

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Economy and Business Improvement Committee**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

### **Imperial and Montpellier Gardens Strategy**

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1** Members of E&BI committee have requested further economic and financial data in order to be in a position to assess the benefit of implementing changes to the town centre parks (Imperial and Montpellier Gardens) in an endeavour to meet the requirements of the Cheltenham Festivals and deliver landscape enhancements for park users.

#### **2. Background and History**

- 2.1** On the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the Council's Cabinet resolved that an outline design be drawn up for Imperial Gardens to accommodate the increase in size and popularity of the Cheltenham Festivals. The marquee footprint (excluding gazebos and covered walkways) is to be kept to a maximum area of 2750m<sup>2</sup> (currently approx. 1950m<sup>2</sup>). Furthermore, both Imperial and Montpellier Gardens will not be subject to more than 75 days each of special event usage, including setting up and taking down (currently 107 days in Imperial Gardens).
- 2.2** Previously, Imperial Gardens has been the main public park used by the Cheltenham Festivals. Starting from 2012, it is proposed that the Jazz Festival will take place in Montpellier Gardens in May and the Science Festival in Imperial Gardens in June. Starting in October this year, the Literature Festival will take place in both Gardens.
- 2.3** The Council's Cabinet has allocated £140,000 to undertake landscape improvements to Imperial Gardens for the benefit of it's users and to upgrade it's infrastructure in order to accommodate the increased marquee footprint. This sum also includes modifications to incoming public utilities which will be needed in Montpellier Gardens

in order to accommodate this, and existing special event usage.

### **3. The Impact of the Cheltenham Festivals on the Cheltenham Economy**

- 3.1** Cheltenham Festivals commissioned a reputable independent party, Blue Republic, to research the impact of the Literature Festival on the Cheltenham Economy in October 2010. The research entailed 306 face to face visitor interviews and 111 interviews with local business.
- 3.2** It was found that average day visitor group spend was £118.95. Average staying visitor group spend was £429.34. The expenditure covered accommodation, food and drink, shopping on and off site, other entertainment whilst in Cheltenham as well as costs incurred on travel/transport.
- 3.3** Nearly half of the businesses interviewed reported that the Cheltenham Literature Festival had a noticeable impact on business, and as the above spending figures would suggest, many of these were food and drink related establishments.
- 3.4** The businesses were asked how important they felt the CLF is to Cheltenham's reputation. Businesses were asked to rate the importance of the festival on a five point Likert scale; where 1 is Not Very Important and 5 is Very Important. 74% of businesses surveyed stated that they thought the CLF was Important or Very Important to Cheltenham. Overall, the score resulted in an average of 4.25 out of 5.
- 3.5** The results of the primary research undertaken, festival ticket sales and known results from relevant studies elsewhere were extrapolated to give the economic impact figures that were widely publicised last year. That being £5.2million brought into the local economy from all Cheltenham Festivals and the creation of 139 jobs.

### **4. Alternative Locations for Festivals**

- 4.1** A SWOT analysis of the Cheltenham Racecourse was undertaken by the Cheltenham Festivals in relation to the Jazz Festival 2012 and an evaluation of Ellenborough Park at Southam. The senior leadership team at Cheltenham Festivals concluded that Montpellier Gardens would be the preferred location for Jazz 2012. Both the cabinet and the Cheltenham Festivals considered it wise moving Jazz to Montpellier in light of the pressure placed on the landscape and infrastructure of Imperial Gardens over the last three years as a result of three festivals taking place, two (Jazz and Science) in very close proximity to one another. It was also jointly felt that the economic benefits to the town centre would be better served by the establishment of a town centre hub for the festivals.

### **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1** The designs, together with feedback from the consultation, Full Council Debate and Scrutiny Committees will be considered by Cabinet for a decision on 26th July 2011. If approved by Cabinet, phase 1 of the works will be worked up in more detail and more accurate costs obtained. Planning and listed building consent will be applied for where required before reporting back to Cabinet in October 2011. Works would be undertaken during this coming Autumn and Winter, subject to approval.

---

<b>Background Papers</b>	Environment Committee, 2nd March 2011 - Imperial and Montpellier Gardens Strategy  Cabinet, 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2011- Imperial and Montpellier Gardens Strategy  Council, 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2011 - Imperial Gardens Outline Design and Consultation
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 – Pre-design estimate of February 2011
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Rob Bell, Director Operations Division, 01242 250019, rob.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk
<b>Accountability</b>	Roger Whyborn, Cabinet Member Sustainability,
<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Environment