CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of
ECONOMY AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 24 January 2011
6.00 pm
Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham, GL50 9SA

Membership	
Councillors:	Malcolm Stennett (Chairman), Garth Barnes, Tim Cooper, Paul Massey (Deputy Chair), Paul McLain, Lloyd Surgenor, Pat Thornton, Andrew Wall and Peter Jeffries
Other Members:	

The Council has a substitution process and any substitutions will be announced at the meeting

Agenda

1.	**APOLOGIES**	
2.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**	(Pages 1 - 2)
3.	**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**	(Pages 3 - 10)
4.	**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS** None	
5.	**MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE** A. By Council - None B. By Cabinet - None	
6.	**BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS**	
7.	**PARKLIFE** Keith Rogg from Parklife will give an update on progress (30 mins)	
8.	**TOURISM AND MARKETING STRATEGY**	(Pages 11 -

	A report of the recommendations of the tourism and marketing working party (20 mins)	48)
9.	**INTERIM BUDGET 2011/12 (INCLUDING HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT)** A report of the Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development and Chief Finance Officer (45 mins) **Please refer to the Cabinet budget papers of 21 December 2010 which were circulated to all members and relevant officers on 17 December 2010 as these will not be reprinted for this meeting.**	(Pages 49 - 52)
10.	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** Date of next meeting : 7 March 2011	(Pages 53 - 54)

Andrew North
Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EBI Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: ……………

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

NAME

You are asked to complete this form if you intend to declare an interest in connection with any item on this agenda.

Please hand any completed form to the committee administrator at the meeting.

You are reminded that you are still required to declare your interest orally at the commencement of the committee's consideration of the matter.

Agenda item	*Personal interest	*Prejudicial Personal interest	Nature of interest

* The Council's Code of Members Conduct explains what is a 'Personal Interest' and a 'Prejudicial Interest'. The Code is set out in Part 5A of the Council's Constitution.

This page is intentionally left blank

Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 29th November, 2010
6.00 - 7.50 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Malcolm Stennett (Chairman), Garth Barnes, Nigel Britter (In place of Pat Thornton), Tim Cooper, Peter Jeffries, Paul Massey, Paul McLain, Lloyd Surgenor and Andrew Wall
Co-optees:	
Also in attendance:	Councillor Colin Hay, Councillor Steve Jordan and Councillor John Webster

Minutes

1. **APOLOGIES**
   Apologies were received from Councillor Pat Thornton and the committee wished her well following her recent operation.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
   None received.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**
   The minutes of the meeting of 20 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

4. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**
   None received.

5. **MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE**
   No matters were referred to Committee.

6. **BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBERS**
   Leader
   Regarding Local Enterprise Partnerships, he advised that the status of the Gloucestershire/Swindon/Wiltshire bid was currently amber. He understood that the county council had received some government advice on how the bid could be improved. Consequently the bid was still ongoing.

   He informed members that the Inward Investment Group had been working with Kraft but the company now had processes in place for supporting its staff so no further work from the group was needed. The group were focusing on the barriers to inward investment, some of which could be accidental barriers such as restrictions imposed by conservation regulations. A meeting had been

arranged for January between officers and businesses to discuss this matter. The group was also looking at marketing. In order to make best use of limited resources the strategy was to target potential businesses who may be interested in investing in Cheltenham using existing contacts. Although Gloucestershire First would continue to support the Inward Investment Group, it was originally set up as a temporary group and therefore a meeting had been arranged in January to review its future role.

In response to a comment from the chair at the last meeting regarding the involvement of manufacturing industries, he advised that Spirax had been invited to join the Business Partnership but he was informed at the meeting that they had declined.

In response to a question from a member, he advised that the Inward Investment Group were not in a position to offer any financial incentives to businesses but they relied on emphasising the attractions of the town. There may be funding which could be accessed at a county level and any bids would be co-ordinated by Gloucestershire First or the local enterprise partnership once it was set up.
The Leader shared the concern of a member that companies could be deterred by planning regulations and more flexibility might be needed. However decisions must be the remit of Planning and the Planning Committee.

Cabinet Member Corporate Services
Regarding Strategic Commissioning, he advised that a key issue was agreeing how members wished to be engaged in the project going forward. The section 4 report would be going to Council in December and if the new arrangements were supported there would be a need for subsequent decisions to be scrutinised.

7.   **CHELTENHAM FESTIVALS SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**
The chair welcomed Councillor Duncan Smith to the meeting, and invited him to introduce the report as chairman of the working group.

Councillor Smith explained that the Cheltenham Festivals Joint Working Group (CFJWG) had been formed 18 months prior and members had included Councillors Smith and Hay (previously Rawson) from Social and Community and Councillors Barnes and Surgenor (previously Hutton) from Economy and Business Improvement, Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

He stressed the importance of Cheltenham Festivals to the town and that they are a valuable partner for the Council. The Festivals aim was to become a sustainable independent organisation which was less reliant on public funding.

The initial meetings of the group had focussed on the tender exercise for a new Box Office system at the Town Hall. Despite considerable efforts from everybody involved, the Festivals had decided to purchase their own box office system with a potential financial loss to the council of £70,000 largely due to lost commission on ticket sales. The Festivals had opted for a system which would provide a platform for their expansion in future years but was too expensive and offered far more facilities than the council needed.

Members had examined the three year business plan for the festivals and challenged various assumptions. They had concluded that the issues raised were answered satisfactorily and the plan was sustainable. Cheltenham Festivals were confident that their projections were realistic.

A number of key issues were identified that needed to be resolved urgently in order to allow progress (item 3.7 of the report).

The Chairman referred members to the six recommendations of the CFJWG, noting that recommendation 5 was put forward as a request from Cheltenham Festivals rather than a recommendation of the Working Group. In response to a question about the likely impact on the business plan if the council funding was reduced earlier, he advised that the business plan was structured on the assumption that the Festivals would be in a position to access Arts Council funding and funding from other agencies in 2012. For this to be achieved the Festivals would need to demonstrate a credible balance sheet and this is why the Festivals considered that the renewal of the council funding was critical at this stage.
Several members raised concerns that it was not acceptable to bind Cabinet to agreeing the funding outside of the budget debate. In response the chairman of the working group advised that section 5.6 of the report circulated had since been amended to give clarity to this matter and would now read as follows:

"Consequently the Review Group ask that Cabinet consider delaying any reduction to the grant until 2012 as part of the budget setting process, following a request by Cheltenham Festivals."

A member asked for clarification on the legal status of Cheltenham Festivals. He also questioned why the Festivals were requesting an extension of their grant if the business plan was sustainable. Regarding the risk assessment he questioned why there was any risk for the council if the Festivals were an independent organisation.

In response the chairman of the working group advised that Cheltenham Festivals was a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It had no legal connection with the council but the council had a Service Level Agreement in respect of the funding provided.

With regards to the risk assessment, the chairman of the working group suggested that the public may view Cheltenham Festivals as part of the council and certainly if the festivals failed then there would be public demand for the council to step in. The working group had felt it was important to minimise the risk to the council but not to underestimate them. The working group were satisfied that the business plan was sustainable and aimed for a break even point in 2011. Continuation of the council funding was important to the Festivals in 2011 as this would be a critical year. They had also been assured by the Festivals that any part of the Festival programme which was not sustainable would cease.

A member raised the issue of the use of Imperial Gardens and Montpelier Gardens and asked for an explanation of the working groups thinking behind this recommendation. Other members raised concerns on behalf of local residents and visitors coming to the towns to use the parks. Cheltenham in Bloom also needed clarification on future plans.

In response, the chairman of the working group, said that some festival events were selling out in hours and there was potential for some events to attract more than 3000 people if a suitable venue was available. The Festivals had tried the racecourse and considered Pittville Park but were now looking for a marquee in Montpelier Gardens to hold these larger events. There was a risk that the Festivals would look outside Cheltenham for alternative bigger venues with a consequent impact on the economy of Cheltenham. Officers were currently in discussions with local residents and friends groups to develop a strategy on the use of the gardens.

In response to a question about the scrutiny of the Service Level Agreement, Councillor Walklett advised that he had
been a member of the small working group responsible for this. They had talked with Cheltenham Festivals and examined the paperwork in some detail and were satisfied that the Festivals had fufilled their objectives and indeed commended them for the progress they had made. They did have some reservations about some of their future plans and these were noted.

The Chairman moved to consider the recommendations. He suggested that although the committee were happy to endorse the recommendations, there was the opportunity to ask Cabinet to take note of the comments from this meeting particularly with regard to the need for sensitivity and public consultation regarding the future use of the Gardens.

RESOLVED THAT the recommendations of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Festivals Working Group as set out in the report be endorsed and they be recommended to Cabinet (subject to the amendment of paragraph 5.6 in the report) and that Cabinet note the comments made at this meeting when considering the recommendations.

8. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**
The policy and performance manager introduced his report which had been circulated with the agenda. The report had come to this committee to enable them to review the corporate performance of the organisation at the end of Quarter 2 – April to September 2010 and to make any comments and observations in order that Cabinet can agree the report at its meeting on 7 December.

Members raised various questions on the presentation of the information in the report. For example some outcomes were reported as green even though some of the milestones and indicators were not on target and members wanted to know what criteria were used for making this judgement. It was also important that they could trust that the overall status was correct. They also commented that there was too much information and at previous meetings they had requested an exception report.

The Assistant Chief Executive explained that the Senior Leadership Team played an important role in challenging the information in this report and agreed to take back the points raised.

RESOLVED THAT:
   1. **The Q2 performance be noted**

Future reports be presented in a exception format with sufficient information to enable members to challenge where targets were not being met.

9. **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. The council had acknowledged that members need to be aware of the corporate risks which may impact on the council and the decisions it takes. The risk register had been updated by the Senior Leadership Team in November and set out progress against mitigating actions. Members were asked to consider the document before it went to Cabinet on 7 December 2010 and identify any additional risks or actions to be brought to Cabinet's attention.

A member commented that the risk register as presented did not highlight the exceptions. This committee should be focusing on the risks where the mitigating actions are below target and asking why this was the case.

The Assistant Chief Executive agreed to take this on board and in future would provide an exception report showing movements and attach the full corporate risk register as an appendix.

RESOLVED THAT:
1. **The Corporate Risk Register be noted.**
2. **Future reports be presented on an exception basis with the corporate risk register as an appendix.**

10. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member Finance and Community Development and the Group Accountant Martyn Scull, Group Accountant to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. The report explained that during summer 2010 additional budget consultation was undertaken. This consisted of 21 road shows in various venues across the town. Residents were asked to use sticky dots to identify services they thought should be 'protected', 'reduced' and 'stopped' and during this process over 21,000 sticky dots were used. Residents found it easier to mark services to protect and reduce but much more difficult to mark those to stop. Officers and Members had been able to answer most of the questions raised by residents. "Back office" costs had been included in all of the costs shown as it was impossible to run services without them.

This was not a scientific exercise but did engage the public. The two appendices showed the results from this consultation, ranked in order, one in chart form and one in a table with figures.

The budget gap was £2.6million and he was now seeking the views of this committee on how the council should save money.

A member asked the Cabinet Member for his assessment of the current operational efficiency level of the council. In his view, this is where any

commercial business would be looking to make savings. The Cabinet Member considered that the council was very efficient and in the order of 85%. By drilling down into individual departments and using approaches such as systems thinking, there was the potential to drive further efficiency savings and this must be a matter for ongoing review. However he stressed that the current budget would be 'close to the bone' and therefore they would be less scope for cuts in the future.

Members raised some concerns about the importance that the Cabinet would give to the results of the public consultation. With very little narrative given to the public, the views expressed were subjective and the nature of the consultation meant that they were self selecting.

In response the Cabinet Member acknowledged that the council would get better at consultation. He stressed that the public had welcomed the opportunity to be consulted and the value of the consultation had been to highlight areas which needed to be looked at in more detail. The Council could then consider these with their additional awareness of priorities.

A member highlighted that changes in legislation regarding strategic planning and building control could enable the council to charge more for its services.

In response to a question from a member about the reliance on Strategic Commissioning to bridge the budget gap, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the medium-term financial strategy relied on the commissioning approach to drive down costs in finding new and appropriate ways to deliver services.

The chair concluded that the committee had mixed feelings about the value of the consultation but overall he thought it was a useful marketing exercise. He pointed out that the areas highlighted in the budget consultation for stopping or reducing services would only make a small contribution to the budget gap and therefore the council must be looking to reduce staffing costs and improve efficiency. At this stage the committee had no information on this to comment any further.

A member suggested that more effective scrutiny of the budget could be carried out if they received a quarterly update report. This was already produced for Cabinet.

RESOLVED THAT the committee receive a quarterly budget monitoring report in the future

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
The date of the next meeting was 24 January 2011 and the scrutiny workplan was noted.

Malcolm Stennett
Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Social & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
10th January 2011

Economy & Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

24th January 2011

Developing a Marketing & Tourism Strategy

Report of the Tourism & Marketing Working Party

Accountable member	**Cabinet Member Sport & Culture, Councillor Andrew McKinlay**
Accountable officer	**Assistant Director Wellbeing & Culture, Sonia Phillips**
Accountable scrutiny committee	**Social & Community and Economic Business & Improvement**
Ward(s) affected	**All**
Key Decision	**No**
Executive summary	The Council's business plan, approved by Council on March 30th 2009, included a milestone to produce a marketing and tourism strategy for Cheltenham in order to maximise opportunities to attract UK based and overseas visitors and investors. In June 2009 the Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Social & Community and Economic & Business Improvement approved a decision to form a small, time limited working party to develop the strategy. The attached draft Marketing & Tourism Strategy is a result of the work undertaken by the Working Party and is reflective of feedback received from both parent Scrutiny Committees and stakeholders in the business and tourism community.
Recommendations	**The Marketing & Tourism Strategy is approved and goes forward for Cabinet approval.**

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

Financial implications	Any savings resulting from an implementation of an approved merger of the Tourism Information Centre and Art Gallery & Museums teams will be reflected the medium term financial strategy. (see 2.1) **Contact officer: Sarah Didcote,** **sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264125**
Legal implications	None directly arising from this report **Contact officer: Nicolas Wheatley,** **nicolas.wheatley @tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272695**
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	These plans include the creation of a single Marketing team within the merged service team. The main HR implication is around the creation of a single team to be achieved through the merger of the Tourist Information Centre Team and the Art Gallery & Museum Visitor Services. Informal consultation has been ongoing and the Unions are aware of the proposals. Dependent on the outcome of the HLF bid, the formal restructure process should commence April 2011. The merger of the two teams is set to realise savings in 2012-13 as identified in the budget proposals. Any post reductions, including any requirement for compulsory redundancies, will be identified as the restructure process progresses. The Council's policies regarding managing change (and any process to manage redundancy) will be followed, including assessing any associated cost implications. **Contact officer: Donna Sheffield,** **donna.sheffield@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774972**
Key risks	The key risks are set out within Appendix 1 of this report.
Corporate and community plan Implications	Strengthening our economy. Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.
Environmental and climate change implications	The impact and potential conflict between sustained and improved tourism against environmental and climate change programmes was identified as a key issue within the Strategy. There will be a need to ensure that full consideration is given to the environmental impact when delivering the action plan.

1. Background

1.1 The Council's business plan included a milestone to produce a marketing and tourism strategy for Cheltenham in order to maximise opportunities to attract UK based and overseas visitors and investors.

1.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committees of Social & Community and Economic & Business Improvement approved a decision to form a small, time limited working party to develop the strategy. The working group consisted of Councillors Rawson, Ryder, Holliday and Karl Hemming who were all members of the Social and Community O&S Committee when the group met and similarly Councillors Cooper, Stennett and Whyborn from the Economy and Business Improvement O&S Committee. The working group last met in February 2010 and were supported by officers from Wellbeing & Culture and the Town Centre Manager. The Tourism & Marketing Working Group embarked upon a consultative process of engaging with a cross section of the business and tourism community, which included retail, culture and business sectors in order to seek their views upon Cheltenham as a visitor destination and how it currently markets itself.

1.3 In addition to this, the Working Group considered the key issues raised at the branding workshop convened in November 2009, and also reviewed financial and visitor data of the council's existing tourism and marketing provision.

1.4 As a result a consultative draft Marketing & Tourism Strategy was presented to both Scrutiny Committees, which was subsequently circulated to stakeholders within the wider business and tourism community between May and June 2010. Feedback from a number of external stakeholders was received with the intention of presenting the revised and final version to both Committees in September prior to the Strategy going forward for Cabinet approval.

1.5 During the period of consultation announcements regarding the significant reductions in public sector funding were made by the new coalition government, along with its intention to abolish a number of agencies and bodies. These changes were likely to effect national and regional and partnership bodies responsible for tourism, as well as funding levels at County & District level.

1.6 In light of this uncertainty it was felt appropriate to await confirmation of the level to which tourism was to be affected by these changes and the funding reductions nationally, regionally and locally, before bringing the Strategy back through Scrutiny.

1.7 Announcements regarding changes to a number of government funded bodies, as well as the Comprehensive Spending Review were made recently. Whilst the full impact of the announcements is still yet to be clearly understood, it is felt that the strategy has now reached a point where it can come forward for approval by both parent Committee's before going forward for approval by the Cabinet.

1.8 Whilst there has been disappointment with the time delay that has occurred in moving the Strategy forward, it is hoped that the reasons given for the delay are accepted and understood.

2. Progress to date

2.1 Despite the delay officers within the Tourism team have been working towards the delivery of a number of actions and improvements identified within the action plan during the year. The progress of this work is :

  ➢ The merger of the Tourist Information Centre Team and the Art Gallery & Museum Visitor Services is progressing well - new job roles/structures have been graded and formal consultations have commenced with the Unions. The formal consultation process with the affected teams will start from January 2011. These plans include the creation of a single

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

Marketing team within the merged service team.

➢ Merger of the individual visitor guides from Cheltenham, Gloucester and the wider Cotswolds to one guide, and this will be launched for 2011. The savings generated has resulted in a review of the current Tourism website being undertaken to consider changes to the design scheme and to include more selling/commissioning/advertising opportunities to boost income generation.

➢ The Museum, Arts & Tourism Manager now sits on the Cheltenham Inward Investment working group meeting - and has been tasked with developing links between Economic Development and the draft Tourism Marketing Strategy. It is envisaged that this will result in the development of strategic working partnerships, projects and activities through marketing Cheltenham and the wider Cotswolds.

➢ Review of the Cotswold and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) was completed in April. New working arrangements with DMO have been put in place, as a result a new Executive Officer Group completed a review its strategy & work programme taking account of the recently launched Visit England Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010-2020.

➢ Work with Gloucestershire First & the DMO is reflective of the strategy and work programme which focuses on 4 key interdependent objectives, which align to the national strategic plan while focusing on the local level. The key objectives are:
• To increase England's global market share,
• To offer destinations of distinction,
• To champion a successful thriving tourism industry
• To develop greater engagement between the visitor and the experience.

- Work is focused on developing media relations - to promote the area and increase our global market share; setting up the new Boardroom Style.com to ensure we offer new "attractions" and continue the development of our thriving tourism industry; and the publication of our one joined-up Accommodation Guide for 2011 to help the visitor combine a number of experiences in a single day and then relax overnight at one of our many high quality establishments.
- A significant project for the Group and Board for this year and next will be how we develop, manage and deliver tourism information. This project is going to take an in depth look at:
- how we manage our data on the Destination Management System (DMS) and web;
- how our customers can access that information, whether it be on the web, out of hours, at our Visitor Information Centres, or elsewhere;
- the quality of our service provision at these access points, and much more.
The work will now be absorbed with the Tourism service plan.

2.2   The Cabinet Member for Sustainability is currently working on a scheme to encourage sponsorship of roundabouts and green spaces by businesses and community groups.

3.   Consultation and feedback

3.1   The Marketing & Tourism Working Group met 5 times during the period September 2009 and March 2010. The Tourism & Marketing Working Group embarked upon a consultative process of engaging with a cross section of the business and tourism community, which included retail, culture and business sectors in order to seek their views upon Cheltenham as a visitor destination and how it currently markets itself.

3.2   In addition to this, the Working Group considered the key issues raised at the branding workshop

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

convened in November 2009, and also reviewed financial and visitor data of the council's existing tourism and marketing provision.

3.3   As a result a consultative draft Marketing & Tourism Strategy was presented to both Scrutiny Committees, which was subsequently circulated to stakeholders within the wider business and tourism community who had been engaged initially.

3.4   The Working Party received the following feedback from external stakeholders during the consultation period May – July 2010.

- A generally positive response was received from the Cheltenham Arts Council.

- A generally negative response was received from the Chairman of the Cheltenham Hospitality Association (who has subsequently stood down) who commented (among other things) on littering, the amount of financial support being given to the Everyman Theatre by the Borough Council, the need to withdraw funding from twinning activities, the risk of over-providing hotel and bed & breakfast accommodation, and the amount of gum deposited on the streets.

- A joint response from a hotelier and two other guesthouse proprietors made a number of points, including what they considered to be the repetitiveness of the draft document. They suggested a pedestrian underpass at Boots Corner and the leasing of the Pump Room to an experienced private operator. They also objected to the relocation of the TIC to the Art Gallery and Museum site, believing that it should be in a retail unit in the town centre.

- Response from the Chief Executive of the Everyman Theatre, commented on what he considered to be the lightness of the background data.   He suggested that the entertainments venues and Festivals could be more effective if they worked together; and urged the Council to give more thought to the future of the Town Hall, bearing in mind that major music and comedy acts seem to be moving away to larger venues.

4.   Performance management –monitoring and review

4.1   Should the Strategy be approved the action plan will be built into the council's performance management framework and and service planning process on an annual basis

Report author	Contact officer: Sonia Phillips sonia.phillips@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 774973
Appendices	1. Risk Assessment
Background information	1. Draft Tourism and Marketing Strategy 2. Corporate Business Plan 2. Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report: June 2009 – Developing Marketing & Tourism Strategy. 3. Overview & Scrutiny Discussion Paper : March 2010 4. Overview & Scrutiny Briefing Note: November 2010

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

Risk Assessment

<div style="text-align: right">Appendix 1</div>

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1.01	If the council fails to plan for future tourism and marketing provision this may result in Cheltenham failing to maintain and improve it's position within the economic, tourism and business sector.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Ensure strategic decisions for marketing and tourism are reflective of future economic and business trends.	Feb.2011	JL	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.02	If the council fails to understand the importance of marketing and tourism within the town's economic and business community this may result in lost partnership or funding opportunities at a time when there is great pressure on the council to achieve savings and continued efficiencies.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Engagement with key external stakeholder partners was a integral part of the draft Tourism & Marketing Strategy resulting in shared knowledge and understanding of responsibilities, challenges and need to maximise future partnership opportunities.	Feb 2011	JL	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.03	If the council fails to integrate the strategy within the corporate strategy and commissioning framework this may result in the action plan not being delivered.	SP	December 2010	4	1	4	Accept	Once strategy has been approved actions will be incorporated into the corporate strategy 2011/12 and appropriate service plans. Outcomes identified in the strategy will be used to inform commissioning activity.	March 2011	SP	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register
1.04	If the council does not integrate the strategy with the emerging Local Enterprise Partnership framework this may result in Cheltenham failing to be in a position to develop future	SP	December 2010	3	2	6	Reduce	Ensure close working with the economic development team and Gloucestershire First to try and sustain business and economic development	March 2011	JG	Policy & Performance risk register

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

<div style="text-align: right">Page 16</div>

								opportunities locally from which Cheltenham will benefit. Lobby to ensure that tourism, marketing and inward investment are seen as key priority areas for the new LEP.			
business and economic opportunities.											
1.05	If the council fails to understand the needs of existing and future visitors to Cheltenham this will result in a downturn in visitor numbers and investors in the town.	SP	December 2010	4	2	8	Accept	Ensure regular and consistent approach to analysis of visitor surveys and customer information which is monitored and service improvement made as necessary.	March 2011	JL\GN\ SPet.	Wellbeing & Culture Risk register

O&S 2010\ Tourism & Marketing Strategy

covering report Jan 11 Final version

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Tourism and Marketing Strategy – 2nd draft

1. Why does Cheltenham need a tourism and marketing strategy?

Ever since Cheltenham developed and grew as a spa town in the 18th century, visitors have been a very important part of its life. Today they remain a crucial part of the economic life of the town, and it is important for Cheltenham Borough Council to have a clear strategy for maintaining and enhancing the characteristics that make Cheltenham attractive to visitors, and for marketing its attractions regionally, nationally and internationally.

2. What does this strategy aim to do?

This strategy aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- To evaluate the importance of visitors to Cheltenham and its local economy
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Cheltenham offer to visitors
- To consider what the threats are to Cheltenham's visitor economy
- To identify ways of strengthening the Cheltenham offer
- To consider what can be done to clarify and strengthen the Cheltenham 'brand'
- To consider what needs to be done to promote Cheltenham more effectively.

3. What is the strategic context?

This strategy is consistent with the Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy 2007-17, which describes tourism as "an important element in the Cheltenham economy". It also contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan, as part of Objective 2 (Strengthening the Economy) and links to the Gloucestershire Integrated Economic Strategy.

March 2010 saw the launch of a new Government Tourism Strategy, but this has now been overtaken by the change of Government. A new strategy is promised for early 2011. In the meantime, the Government has decided to abolish South West Tourism in its 'bonfire of the quangos', replacing it with looser partnerships and putting a question mark over the future of the regional tourism strategy. Our own strategy has therefore to be set within a fluid and developing national and regional policy framework and to be capable of responding to changes and opportunities as they occur.

4.   How important are visitors to Cheltenham?

The Cheltenham Borough Tourism Economic Impact Assessment for 2006 estimated that Cheltenham had a total of 1.8 million visitors in that year. Total expenditure by visitors was £121 million. Of this spend, 32% was on retail goods and services, 30% was on catering, 13% on accommodation and 11% on entertainment. At the same time, a total of 2,874 jobs in the borough were directly or indirectly related to tourism. These figures will have changed with the onset of the economic downturn, and now urgently need updating, but the point remains that tourism is a vital part of our prosperity.

5.   Why do visitors come to Cheltenham?

Cheltenham does not have a single dominant attraction, but visitors come here for a number of reasons, of which these are some of the most important:
- The town's historic architecture and beautiful gardens are a major draw.
- So too is the cultural life, including the festivals, which have a national and international reputation.
- The town has a prosperous commercial sector, with many successful businesses, many of which have been relatively successful in surviving the economic downturn.
- Cheltenham has excellent shopping, and is particularly well known for its boutique shopping and specialist markets.
- Cheltenham has a wide variety of eating places, including a number of very high quality restaurants, and has a relaxing and enjoyable café culture.
- Cheltenham has a vibrant evening economy, including restaurants, pubs and clubs.
- The race meetings at Cheltenham Racecourse, especially the Cheltenham Festival, are an international attraction.
- Cheltenham is a popular venue for conferences and for special events such as the Morgan Centenary celebrations in 2009.
- Visitors are drawn here to visit friends and relatives, and especially to visit students in the many educational centres in the town.
- Cheltenham is a base for touring and exploring the surrounding area, for example through the Romantic Road transport and hotel packages.

6.   How do visitors and non-visitors perceive Cheltenham?

There are clues as to how Cheltenham is perceived in the Profiling Research which the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) produced in 2008. This research segmented the UK visitor market as follows:

- Style Hounds (usually young, fashion conscious and style conscious)
- Cosmopolitans (active and confident, high spenders)
- High Street (mainstream, followers of high street fashion)

- Discoverers (independent, looking for new and educational experiences)
- Followers (strongly influenced by what people will think, risk averse)
- Traditionals (self-reliant, traditional values)
- Functionals (self-reliant, price driven but not risk averse)
- Habituals (largely inactive, low spending, traditional and risk averse)

In the research, the different segments had different ideas of what they associate with Cheltenham. Style Hounds were most likely to think that Cheltenham is old-fashioned, and associated the town most strongly with its historic attractions, cultural and sporting events. More than half of Cosmopolitans think that Cheltenham is old-fashioned and again associate the town most strongly with historic attractions and culture, though more than two thirds also associate the town with boutique shopping. The High Street segment and the Followers are least likely to see the town as old-fashioned but they are also least likely to see it as cosmopolitan – maybe because being cosmopolitan is not very important to them. Less than half of the High Street, Discoverers, Followers and Functionals segments associated Cheltenham with boutique shopping or specialist markets, though you would expect Discoverers to be interested in both.

The profiling research also analysed the ages and life stages of visitors and non-visitors to Cheltenham. This showed that:
- Visitors are more likely to be Traditionals.
- The High Street segment is likely to be strongly represented in those who would consider coming to Cheltenham.
- Non-visitors are most likely to be Discoverers, Followers and Habituals.
- In terms of age profile, there is a strong bias towards people over 51 years with no children at home (roughly 7 out of 10 of visitors), with a much smaller number of young families (less than 1 in 10).

7.   What market sectors do we want to appeal to?

The profiling research outlined above throws up a number of obvious conclusions.

- It is important that Cheltenham keeps its attractiveness to older people, traditionalists and mainstream High Street shoppers. From this point of view it would be a mistake to portray Cheltenham as a noisy, brash place or as an exclusive and expensive town.

- It seems that the town is not doing enough to appeal to Style Hounds, Discovers and Cosmopolitans, many of whom currently seem to have a negative view of Cheltenham, but all of whom can in reality find much to interest and appeal to them here.

- There is scope for developing the family market, as long as this is done in ways that do not alienate the older visitors.

8. What are the strengths of the 'Cheltenham offer'?

8.1 A high quality town centre

Cheltenham offers a relatively compact town centre with a variety of experiences readily at hand: high quality retailing; well-maintained and spacious parks in the shape of Imperial Gardens and Montpellier Gardens; high quality restaurants; an historic entertainment venue in the shape of the Town Hall; a renowned Art Gallery & Museum; and the unique Holst Birthplace Museum. The Promenade is widely regarded as one of the most attractive streets in England. Within walking distance of the town centre are the delightful Montpellier and Suffolks areas with distinctive characters and their mix of eating places and high quality retail.

8.2 An accessible town centre

The town centre is highly accessible, being ringed with car parks and having a bus station and bus stops right in the centre. Coach parking is available at North Place. The Cheltenham Spa rail station, though outside the town centre, is well connected to the centre by bus and taxi. Road links are good, especially to the M5 which runs just to the west of the town. Cheltenham also benefits from the fact that Gloucestershire Airport is nearby, with air passengers being just a five-minute taxi ride from Cheltenham Spa Station and also being well served by a frequent bus service to Cheltenham town centre.

8.3 Historic architecture

Cheltenham has only existed as a significant town for about two and a half centuries, and is not therefore an historic town in quite the same way as Gloucester or Cirencester. However it has a great deal of excellent architecture from the Regency and Victorian eras which the Borough Council over the years has been anxious to preserve. These buildings range from artisan housing to grand crescents and find their most glorious expression in Pittville Pump Room, built in 1825-30 in the austere Greek Revival style, which is in many ways an icon of Regency Cheltenham. In addition, outside the town centre but still within easy reach are the historic village of Prestbury and slightly further a field historic towns such as Winchcombe.

8.4 Parks, gardens and open spaces

Cheltenham has a valid claim to be one of England's major garden towns. 'A Town within a Park', a phase coined by a visitor from overseas, aptly describes Cheltenham's unique landscape, beautiful Regency and Victorian buildings enhanced by tree-lined streets and the extensive open spaces of our parks and gardens. The excellence of the town's parks and gardens does not rest exclusively on the efforts of the Borough Council but on the many voluntary organisations, friends' groups and businesses that help to maintain Cheltenham's green recreational areas to a high standard. This partnership working has enabled the town to win national acclaim in the RHS Britain in Bloom Competition and many gold accolades from Heart of England in Bloom along

with the coveted Green Flag status for Parks. The Council often organises floral trails which frequently include many private residents opening their gardens.

National praise has encouraged many visitors from overseas to see the floral displays at all seasons. Furthermore, parks and gardens are not just a feature of the town centre, but a major feature of life in almost every part of the town, including Pittville Park, Hatherley Park, Naunton Park, Hesters Way Park, Sandford Park, Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens, Jenner Gardens, Springfield Park, just to name a few. Parks also provide venues for events of many different kinds, including musical events.

The town also has a huge countryside recreational area at Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common, owned by the Borough Council and situated within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Formerly used for quarrying and agricultural purposes, it now lends itself to all kinds of activities, including walking, hiking, bird and butterfly watching, horse riding, hang gliding and mountain biking. A designated triple Site of Special Scientific Interest, the land is rich in ecology, geology and archaeology value, with wild flowers/grassland, deciduous and coniferous woodland and scrub which are all of national importance. It also offers spectacular views over the town and Severn Vale.

8.5   The retail experience

Cheltenham is well provided with a wide range of shops, from national and international chain stores to quality independent shops. The Promenade has its own distinctively stylish flavour and is home to long-established retailers as well as some of the UK's best-known fashion houses, shoe shops and bookstores. The High Street offers two major shopping arcades, the Regent Arcade and the Beechwood Shopping Centre, which contain many nationally known stores as well as smaller independent shops.

Towards the West End of the High Street is The Brewery, which offers shopping and a wide choice of family-friendly restaurants. A short walk from Cheltenham town centre are the Montpellier and Suffolks areas, with their distinctively continental feel, combining specialist boutiques, designer shopping, antiques and gift shops, together with pavement cafés and fashionable wine bars.   Neighbourhood shopping centres such as Bath Road and the Lower High Street mainly cater for local shopping but have the potential to attract visitors because of their distinctive character and interesting independent shops.

8.6   The evening economy

Cheltenham has a thriving evening and night time economy, which is the biggest to be found between Birmingham and Bristol. The town centre boasts venues and events for all ages and tastes – cafés, restaurants, cinema, theatre, festivals, pubs and clubs. The pubs and clubs alone make a very significant contribution to the local economy and cater for an average of 10,000 people per night.

8.7   The cultural offer

The Cheltenham Festivals

Cheltenham's Literature, Music, Jazz and Science Festivals are unique in being run by a single organisation, Cheltenham Festivals Ltd. All boast enviable international reputations as leaders in their field and have established Cheltenham as one of the leading UK cultural destinations for those seeking the best in literature, music and science. Festival programmes feature the most up-and-coming, controversial and entertaining international performers. Visitors talk about the 'Cheltenham experience' – the unique 'Festival buzz' and inspirational atmosphere that pervade the town when the Festivals are staged.

In 2010 Cheltenham Festivals sold 173, 353 tickets in addition to staging many free events across the town attracting an estimated 30,000 more people. The four Festivals increased total ticket sales by 14% on 2009. Turnover and income again increased year on year and recent research estimated the impact on the local economy is around £5.2 million, supporting 139 jobs. Around 60 % of Festival attendees come from within the county and of those a third live within Cheltenham Borough.

The Festivals also send out significant and positive cultural messages about the town. Media sponsors such as The Times and SKY Arts dedicate specific coverage to Cheltenham and BBC Radio has broadcast Festival events to around 36 million radio listeners this year alone. In addition, the coverage in newspapers and magazines equates to around £2.5 million of advertising spend for Cheltenham which has a significant impact on the town as a tourist destination. The Times Literature Festival recently won the 2010 Gold Award at the South West Tourism Excellence Awards, for the tourist event of the year.

Other festivals

Over the years Cheltenham has become the centre for a number of events which, though they are not part of the Cheltenham Festivals portfolio, nonetheless brand themselves as festivals. One of these, the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, is actually much older than the Music and Literature Festivals, dating back to the 1920s, and has a particularly important role in encouraging young talent. The Cricket Festival is another Cheltenham tradition, offering a fortnight of first-class cricket on the Cheltenham College grounds. Other festivals include the Folk Festival, the Wychwood Music Festival, the Greenbelt Festival, the Food and Drink Festival, the Ballroom Dancing Festival and, in 2010 for the first time, the Cheltenham Film Festival.   Each of these events draws a significant number of visitors to the town.

The Everyman Theatre

The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham's professional theatre, is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council but managed by the Everyman Theatre Company. It dates from 1891 and was designed by the pre-eminent Victorian theatre designer Frank Matcham. It is a distinguished theatre of national and regional importance, which in 2009/10 sold over

192,000 tickets. A breakdown of its audience has shown that 36% are from Cheltenham, 40% come from other parts of Gloucestershire, and the remaining 24% are from outside the county. It therefore makes a very significant contribution to attracting visitors to the town, with a total of 64% of its audience coming from outside the town. In addition, it is a major venue for Festivals events. The Theatre has now launched a £3m scheme to restore the historic auditorium and refurbish the foyer and catering areas, to which the Borough Council has agreed to make a financial contribution.

Cheltenham Town Hall

The Town Hall has been the major centre for music and cultural events in the town since it was built in 1903. It is the main venue for Cheltenham Festivals and also has its own year-round programme ranging from orchestral music to stand-up comedy for which it sold over 278,000 tickets in 2009 (an increase of almost 20,000 on 2008). The recent installation of a new box office system should mean that in the future we will be able to quantify what proportion of the audience are local and how many are visitors.

Pittville Pump Room

The Pump Room is a magnificent reminder of the glory days as a spa, a Grade I listed building, and the only place in Cheltenham where the spa waters can still be taken. It is open to visitors free of charge when events are not taking place there. In addition, the building is widely used as a venue for Festival concerts and other concerts, with its programme being arranged and promoted alongside the Town Hall programme. It is also an increasingly successful venue for wedding receptions and other private functions. The upstairs rooms have (as yet largely unexploited) potential for small conferences and business meetings.

Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum

The Art Gallery dates from 1899 and the Museum from 1907. Today, its arts and artefacts include a nationally important collection of works from the Arts and Crafts Movement. It also hosts many touring collections. Currently over 65,000 visitors a year come to the Art Gallery & Museum and its outreach work reaches another 6,000 people. However it is hoped to begin on a major refurbishment and redevelopment of the buildings in 2011, which will result in a major expansion of the gallery space. As part of the improvements, a walkway through to Church Walk and St Mary's Church will be created and the Tourist Information Centre will move to a ground-floor location in the refurbished building.

The Holst Birthplace Museum

The Holst Birthplace Museum is the Regency terrace house where Gustav Holst, composer of The Planets was born in 1874. It tells the story of the man and his music alongside a fascinating display of personal belongings including his piano. It is also a fine period house showing the upstairs downstairs way of life in Victorian times. It is run by a charitable trust and relies significantly on voluntary help, which means that its

opening hours are limited. However, it is open to parties of visitors by arrangements, and hosts a number of temporary exhibitions and special events each year.

The Playhouse Theatre

The Playhouse Theatre is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council but managed by a voluntary body, the Playhouse Theatre Company. It is Cheltenham's main venue for non-professional drama.

The Bacon Theatre

The Bacon Theatre is owned by and part of Dean Close School. The auditorium seats 566 people and provides a venue for a number of musical and dramatic events and lectures organised through the year by a variety of organisations.

The Gardens Gallery

The Gardens Gallery is Cheltenham's community art gallery for local artists to exhibit their work to the public and for other arts-related activities. It is owned by the Borough Council and run by a public-interest company.

Other arts spaces

The town has a number of privately owned galleries, for example the Darcy Gallery in Well Walk, which have the capacity to put on their own exhibitions.

The Parabola Arts Centre

The Parabola Arts Centre, completed in July 2009, is Cheltenham's newest cultural venue. It is owned by Cheltenham Ladies' College and includes a 320 seat theatre, complete with full orchestra pit. It hosts a diverse programme of drama, music and art.

8.8   The sports offer

In addition to the exciting mix of high profile sporting fixtures and festivals throughout the calendar year, Cheltenham also benefits from a number of high quality community sports facilities. Leisure@ Cheltenham, the towns major public leisure facility boasts a 33 metre pool with separate learner pools and diving pit, providing a fun day out for any visitor to the town. The centre also offers a double sports hall, squash courts, dance studios, a state of the art fitness suite and relaxing health spa.

During the summer months Sandford Park Lido offers outdoor swimming in stunning surroundings, and has recently been refurbished to a high standard thanks to the Lottery Heritage Fund. A number of private leisure and fitness facilities are also located within the town, whilst a number of schools also provide community access to sports halls and all weather pitches.

8.9   Cheltenham Racecourse

Cheltenham Racecourse is a major venue, both for racing and for conferences, festivals and other events. It has 17 days of racing spread over 8 fixtures each season, the most important of which is the Cheltenham Festival in March, which generates around £40 million of income for the town each year. The Festival attracts around 200,000 spectators every year. It has also been estimated that around 10,000 beds are filled each night in the Cheltenham area during Festival week. The Racecourse is therefore an extremely important contributor to the visitor economy in Cheltenham and to the town's reputation nationally and internationally. The Racecourse has become a regular venue for a number of cultural festivals and events, including the Christian festival Greenbelt, and the Wychwood Music Festival.

8.10   The Centaur Building

The Centaur Building is part of Cheltenham Racecourses' facilities, but is also a major venue in its own right for concerts, exhibitions, conferences and meetings of all sizes and ranks as the biggest conference venue between Bristol and Birmingham. Its auditorium holds up to 2,500 people and is frequently used for large Literature and Music Festival events which cannot be accommodated at the Town Hall.

8.11   Cheltenham's 'hinterland'

Cheltenham is marketed as the 'Centre for the Cotswolds', which is intended to tie in with the bigger and wider Cotswolds brand. It is clear that many of the attractions that bring people to Cheltenham are not in the town itself but further afield. They include historic towns like Cirencester and Winchcombe, historic sites such as Sudeley Castle and the many picturesque villages of the Gloucestershire countryside. Cheltenham and Gloucester are often seen as competitors for shoppers and visitors, but in many respects it might be more profitable to regard them as complementary, especially where shopping and culture are concerned.

8.12   Eating places

Cheltenham is well known for the variety of eating experiences that it offers, including more than one hundred restaurants and cafés. Among them are a number of restaurants of true distinction and widespread fame, some of which boast major national and international awards. Cheltenham also has a number of highly rated pubs. Contrary to the widely-held image of Cheltenham as a conservative and old-fashioned place, the restaurant scene in the town is amazingly varied and highly cosmopolitan. In recent years, Cheltenham has developed a relaxed 'café society' ambiance, especially in the Promenade, Montpellier and the Suffolks.

8.13   Hotels

The hotel industry in Cheltenham offers a variety of hotels, ranging from international and national brands such as the Mercure Queens Hotel to a number of budget hotels and small hotels. The standard of accommodation is high.

Capacity is also good. The Hotel Capacity Study prepared for the Joint Core Strategy in July 2009 estimated that Cheltenham offers 20 hotels with 1,098 bedrooms. Since then the Kandinsky Hotel with 60 rooms, has re-opened as the Montpellier Chapter Hotel; and the Hotel de la Bere has undergone refurbishment and is reopening early in 2011 as Ellenborough Park with 60 rooms (although it falls outside the scope of the Study).

The Study found that 270,000 rooms were 'sold' in Cheltenham in 2008, which represents 68% occupancy. It also identified 343 rooms in bed and breakfast accommodation. The main hotels can also provide venues for business meeting and small conferences.

8.14   Educational institutions

The University of Gloucestershire, the Gloucestershire College and the major independent schools (Cheltenham College, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close School and St Edward's and a number of other private educational institutions) contribute significantly to the 'visitor economy'. They also provide facilities that can be used for conferences and cultural events. A notable example is the Ladies' College which recently opened its Parabola Arts Centre. Cheltenham also has a number of language schools that bring visitors to the town.

8.15   Twinning links

Cheltenham has twinning and friendship links with towns in France, Germany, the USA, Russia, China, the Netherlands and Kenya. These links help to promote the reputation of Cheltenham abroad, facilitate educational, cultural and sporting exchanges, and undoubtedly bring visitors to the town. The relationship with Weihai in China is particularly significant for the future, especially as there is considerable interest on both sides in developing educational and business links. Cheltenham is a very popular destination for students from China and France who come to study English or to attend the business school in Gloucestershire University.

9.   What are the weaknesses of the 'Cheltenham offer'?

9.1   Town Centre

There is clearly a need and opportunity to improve the town centre, which the Borough Council, County Council and other stakeholders have already identified, with the formation of the Cheltenham Development Task Force in January 2010. The Task Force has been continuing with the work started under the Civic Pride to revitalise Cheltenham's urban environment. Several parts of the town centre fall well below what you would expect to see in a town of Cheltenham's distinction. The route into town along the Tewkesbury Road and Swindon Road looks unprepossessing and devoid of greenery. The former coach station site (now North Place car park) on St Margaret's Road is effectively a derelict site waiting for regeneration. So too is the Portland Street car park, which faces Trinity Church and a pleasant row of 19th century residential properties. In Royal Well Road, the impressive sight of Royal Crescent is marred by the

ugly rear of the Municipal Offices which faces it on the other side of the road. All of these unsatisfactory features, so close to the centre of town, undermine Cheltenham's claim to be an elegant and beautiful town.

9.2   Traffic and parking

Cheltenham is notorious for its complicated gyratory traffic system, though the fact that it has survived so long suggests that it is far from easy to come up with something better. One particularly unsatisfactory feature of the traffic system is the way the High Street is severed by the Royal Well/Clarence Street/North Place traffic route. The effect of this is to cut off the High Street west of Boots Corner from the rest of the High Street and add to air pollution in the town centre. This is another issue which is currently being addressed by the Cheltenham Development Task Force.

Although studies suggest that car parking in Cheltenham is adequate for demand, it can be quite difficult for visiting motorists to find car parking spaces, especially at busy times of the year. A bad experience of trying and failing to find a convenient parking space can easily put off a visitor from returning to the town.

Also, the town will suffer the loss of just over 500 car parking spaces when the North Place and Portland Street car parks are redeveloped as part of the Civic Pride scheme. The number will drop from 813 spaces at present to a possible 300.

9.3   Signage

The lack of satisfactory signage is often mentioned by visitors to Cheltenham. It is possible for a stranger to the town to visit without finding their way to the town centre, let alone to the specific attractions they may be looking for. Signage on the approaches is also inadequate and does not do enough to flag up the town's major attractions. For example, signage to Pittville Pump Room and leisure@Cheltenham is particularly unsatisfactory.

10.   What are the threats to Cheltenham's 'visitor economy'?

10.1 Retail

In a situation where other towns in the region, for example Bath and Gloucester, are improving their retail offer, there is an obvious danger that the Cheltenham offer will fall behind. In particular, the Borough Council's own research has suggested that there is a need for more large retail units that can accommodate major national and international stores.   However it is also important that Cheltenham should not become a 'me too' shopping town or choose to allow major retail development on the edges of the town that could damage the town centre.

10.2 Cultural venues

Although the Town Hall is a delightful venue and has achieved growing commercial success in recent years, it needs significant improvements to bring it up to date with the needs of the 21st century. Plans have been drawn up to improve the Town Hall but have not yet progressed due to a lack of capital finance. Prolonged failure to improve the facilities at the Town Hall will threaten Cheltenham's position as a major cultural centre.

10.3 Conference capabilities

While the Centaur Building at the Racecourse offers an excellent venue for larger gatherings, the management of Cheltenham Racecourse feel that they are hampered by the lack of a conference hotel on-site. They are therefore considering applying to build a 200-room hotel. This could be a difficult issue for the Borough Council, as the planning issues and the commercial considerations may be hard to balance.

10.4 Fear of crime

The large number of licensed premises in Cheltenham town centre creates a perceived risk of crime and anti-social behaviour in the town, especially late at night.

10.5 Global events

The world economic downturn has undoubtedly hit tourism, and part of the purpose of this strategy is to help tourism in Cheltenham to come out of the recession quickly and strongly. However, there may be other, longer-term issues with their origin in global events that threaten Cheltenham's visitor economy. One of these is a possible reduction in international and domestic travel and a rise in the cost of air travel resulting from the need to respond to climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Another is the possible impact of events such as future terrorist incidents which may create a greater unwillingness to travel. Both of these developments could significantly reduce the number of overseas visitors, thus making it necessary for the Council to intensify its efforts to promote tourism to markets within the UK and to increase spend per visitor as visitor numbers fall.

11. How can the 'Cheltenham offer' be strengthened?

11.1 Regenerate the town centre

The Cheltenham Development Task Force project will regenerate the most unattractive sites in the town centre. It will create new public spaces and better routes through the town centre for pedestrians. All of these improvements will tend to make Cheltenham more attractive for visitors.

11.2 Strengthen the retail offer

The project also has the potential to improve Cheltenham's retail offer without resorting to edge-of-town or edge-of-centre developments that could damage the town centre. The major Civic Pride development sites offer potential for new retail development as part of mixed-use developments. If the Borough Council offices were to be relocated to another site – a possibility which is being considered as part of the council's emerging Accommodation Strategy – this would open up an opportunity to provide more of the boutique-style shopping which is a distinctive feature of the 'Cheltenham offer'.

11.3 Improve cultural venues

The Borough Council needs to develop a strategy for improving the Town Hall as a cultural venue in order to secure its position as a major cultural centre, though it may not be in a position to progress this immediately. .One option that should be considered is a Development Trust, along the lines that currently exists to redevelop the Art Gallery and Museum. The aim would be to match an amount of capital contributed by the Borough Council with funds raised from other sources such as charitable trusts and lottery funds. Given the strong interest which Cheltenham Festivals have in the future of the Town Hall, it is important that they should be involved in developing this strategy.

It is also important to recognise the positive impact that the redeveloped Art Gallery and Museum can have when completed. It will not only open up a pedestrian route through to St Mary's Church, but will become a centre for visitors as the new location of the Tourist Information Centre. The potential that it will have to host and promote a wide range of artistic and cultural events needs to be exploited.

11.4 Promote Cheltenham as a conference centre

The Borough Council has a continuing, active role to play in promoting conferences at locations, both council- and privately-owned, in Cheltenham. Pittville Pump Room has the potential to provide a venue for small conferences and business meetings in its upstairs rooms, but would require a modest level of investment in order to seize this opportunity.

11.5 Support the hospitality industry

Perhaps the most positive way in which the Borough Council can support the hospitality sector at present is to help it survive and recover from what has been a difficult and damaging recession.

The Hotel Capacity Study published in July 2009 suggests that hotel business will be badly hit by the recession (as indeed appears to be the case) and that hotel capacity in Cheltenham should remain constant for some time. However it suggests that, according to its own projection of demand, Cheltenham may well need 100 rooms coming on stream in 2013 and a further 50 in 2015. At a more optimistic level of demand, 100 rooms might be required in 2012, an additional 100 in 2014 and 50 more in 2016.

Caution is needed in applying these projections to actual decisions about the rate of hotel-building, as the revival in demand could well be slower than forecast. It would not be doing any favours to the hospitality industry or to the local economy generally to allow over-expansion of the hotel accommodation. It is possible that different considerations may apply to any proposal for a conference hotel at the Racecourse, where the developers would presumably argue that the hotel would generate additional conference business and that therefore the competitive impact on other hotels in the area would be correspondingly reduced.

11.6 Make car parking easier

One of the 'quick wins' of Civic Pride could be to install a system of electronic signage to point visitors to car parks where spaces are available. This would considerably improve the experience of visitors coming to Cheltenham by car.

However, the Cheltenham Development Taskforce, which is overseeing the Civic Pride initiative, has also identified an imbalance in the provision of car parking across the town, with a concentration of off-street parking capacity in the north and east of the town and an under-provision in the south and west.

This imbalance will be partially corrected when the North Place and Portland Street car parks are redeveloped, with a loss of around 500 spaces. But in addition, extra parking spaces may need to be provided in areas where they are currently in short supply. The Borough Council is currently working with the County Council on a joint parking strategy which will address this issue.

11.7 Improve signage to local attractions

The Borough Council, working with the County Council as Highways Authority, should review signage to local attractions. It is important that people can find their ways from out-of-centre locations to central points such as the Promenade, High Street, the major historic buildings and cultural venues and the Tourist Information Centre. It is also important that, once in the town centre, they should be able to navigate around it. Greater use of information boards in the town centre should be considered.

In addition, there is considerable scope for improving signage to visitor attractions along the main gateways into the town. For example, there would be benefit in having the town's major attraction listed on one brown sign on the approach roads to the town. These could include Regency architecture, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, the Holst Birthplace Museum and Pittville Pump Room. It is important that these issues are considered as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force project.

11.8 Develop new transport links

In recent years there has been growing discussion of creating a light rail link providing easy transport between points within Cheltenham, and between Cheltenham and Gloucester. Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce launched the idea of a community

railway in 2007. Recent advances in transport technology have made this idea potentially cheaper and easier to achieve than would have been the case only a few years ago. Supporters of the scheme say the first phase would connect Cheltenham Spa railway station with the racecourse, GCHQ and Gloucestershire Airport in Staverton. The next stage would be to link up with the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (GWR), which is currently extending the line north to Broadway.

The project would be well beyond the scope of the Borough Council to accomplish. However, if it proved a practicable undertaking for some kind of public-interest enterprise with Government and commercial support, it would clearly have significant benefits for Cheltenham. It would make it easier for visitors to the town centre to access the Racecourse and vice versa. It would also make it fast and easy for people in Gloucester to visit Cheltenham and vice versa. There would also be benefits in terms of reducing the volume of private cars and easing congestion on the roads. It would therefore constitute a significant enhancement of what Cheltenham has to offer its visitors. It is therefore important for the Borough Council to decide whether it wishes to support further exploratory work on this scheme.

11.9 Strengthen Cheltenham as an 'events town'

A striking feature of life in Cheltenham is the large number of events, ranging from cultural festivals to racing fixtures and from sports events to food and antiques markets. 'There's always something happening in Cheltenham' could almost be a motto for the town. An inspection of the town's calendar of events shows very few substantial gaps. However, it is important that the town, especially the Borough Council, should be proactive in attracting new events and welcoming and open-minded towards groups and businesses who wish to establish new events in Cheltenham. The potential for a Design Festival in Cheltenham is already under discussion and there is potential for other festivals such as an Arts and Crafts Festival or a Visual Arts Festival. The town's brand values (see section 12 below) should serve as a guide to which events are appropriate to Cheltenham and which may not be appropriate.

There may also be potential for retail events, perhaps at weekends during the year. These could possibly link in with existing events such as the Continental and French markets, in order to attract day visitors at times other than Christmas.

11.10 Strengthen Cheltenham's 'family' offer

Cheltenham has many features which make it an attractive place for families to come, including parks, sports facilities, the Art Gallery and Museum, many of the Festivals events, and family friendly shops and restaurants. However, Cheltenham's image as a sedate Regency town perhaps conceals these strengths. The Borough Council, working with the business and cultural communities, should look for opportunities to strengthen Cheltenham's appeal to families, especially in the summer holidays and the run-up to Christmas, and to promote the events and attractions that are available.

11.11 Manage crime and the perception of crime

It is clear from the statistics that crime in the town centre is being effectively managed. The number of reported crimes the town centre dropped from 5,265 in 2005/6, to 5,038 in 2006/7, to 4,050 in 2007/8, to 3,898 in 2008/9, with a further downward trend in the 2009/10 year. Police are predicting that the figures at 31st March 2010 will show a 45% drop in town centre crime over five years. In terms of violent crime the trend is also downward: 1,260 in 2005/6, 1,184 in 2006/7, 1,016 in 2006/7, 972 in 2008/9, with a further drop in the 2009/10 year. One of the main reasons for crime reduction in this area is a more focussed 'intelligence led' approach to policing the night-time economy.

This effective management needs to continue, with the Borough Council (especially through the use of its licensing powers), the police, the managements of licensed premises and other stakeholders all playing their part. It is also important that the perception of crime is also managed, so that the economy of the town is not damaged by exaggerated ideas of the risks of becoming a victim of crime.

12. What can be done to clarify and strengthen the Cheltenham 'brand'?

12.1 How important is branding?

A brand is the image of the product in the market. It is a collection of ideas and values which those promoting the product wish people to associate with it. It is also the starting point of any effective marketing programme, because it is the core of the message that we are trying to promote.

12.2 What brand values should Cheltenham represent?

It is hard to encapsulate in a single idea or slogan what Cheltenham's offer to visitors is. We are an historic Regency town; an historic spa; a garden town; a town of natural and architectural beauty; a centre for arts, culture and the creative industries; a pleasant place in which to relax, enjoy yourself and go shopping. In that sense, deciding on a brand for Cheltenham is not easy.

However, one important purpose of a brand must be to challenge incorrect perceptions. We have seen in section 6 above that the profiling research which the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO produced in 2008 found that many of the people surveyed who did not know Cheltenham thought it was an old-fashioned place, and not very cosmopolitan. The 'Cheltenham brand', has to address that issue by emphasizing that the town is a **vibrant** and **sophisticated** place.

Another important function of a brand is to emphasis key strengths. Although there are many facets to the visitor experience of Cheltenham, they are all associated in some way with **enjoyment**. They are often about the **beauty** of the natural or built environment. They are often about **high quality**, whether in the general environment, the cultural life, the shopping, or the eating experiences. They are often about

creativity, whether we are speaking of the creativity of musicians or the creativity of a landscape gardener, an architect or a cordon bleu chef.

In addition the very **diversity** of the pleasures and experiences Cheltenham offers must itself be an important attraction of the town and a crucial part of any Cheltenham brand.

Already, therefore, we have identified seven quite distinct brand values for Cheltenham:

Vibrancy
Sophistication
Beauty
Enjoyment
Quality
Creativity
Diversity

This is probably as many brand values as we need to shape our promotional activity.

12.3 The Cheltenham logo and strapline

A brand is usually associated with a logo and a slogan, though these are strictly speaking only a part of what makes a brand. In Cheltenham's case, our marketing material tends to use the image of a caryatid (the armless ladies of Montpellier Walk) as the iconic image of Cheltenham. It also uses – and has used for many years – the slogan or strapline 'Centre for the Cotswolds'.

The strapline communicates the brand value of beauty and also associates Cheltenham with its very famous and beautiful rural hinterland. Although it does not 'tick the box' for all the Cheltenham brand values, it communicates a genuine selling point in a simple and uncontrived way and links Cheltenham into the well-established and powerful Cotswolds brand.

Furthermore, the current branding seems to work. The DMO research in 2008 revealed that Cheltenham has the strongest associations of any major tourist destination in Gloucestershire in the minds of people surveyed.

12.4 Does Cheltenham need one brand or several?

Branding experts would argue that any product can only have one brand. The workshop convened in Cheltenham by the shadow Tourism Minister in November 2009 made a contribution to developing a 'Cheltenham brand' by arguing that the Cheltenham brand is confused, and that 'Centre for the Cotswolds', 'Cheltenham Spa' and 'Regency Cheltenham' are used in a fairly random way in signage and promotions. This point needs to be taken in the new signage that we suggest should be developed, though there seems to be no compelling reason why the rail station should need to drop the 'Spa' from its name.

However, there is a real practical difficulty in insisting that Cheltenham should always cling to a single brand whatever the circumstances. The difficulty is that a town of well over 100,000 people and many thousands of visitors is not like a chocolate bar or a soap powder. It is bound to have many varied facets and mean different things to different people. Brand cannot be a straitjacket that stops us promoting ourselves to the best advantage in any given situation.

A practical solution to this dilemma is that:

- All of Cheltenham's tourist signage should be consistent with the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' branding.

- All of Cheltenham's promotional material should as a general rule use the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' branding, though there may be a variation when the material is addressing a specialist audience (see below).

- All of Cheltenham's promotional material, whatever the audience it is addressing, should be consistent with the brand values set out above.

In addressing specialist audiences, it might be helpful to see the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' as an umbrella branding from which a number of strands or sub-brands can be drawn out – e.g. 'Centre for Festivals', 'Centre for World-Class Racing', 'Centre for Relaxed Shopping', 'Centre for Famous Restaurants', 'Centre for Parks and Gardens', 'Centre for the West' (when promoting the town as a centre for touring areas outside the Cotswolds) etc. We should also consider developing a cultural sub-brand under a strapline such as 'England's festival town', which would also have the advantage of embracing both the cultural Festivals and the racing Festival.

In practical terms, it is also necessary for the Cheltenham brand to fit within other, broader brands. There is already a strong Cotswolds brand, into which 'Centre for the Cotswolds' fits very well. There may also be a need to create brands for tactical purposes. For example, Cheltenham, Gloucester and a number of other districts have considered bidding as a group to be the City of Culture at some point in the future. For this purpose it might be necessary to go in under the banner of a Gloucestershire brand.

13. What needs to be done to promote Cheltenham more effectively?

13.1 Create a single marketing department for the Borough Council

Budget provision for marketing Cheltenham is not insignificant, with the Borough Council making an annual revenue budget allocation in 2010/11 of £104,000 to directly fund the marketing function. The budget is primarily used to fund officers who have a direct responsibility for marketing (2.5 FTEs). However it also includes an operational budget of £32,000 for the Council's marketing and promotional activity. This budget

should not be confused with the £306,000 allocation that the Council also makes for the management and operation of the Tourist Information Centre.

Whilst this sum is not small, the marketing function within the Council has become fragmented and diluted over recent years as a result of organisational changes that have taken place throughout the authority, which has left the function being spread thinly across a number of service areas and teams. This, coupled with the lack of a marketing and tourism strategy to provide vision and focus, has resulted in the marketing budget being spent year after year on the promotion of campaigns, events and activities that have no strategic alignment or justification.

This needs to be addressed. The Council's marketing needs to be reviewed with a view to creating a single marketing department which would not only co-ordinate the Council's own activities but work with partner organisations such as the major cultural providers and the business community.

13.2 Develop the role of the Tourist Information Centre

The Council's aspiration is to relocate the Tourist Information Centre to the redeveloped Art Gallery & Museum, which could become the centre of an information hub for visitors the town, as well as being virtually on the doorstep of the town's oldest building, the St Mary's Parish Church. But whether or not the relocation takes place, it is important to recognise the sheer quantity of day to day work the TIC does in attracting people to the town and making their stay pleasant. In 2009 it dealt with roughly 99,000 enquiries and placed over 800 bookings for accommodation, while our Visit Cheltenham website received well over 1.172 million hits. All of this work makes a measurable impact on the local economy.

It is also important to ensure that the TIC is well signposted; and also to look for opportunities to set up 'baby TICs' – displays and information boards – at other council buildings and other venues where visitors are likely to come, such as the railway station.

13.3 Make effective use of media and public relations

The Tourism section work hard to promote Cheltenham, its events and attractions, through media and PR work. It is important that the existing in-house resources for doing this work are protected. It would also be desirable to be able to buy in additional resources and expertise from time to time, in order to make a bigger impact nationally and regionally. One obvious opportunity to do this would be during the period around the 2012 London Olympic Games, when there will be an unusually large number of overseas tourists in the U.K.

13.4 Promote Cheltenham as a conference town

The Tourism section of the Borough Council has already established a conference desk and a conference guide as marketing tools, and has recently launched a conference website. The need now is to consolidate and build on this work in order to encourage conferences to come to Cheltenham.

13.5 Promote Cheltenham as a film location

Cheltenham is now known as a film-friendly destination and in recent years we have had the filming of Casualty and a film These Foolish Things as well as many reality TV shows and documentaries. The use of Cheltenham as a film location not only brings business to the town, but also generates publicity for Cheltenham which in turn helps to attract visitors.

Cheltenham Borough Council's Tourism section has been a front runner in the region in promoting film-friendly training for its staff and has also instigated film-friendly training for the whole of the county by South West Screen through the Destination Management Organisation (DMO). It also operates a Film Desk and website. Cheltenham also led on the research for the Movie Map produced by the DMO.

The national tourism body VisitBritain has identified film tourism as one of its key focuses for the future. This being the case, this is an excellent time to build upon our efforts to promote Cheltenham as a film location and the Borough Council as a film-friendly local authority.

13.6 Co-ordinate and improve the availability of information

With such a wide variety of events and activities being available to local people and visitors to the town, it is important to provide them with a simple, easily accessible guide to what is happening in Cheltenham. The Council should consider creating an events website, which might have the potential to be a revenue-earner. At present the nearest thing that we have to an events website is the privately run SoGlos.com.

On a more tactical level, Cheltenham must do all it can to promote its attractions at key times of the year. In 2009 and 2010 the Borough Council produced a promotional leaflet for Christmas and an Autumn in Cheltenham pdf. It will help the local economy if these and similar campaigns can be continued in future years.

13.7 Develop online communications

The Visit Cheltenham website, which already receives well over a million hits a year, is sure to become an even more important tool for promoting Cheltenham in the coming years. It is therefore very important that it is 'fit for purpose'. Considerable work has been done to improve the Visit Cheltenham website, but it is important that its effectiveness is kept under review. Not only must it be comprehensive and provide easy access to a wide range of information about the attractions of the town. It must also provide easy and effective links with related sites, especially those that carry information about events and facilities that might interest visitors and make their visit more enjoyable.

It will also becoming increasingly important that the Borough Council should make more use of emarketing in general, for example enewsletters, twitter and facebook. With a procurement process currently under way for a new Town Hall box office, it is also

important for the potential of this system for creating opportunities for emarketing to be explored and exploited.

13.8 Adopt a more commercial approach

It would be putting our heads in the sand to deny that the Borough Council, like all other public authorities, is going to face very straightened circumstances in the next few years. The Council is therefore going to need to rely on support from other partners to promote and market the town – and maybe even to keep the local environment in good condition for both residents and visitors. For example:

- The Council's relationship with Cheltenham Festivals Ltd and perhaps other cultural providers should be more commercial and more focused on identifying opportunities for income generation that could benefit both parties.

- The Council needs to review its policy on sponsorship, particularly in the light of recent disagreements over the sponsorship of roundabouts. It may be that the Council should be more flexible in regard to sponsorship and advertising than it considered appropriate in the past, subject to appropriate environmental safeguards. For example, the Council should consider drawing up a list of sponsorship that it is prepared to make available, clearly outlining the benefits to sponsors.

- The Council should consider the potential for introducing some new chargeable services, for example for permitting advertising signs at key locations. Many offers of sponsorship from businesses are not really sponsorship but a way to buy what is not currently available. Again, appropriate environmental safeguards need to be in place, together with some degree of control over the suitability of the messages that are permitted.

- The Council needs to further explore the scope for collaboration with other organisations in the town that have significant marketing budgets (see below, paragraph 13.9).

- The Council has the potential to earn a modest income from fees by encouraging film-makers to use the town as a location and maintaining its film-friendly attitude.

- The Council should work with Cheltenham Festivals and the business community to develop 'cultural packages' for attenders at major conferences.

- The Council, working with the business and cultural communities, should explore the possibility of arranging and offering special promotional deals for family and friends of students at the University and other major educational institutions.

13.9 Work in partnership

It is important to recognise that Cheltenham Borough Council is not the only organisation which, in one way or another, is marketing and promoting the town. In fact

the marketing resources of many local businesses and organisations dwarf those of the Council. It is therefore essential that the Council works with all the organisations that are promoting events and services in Cheltenham to achieve the best use of resources and the biggest 'bangs for bucks'.

The Council should consider creating a Marketing Forum, to which businesses, public-interest companies, traders' groups and voluntary organisations that have a significant marketing resource would be invited to come to discuss opportunities for collaborative work to promote Cheltenham.   This could explore (among other things) the potential for making cross-selling offers (e.g. offering cultural or leisure opportunities for conference visitors, or one organisation offering introductory discounts to customers of another).

There is also a need for an Entertainments Forum in which the town's main cultural providers can come together with council officers to discuss joint promotional activity. It is important to recognise that, though the Council is an organiser of its own entertainments and events (principally at the Town Hall, Pittville Pump Room and the Art Galley & Museum), it also has an interest in promoting those events that are organized by other providers such as Cheltenham Festivals, the Everyman Theatre and the Holst Birthplace Museum.

13.10 Work more closely with other public bodies

It is unrealistic to imagine that Cheltenham can be marketed entirely separately from the attractions of the surrounding area. This is particularly true in an internet age where people can trawl widely for information. It therefore makes sense to work collaboratively with other councils in Gloucestershire where appropriate on particular campaigns and publications.

(1) The Destination Management Organisation (DMO)

The Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) is the county-wide body that provides a joint forum for Gloucestershire local authorities and the private sector. It is one of nine similar organisations in the South West of England. The cumbersome title reflects the fact that it recognises the commercial wisdom of promoting two distinct marketing brands for different parts of the county – Cotswolds (including Cheltenham) and Forest of Dean – rather than a single Gloucestershire brand. Since it was formed in 2005 it has run some valuable campaigns, as well as helping councils achieve economies of scale in print. It commissioned the first-ever county-wide visitor/non-visitor survey. It owns a marketing database, DMS, for which Cheltenham is the lead authority.

In 2010 the DMO restructured itself, slimming down the size of its board and identifying itself more closely with the economic development of Gloucestershire First, which will now set its overall strategy. As a result of this, it is now playing a more active role in promoting tourism in Gloucestershire, especially by facilitating the sharing of services between local authorities. For example for the first time ever, the five local authorities from Cheltenham, Cotswold, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury have come togther to produce the new 2011 Visitor Guide which will provide a comprehensive overview of attractions, events, and

accommodation across the destination rather tha each producing there own. Continuing down this road of shared services could bring considerable benefits for Cheltenham – not least in the form of financial savings.

(2) Regional and national organisations

Cheltenham Borough Council has strong links with VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland, both through the DMO and directly. It is important that these links continue, as they provide important contacts for key promotional activities including press and PR. VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland also operate important websites.

13.11 Promote research

The Borough Council's most recent Tourism Economic Impact Assessment was carried out in 2006. This gives a good picture of the impact of tourism on the local economy before the recession, but it is not a wholly satisfactory basis on which to base policy and strategy in 2011 and beyond. If the Council takes tourism seriously, it should adopt a policy of carrying out new impact research, at sensible intervals – say, every two or three years. There should be a small revenue reserve from which to pay for this research.

The Borough Council should also encourage our partners in the town to conduct their own research into where visitors are from and how they heard about Cheltenham. This could help to give us a wider picture of the number and type of visitors and how well our marketing is working.

14. What are the financial implications of this strategy?

This strategy does not assume that significant extra resources will be available from the Borough Council to allow Cheltenham to achieve its tourism and marketing objectives. It would be unrealistic to present the Council with a shopping list of growth bids in the present financial and economic climate. In fact this document suggests a number of areas where economies might be made (e.g. shared services) and additional income raised (by adopting a more commercial approach). Savings could be used to supplement the Council's very modest promotional budgets.

However, it is important for the Council to recognise that visitors are, and will remain, a very important part of the local economy. Supporting tourism is one of the most effective ways in which the Council can aid economic development. This needs to be reflected as far as possible in the Council's budget priorities.

It is important to continue and build on what has been done with considerable success to promote Cheltenham as a centre for visitors. Furthermore without either additional revenue resources or occasional input of one-off funding, it will be impossible to continue activity such as the Christmas promotional leaflet, let alone more ambitious marketing and PR activity.

It is particularly important that funding should be provided for economic impact research, otherwise it will be difficult to measure the effectiveness of what the Borough Council and its partners are doing to enhance and promote the town.

The development of the Tourist Information Centre's role, including the creation of new displays and information boards, will require some one-off funding. So too will improving signage. Tourism signs are the County's responsibility, but are funded by the organisation providing the attraction (which for the most part would be the Borough Council). The Borough is responsible for the pedestrian finger signs in the town.

Some of the broader aspirations referred to in this strategy are part of the Civic Pride initiative and will be funded as part of that programme.

15.   How will we know our strategy is effective?

We will know our strategy is effective when:

- There is measurable evidence of an increase in visitor numbers and visitor expenditure.

- There is measurable evidence of the level of employment in tourism-related activities being maintained or actually increasing.

- There is a greater awareness of what Cheltenham offers among actual and potential visitors and non-visitors, as measured in research.

- Visitors are satisfied with their experience of coming to Cheltenham.

- Residents are satisfied that they benefit from the work that is done to attract visitors, both in terms of its economic impact and in terms of their own quality of life.

16.   What does the strategy mean in practice? A 3 year action plan

.

MARKETING & TOURISM ACTION PLAN 2011 -13

Corporate Objective	What is our aim?	How will we do it?	When will we do it?	Where will the money come from?	How will we how when we have succeeded?	Responsible officer
Strengthening our Economy	To focus Cheltenham's tourism marketing more effectively	By creating a single marketing department	Complete by 31st March 2012	Existing revenue budget resources	Increased tourism and visitor numbers. Greater awareness of the 'Cheltenham offer' through feedback received from external stakeholders and business partners.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To exploit the potential of the Art Gallery & Museum as a visitor attraction	By implementing the planned development of the building	Closure of AG&M planned – 31st March 2011	Existing capital resources and continuing external fundraising	When visitor numbers increase following redevelopment.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To make better use of Pittville Pump Room as a visitor attraction	By improving conference facilities	Business case delivered by November 2011	'Invest to save'	Increased turnover from conference sector.	Gary Nejrup
Strengthening our Economy	To involve businesses and community organisations in ensuring that Cheltenham remains a beautiful town	By reviewing the Council's policy on sponsorship and related advertising	Review complete by 31st March 2012	Existing resources	When the Council establishes an income stream from sponsorship which can then be used to improve the local environment.	Sonia Phillips
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To promote more effective working between the major cultural providers in Cheltenham	Investigate the creation of establishing an Entertainments Forum	Feasibility study complete – 31st March 2012	Existing resources	Performance data in respect of customers visiting Cheltenham for more than one type of cultural event	Gary Nejrup

O&S 2010\Tourism & Marketing Strategy version 2

					increases. Economic impact study in relation to cultural provision.	
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To co-ordinate and pool the resources of organisations that are promoting Cheltenham	Investigate the creation of establishing a Marketing Forum	Feasibility study complete – 31st March 2012	Existing resources	When a greater awareness of the Cheltenham offer is reported through business partners	Jane Lillystone
Strengthening our Economy	To communicate better with our target markets	By reviewing what our best market sectors are and reviewing our PR, advertising and marketing to ensure that it is targeted to these sectors	Review complete by 31st December 2011	Existing resources	When awareness of the Cheltenham offer and visitor spend increase	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To work towards improving the events facilities at the Town Hall	By developing a strategy for investing in the Town Hall	Strategy complete by 31st March 2013	Existing resources – capital resources still need to be identified	When Town Hall facilities are improved and income increases	Gary Nejrup
Enhancing and protecting our environment	To make parking an easier and pleasanter experience in Cheltenham	1. By introducing an electronic signage system to direct motorists to the most convenient car park 2. By redistributing car parking capacity throughout the town	2011-13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force.	Capital released by Civic Pride and other disposals	When traffic movements across the town are reduced and car park capacity is more closely aligned with demand	Grahame Lewis
Strengthening our Economy	To improve the visitor experience by improving visitor information throughout the town	Devise proposals for creating 'baby TICs' and greater use of displays and information boards at key locations, as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	2011-13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force	Capital released by Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	Performance data in respect of visitor satisfaction levels.	Grahame Lewis

O&S 2010\Tourism & Marketing Strategy version 2

Strengthening our Economy	To improve website information and maximise e-marketing opportunities.	Investigate proposals to create an events website	Proposals complete by 30th June 2011	Existing resources.	Increased turnover through on line sales.	Gary Nejrup
Strengthening our Economy	To have robust and accurate information in respect of the economic impact of Cheltenham's unique selling points	Undertaken economic impact assessments on a regular basis (3 yearly) Establish a reserve to fund periodic economic impact research to measure the contribution of tourism to the local economy.	Complete by March 2012	Existing\partnership funded	Comparative & up to date data is available.	TBC
Strengthening our Economy	Enhance and improve Cheltenham's retail offer.	Explore potential of redevelopment of Cheltenham's key town sites as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force.	2011- 13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force project plan	Capital released by Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	When key town centre sites are improved and Cheltenham's position within retail sector improves.	Grahame Lewis
Enhancing and protecting our environment	Enhance Cheltenham reputation as attractive town & safe town	Seek to ensure the quality of parks and gardens is maintained and that opportunities are taken where possible to add to the town's green open spaces. Continue to work with the police and other partners to control crime in the town centre especially late at night, and to	2011-13 Align improvements to the council's Green Space Strategy & Crime & Disorder Partnership	Existing resources \ partnership funding opportunities	Visitor satisfaction data. Crime reduction statistics.	Rob Bell \ Trevor Gladding

		ensure that Cheltenham is perceived as a safe town.				
Strengthening our Economy	Further enhance Cheltenham's visitor experience and develop the town's offer.	Continue and build on the current activity to promote Cheltenham as a conference centre and film location.	January 2012	Existing resources	Increase in conference bookings and accommodation bookings.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	Enhance Cheltenham reputation as an events town	Review gaps in Cheltenham's events calendar and actively seek to attract suitable new events to fill them	Review complete by March 2011	Existing resources	Production a year round calendar of events. Reduction of no. of weeks\months where an event is not taking place.	Gary Nejrup
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	Develop and expand Cheltenham's cultural offer to a broader market.	Consult with cultural and commercial partners to devise proposals for improving Cheltenham's 'family offer' and explore the potential to work more closely with Cheltenham Festivals on joint revenue-earning activity.	Review complete by March 2012	Existing resources	Increased turnover\visitor numbers of target audience\ market.	Gary Nejrup
Ensure we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers.	Explore joint \shared service working opportunities with tourism sector and providers across the county.	Explore with the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO and with other district councils in Gloucestershire the potential for shared services in the field of tourism and marketing.	March 2011	Existing resources	Cost reduction with retained service standards	Sonia Phillips

Page 46

Ensure we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers.	Ensure the council continues to strategically review tourism and marketing	Conduct a major review of this strategy using the most recent tourism economic impact assessment and other recent research.	Review complete by March 2013	Existing resources	Implementation of 3 year action plan	Sonia Phillips

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheltenham Borough Council

Economy & Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24th January 2011

General Fund Revenue and Capital - Revised Budget 2010/11 and Interim Budget Proposals 2011/12 for Consultation

Accountable member	**Cabinet Member for Community Development and Finance, John Webster**
Accountable officer	**Chief Finance Officer, Mark Sheldon**
Accountable scrutiny committee	**all scrutiny committees**
Ward(s) affected	**All**
Key Decision	**Yes**
Executive summary	The council has received notification of a 15.46% cash cut in government support in 2011/12. The funding gap for 2011/12, taking into account the provisional finance settlement, is £2.94m. The budget report, to which report refers, summarises the revised budget for 2010/11 and the Cabinet's interim budget proposals for bridging the funding gap 2011/12.
Recommendations	1. **The committee consider the proposals and feed back any comments on the proposals back to the Cabinet.** 2. **Consider and propose alternative options including the identification of the funding of any alternatives.**

Financial implications	See main budget report **Contact officer: Mark Sheldon.** **E-mail: _mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk_** **Tel no: 01242 264123**

Legal implications	See main budget report
	Contact officer: Peter Lewis
	E-mail: peter.lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk
	Tel no: 01684 272012
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	See main budget report
	Contact officer: Julie McCarthy
	E-mail: julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk
	Tel no: 01242 264355
Key risks	See main budget report
Corporate and community plan Implications	See main budget report
Environmental and climate change implications	See main budget report

1. Background

1.1 The Cabinet's budget strategy for 2011/12, approved at a meeting on 26th October 2010, included an estimate of £2.6m for the 2011/12 budget gap i.e. the financial gap between what the Council needs to spend to maintain services (including pay and price inflation) and the funding available assuming a 10.7% cut in government support. This was subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR10) and assumed a funded council tax freeze. The council only received notification of its actual grant on 13th December 2010. The final assessment of the budget gap for 2011/12, based on the detailed budget preparation undertaken over recent months and the actual financial settlement is £2.94m.

1.2 The settlement was actually £245k worse than anticipated and, given the delay in its publication, has presented the Cabinet and the council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with an incredibly difficult task in responding to deeper and more rapid cuts in making sound recommendations in time to publish a budget allowing for a reasonable period of consultation.

1.3 In preparing the budget the Cabinet have, through the Bridging the Gap (BtG) programme minimised the impact on front line services as far as possible. However, given the severity of the cuts, it is inevitable that some cuts affecting services have had to be made.

1.4 The Cabinet are keen to receive feedback on the proposals and are would welcome any views on costed alternatives.

1.5 Consultation will take place with Parish Council's, the Chamber of Commerce and the Residents Focus Groups that were consulted in the period leading up to the development of the draft budget will be invited to examine the draft budget. In addition to this all Overview and Scrutiny committees will have an opportunity to look at the budget, and the cross committee Budget Scrutiny Group will meet early in the new year.

1.6 The attention of Overview and Scrutiny is drawn to the fact that the Government plans to cut the support it gives to the council by a further £495,000 for the financial year 2012/13. Given this settlement, the projected gap for 2011/12 is already an estimated £800,000 which has been reduced to £324,400 as a result of measures proposed in this draft budget. Suggestions to further reduce the projected gap for 2012/13 should also be considered.

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 As outlined in the main report.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 As outlined in the main report.

4. Alternative options considered

4.1 The Cabinet have considered many alternatives in arriving at the interim budget proposals. Opposition groups will be able to suggest alternative budget proposals for consideration by council in February 2011.

5. Performance management – monitoring and review

5.1 The delivery of the savings workstreams included in the interim budget proposals, if approved by full council will be monitoired via the BtG group.

Report author	**Mark Sheldon, Chief Finance Officer**
	Tel. 01242 264123;
	e-mail address _mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk_
Appendices	Refer to Interim budget proposals – Cabinet papers, 21st December 2010.
Background information	1. Provisional Finance settlement 2011/12

Agenda Item 10

Economy and Business Improvement Overview

And Scrutiny Work Plan

2011/2012

Meeting date	Item	Why has this come to scrutiny?	Who will coordinate
7 Mar 2011	Glos Integrated Economic Strategy	Glos First be invited to update the committee on how the plan was developing and a report on the resulting actions (a request from the March 2010 meeting)	Economic Development Manager
7 Mar 2011	Draft Corporate Strategy	Comment on the Corporate Strategy Draft Action Plan 2011/12	Richard Gibson, Policy and Performance Manager
7 Mar 2011	Corporate Risk Register	Quarterly review	Richard Gibson, Policy and Performance Manager
Regular topics			
	Corporate Risk Register	Quarterly review requested by the committee	Bryan Parsons, Policy and Performance Officer
	Performance Report	6 monthly review	Richard Gibson, Policy and Performance Manager
	Quarterly budget report	Quarterly review requested by the committee	Mark Sheldon, Chief Finance Officer
Potential topics	**Dates to be allocated in the plan**		
	Gloucestershire Airport Business Plan	Review the business plan 12 months after the start of the drawdown of the loan	Pat Pratley, Strategic Director

Last updated : Wednesday, January 12, 2011

This page is intentionally left blank