,245 (estimated to be around 40.2% average utilisation)
 - o Adult skate £12, Child £9, Concession £9, Family £35
 - o Christmas and NY sessions £15/£10/£12
- **Swansea Winter Wonderland**
 - o 8 week project (November 2019 – January 2020)
 - o Rink capacity – 230
 - o Total skaters – 31,429 (estimated to be around 23.1% average utilisation)
 - o Adult skate £12, Child £9, Concession £9, Family £35
 - o Christmas and NY sessions £15/£10/£12
- **Leicester**
 - o Leicester City Council have had an ice rink since 2017 and have been working with 11th Hour since 2019.
 - o 4.5 week project (December 2019 – January 2020)
 - o Rink capacity – 230
 - o Total skaters – 29,904 (estimated to be around 39% average utilisation)
 - o Adult skate £10, Child £8.50, Concession £8.50
 - o Preview skate £5

The following statements have been received from the local business community:

Dr Diane Savory OBE DL, Chair, Cheltenham Economic Recovery Task Force

I am writing to you on behalf of the Cheltenham Economic Recovery Taskforce following the recent update received regarding the ice rink.

Working in partnership is key to successful delivery and the event of the ice rink in Cheltenham, will not only bring much needed footfall to the town post pandemic but also confidence to existing businesses and future investors on Cheltenham's commitment to economic recovery. Clearly, time is of the essence to secure such an event for Christmas 2021 and I very much hope that this can be achieved.

The Task Force's vision is to be bold, be swift and be brave and I think the ice rink opportunity embraces this thinking.

Erol Uray – General Manager, Queens Hotel, Cheltenham

I just want to highlight that the Queens is fully supportive of the Ice Rink in the Imperial gardens over Christmas. I think it is great attraction for the town. It will encourage more visitors and shoppers to come into town and at the same time stay.

It is important the pandemic that we show that Cheltenham is still a major town and attractive at any period of the year. The ice Rink is something we did not have before and I think it will be very popular and exciting.

Belinda Hunt, on behalf of the Board of Cheltenham BID

It has been the BID's desire to see a Christmas offering in Cheltenham that not only competes with other towns and cities in the region, but surpasses what they can offer.

We have taken steps to achieve this and as you are aware, have had the ambition of bringing an ice rink to Cheltenham for several years. We appreciate the council's position and commitment to making this happen.

The BID board is of the opinion that having an ice rink in Cheltenham during this festive period is essential and as such would lend its support in any way possible. The BID's view is that:

- *The ice rink, coupled with the extended markets and enhanced Christmas lights, would provide an offering which would go beyond those of the likes of Gloucester, Worcester and Bristol. It would put Cheltenham at the top of the list of destinations to visit, alongside Bath, Cardiff and Birmingham. In a time when competition for local, regional and national visitors is so strong, Cheltenham needs this ice rink to take it further down the road to economic recovery.*
- *Sustained community involvement and engagement is vital for a place to thrive and grow. To achieve this, local people need to be encouraged and given a reason to have a sense of pride in the place they live and work. An ice rink in Cheltenham, particularly on the back of the past 18 months, would help to build community confidence in the desire of the council to be proactive in ensuring the future growth of the town for the benefit of everyone.*
- *The return on investment is likely to be long term. Combined with the enormous investment the council is committing to other major projects, Cheltenham would be seen as a place for businesses and people with an ambition to develop and grow.*

TURF would be very pleased to have such a great event staged in Cheltenham this Christmas. It would very much aid the economic recovery for the town and the hospitality community as well as providing another opportunity for fun for all!

Oliver Williams, Property Director, StayLets, Cheltenham

Bringing an ice rink back to Cheltenham is something that the town has been waiting for for a while. We think it's a wonderful draw for visitors to the town, especially alongside the Christmas Markets, but also offers a special opportunity for those living in the town to really ramp up the festive spirit – something we're all looking forward to after the past couple of years!!

The Cheltenham Trust

An appealing Christmas offer is vital to support Cheltenham's economy as it recovers from the pandemic and to continue to attract the community, and visitors from further afield, back into Cheltenham. The ice rink will strengthen further the town's Christmas offer and increase the opportunity for surrounding businesses to benefit from increased footfall over this crucial trading period. The Garden Bar Orangery, run by The Cheltenham Trust, looks forward to complementing the Christmas market and ice rink, helping to create an attractive visitor destination in the town centre.

Vicki Patterson, Marketing Director, KIBOU Restaurants

We're excited to see that plans are back in place to add a little sparkle to Cheltenham this Christmas and think the ice rink will be a great draw to the town. The staycation boom has definitely benefited footfall and trade over the summer months, and initiatives such as this will enhance the town's status as the perfect getaway destination for a little festive fun, plus offer residents something special too.

Christmas is hugely important to all in the hospitality trade, but it's also one of the most competitive, so we welcome any support in driving footfall to the area and enhancing the experience for visitors and residents when they are here.

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