

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 14 May 2020

Interim Events Strategy

Accountable member	Councillor Flo Clucas
Accountable officer	Tracey Crews, Director of Planning
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>Over the last year the Borough Council has undertaken a review of its current approach to events including infrastructure, governance and management arrangements which supports it. Research has been conducted in order to identify the best practice adopted by successful event towns and cities to determine and influence how Cheltenham can shape the approach to events going forward. During the drafting process an Overview and Scrutiny Events Task group was set up to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The councils approach to managing events in our parks and gardens within the context of the commercialisation agenda; • the approval process for events across the borough; and • how events are managed once approval is given. <p>Where considered appropriate, the recommendations of this task group have been taken into account in the final drafting of this strategy.</p> <p>This report draws together the consultation and presents a draft Interim Events Strategy for endorsement by Cabinet. The next steps proposed will be to work with key partners, elected members, officers and stakeholders to implement new processes, infrastructure and resource to enable the delivery of high quality events that create positive and memorable experiences. In order to facilitate this, officers will prepare business plans to be agreed by an elected Member.</p> <p>It is worth noting that despite being created prior to Covid-19, the events strategy still has a place in the post Covid world forming part of the town's recovery plans. Cheltenham's ambitions regarding events remain the same despite the pandemic. When events and mass gatherings begin to be reinstated in the Borough government guidelines in place at the time will be adhered to for example social distancing.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The cabinet resolves to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the Interim Events Strategy including the vision, principles and objectives of the Strategy. 2. Authorise the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Lifestyles to deliver the implementation of a

new event booking and management process.

- 3. Authorise the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to develop a business case for capital investment to aid the delivery of this events strategy in relation to events infrastructure.**
- 4. Authorise the Event Manager to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the land use planning strategy for events in Cheltenham, the findings of which will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.**

Financial implications	<p>As part of the yearly budget, £50k is set aside for Events, this money will be used to deliver recommendation 2. Each business case will be reviewed once completed as per recommendation to ensure any additional capital spend brings value for money.</p> <p>Contact officer: Andrew Knott, Andrew.knott@publicagroup.uk,</p>
Legal implications	<p>None directly arising from this report other than noting that implementation of the recommendations within the Interim Events Strategy will require consideration of the Licensing Act 2003, the authority's Contract Rules and Data Protection legislation. Also, with regard to land use licences, decisions are delegated to the Director for Finance and Assets if the value is under £250,000 otherwise decisions will need to be referred to Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Also, as Marketing Cheltenham is not a separate legal entity but a collaboration between the authority, the Cheltenham BID and the Cheltenham Tourism Partnership, the authority will be responsible for implementing the recommendations allocated to Marketing Cheltenham within the Interim Events Strategy.</p> <p>Contact officer: shirin.wotherspoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272017</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>No immediate direct HR implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Julie.mccarthy@publicagroup.uk, 01242 264355</p>
Key risks	See Appendix 1
Corporate and community plan Implications	The proposed interim Event Strategy response directly to the Corporate Plan, Commercial Strategy and Place Strategy.
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The proposed interim Event Strategy seeks to encourage event organisers to consider how the environmental impacts of events can be managed.</p> <p>Should Cabinet in considering a future business case for capital investment agree to facilitating sites with utilities, this would mitigate the impact on the environment e.g. by minimising the use of generators.</p>

Property/Asset Implications	Contact officer: Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk
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1. Background

- 1.1** On 27th March 2017 the Council endorsed the Place Strategy where it was identified that we have a well-defined visitor economy and a national and international reputation with regard to our key festivals and events coupled with a strong hospitality offer. It was also highlighted that we needed to do more to increase the number of visitors making Cheltenham their destination of choice.
- 1.2** Cheltenham has a strong tradition of hosting successful, prestigious, large scale cultural events which have been shown to materially boost the local economy. Now branded The Festival Town, events in Cheltenham are integral to delivery of the Place Vision as well as responding to the agenda of commercialisation of Cheltenham Borough Council providing added value to Tourism, generating income but also contributing to the economic and cultural vitality of the town.
- 1.3** This event strategy has been prepared to directly respond to the objectives of Marketing Cheltenham, providing direction across Cheltenham's visitor economy within a commercially focussed approach. This interim strategy is designed to create a clear vision for Cheltenham Borough Council to identify the mechanisms for successful event delivery, improve the infrastructure available to events, and provide some direction to the town's programme of events to maximise on their impact in preparation for the Cultural Strategy.
- 1.4** **Creation of a new events booking & management process and new event site**
- 1.5** In 2016 Cheltenham Borough Council began a project to develop the opportunity to utilise sites within the borough of Cheltenham for festivals and events with the aim of events calendar growth and revenue generation. This project identified three key objectives:
 - 1.** Develop event sites and services to support opportunities for Cheltenham to become a national and international event destination within the next three years;
 - 2.** Increase revenue generation to support the Regulatory and Environmental Services – Commercial Transformation Programme (REST) economic growth target of £500k by 2019/20;
 - 3.** Ensure opportunities for growth support diversity, accessibility and community engagement.
- 1.6** This project conducted research with officers and event organisers assessing the current management processes and land use to identify solutions to reach the desired outcomes:
 - register detailing location, infrastructure, accessibility, availability;
 - service level package offerings;
 - pricing matrix;
 - robust simple process for customers/event organisers;
 - robust internal process for officers;
 - strategy for marketing event sites and services, and
 - measures of success document including key performance indicators.
- 1.7** The findings from this project have been reflected within the interim event strategy; however the project has been paused so that it can take direction from the proposed strategy.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1** Our vision is to enable the delivery of high quality events that create positive and memorable experiences for residents and visitors that support Cheltenham's Place Vision as a vibrant town to visit, work, live and invest.
- 2.2** The strategy will support a transparent approach which will help Cheltenham deliver change to:
- Ensure the events delivered are right for the brand of Cheltenham with an appropriate geographical spread across the town.
 - Further improve our national and international reputation for attracting and hosting major events.
 - Develop a framework to ensure Cheltenham Borough Council assets create a return on investment – being able to clearly demonstrate the value through effective research and ensure fairness when charging for the use of spaces.
 - Attract events that bring added value to the town – establishing a stronger emphasis on how partners optimise and leverage the benefits from events and ensure that all events, including one off events, generate an ongoing event legacy whether this be through adding value to the local economy, community engagement or outreach outcomes.
 - Provide clear leadership and collaboration – encouraging services and organisations to work better together. This includes strengthening the culture of collaboration at both an organisational and locality level across all sectors in order to create an enhanced events programme.
 - Use Cheltenham's events to reinforce 'The Festival Town' brand, creating year-round activity to strengthen our identity across many events so the critical mass of activity is of greater value than the individual parts.
 - Engage with the Councils emerging policy on social value.
- 2.3** As part of the modernisation work currently being undertaken by the council the current end to end event process has been documented and analysed. Initial findings identified the event process currently requires:
- High level of officer processing time
 - High number of wait times within the process
 - High number of internal and external roles involved
 - High number of interactions
 - All resulting in inefficient costs in both time and resources both to the council and event organisers
- 2.4** Through the implementation of a new event booking and management system this will streamline the process reducing staff times and associated costs and improving the customer service to event organisers.
- 2.5** In July 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and made a pledge to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030. With events and festivals being part of Cheltenham's identity it is key

that carbon neutrality is echoed in their operations. For this to be achieved council events spaces need to be upgraded to provide the facilities and utilities that event organisers require without the reliance on infrastructure such as mobile generators.

- 2.6** Currently the majority of event activity on council land is concentrated to Montpellier Gardens and Imperial Gardens. It is recognised that some events benefit and require a town centre location however by investing in the creation of events sites in other Cheltenham parks the impact and benefit of events can be spread across the town.

3. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan

- 3.1** Within the Council's Commercial Transformation Programme which began in 2016, events are identified as a priority work stream stating 'Cheltenham is famous for its successful festivals and there is potential to grow the existing calendar of events across Cheltenham, potentially in new locations. The Council still provides support for the delivery of all festivals and events, through licencing, public protection, planning, enforcement etc. Developing this strand of work is likely to be a priority in the emerging Place Strategy, it is therefore important that a great emphasis be placed on co-ordinating and growing the events/festivals agenda and developing the collaboration between the key partners.'
- 3.2** In 2018 the Council agreed its Commercial Strategy, setting out 'In our drive towards financially sustainable future we identify new opportunities to generate income through investment in projects...Our commercial approach aligns with our approaches around Place, Customer, Digital and People which combine to show we are entering a new era of business enterprise, growth and creativity.'
- 3.3** The Corporate Plan aims to continue the revitalisation of the town and investment in public space. One of the measures of success is to increase the visitor economy which is also referenced within the proposed interim event strategy.
- 3.4** The Place Strategy details our vision that Cheltenham be a place where culture and creativity thrives and that we have an aspiration to invest in our public spaces and our heritage.
- 3.5** The interim event strategy, detailed in Appendix 2, has been shaped to support the aims detailed in the Corporate Plan and the Place Strategy and will provide a framework within which new and existing events will be delivered.

4. Consultation and feedback

- 4.1** Alongside the creation of the Interim Events Strategy a review of events management was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A Task Group was set up to consider the following:
- the Council's approach to managing events in our parks and gardens within the context of the commercialisation agenda;
 - the approval process for events across the borough, and
 - how events are managed once approval is given.
- 4.2** The Task Group engaged with a number of key stakeholders, including event organisers and local resident's groups. This was an important part of the process and informed a number of recommendations within the committee's report which have been considered within the Interim Event Strategy recommendations.
- 4.3** As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations the Chairman submitted a

minority report ([O&S committee minutes](#) – see agenda point 8). A meeting with members will be coordinated where a response to the minority report will be discussed. The minority report was noted by Cabinet in March 2020, however this will be reviewed post Covid-19 when time can be dedicated to reviewing the options and engaging with officers.

- 4.4** The Culture Board were also engaged during the creation of the Interim Events Strategy. It was through this engagement that it was agreed that the Events Strategy be an interim strategy (see 5.1).

5. Performance management – monitoring and review

- 5.1** With the Cultural Strategy in development during 2020, this strategy will be interim primarily focussed around some of the council's priorities and shorter term objectives to improve event delivery and management. This strategy will then be re-visited and aligned with the Cultural Strategy and its recommendations, becoming a longer term Cheltenham-wide Events Strategy.
- 5.2** The annual resident survey will help provide a measurement tool to assess how events impact on their views of their town and the cultural offer available to them.

Report author	Contact officer: Events Manager jess.goodwin@marketingcheltenham.co.uk 07468 716058
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Assessment 2. Interim Events Strategy
Background information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commercial transformation Programme https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/documents/s19906/2016_07_12_CAB_REST_Commercial_Focus.doc.pdf 2. Commercial Strategy https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6603/cbc_commercial_strategy.pdf 3. Corporate Plan https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7401/corporate_plan_2019-23 4. Place Strategy https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/19/corporate_priorities_and_performance/1392/place_strategy

Risk Assessment

Appendix 1

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
ES1	If there is no overall strategy with regard to events in Cheltenham, the Event Manager will have no direction under which to enable proactive expansion of the events programme, encourage greater environmental consideration by event organisers or encourage greater accessibility in context of social value.	David Jackson	11/2/20	2	4	8	Avoid	Resolution to endorse interim events strategy by Cabinet. Resolution to agree Social Value policy by Cabinet.	April	Jess Goodwin	Marketing Cheltenham
ES4	If a new event booking and management process is not implemented, it will be difficult: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce the current inefficiency of the process and current level of officer resource. improve the level of professional and efficient service provided to the event organiser to support proactive expansion of the events programme 	David Jackson	11/2/20	2	2	4	Reduce	Work has been undertaken to improve the current process. The event project will be reviewed should Cabinet endorse the interim event strategy to align its outcomes.	August	Jess Goodwin Jane Stovell	Events Project Marketing Cheltenham
ES7	If a new event site is not created, it will	David Jackson	11/2/20	2	5	10	Reduce	Should Cabinet resolve to undertake a review	Dec	Jess Goodwin	Marketing Cheltenham

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be difficult to provide sufficient availability to support a proactive expansion of the events programme • reduce the commercial opportunities from council assets during the expansion of the events programme • continue to mainly impact honeypot sites such as Montpellier and Imperial Gardens 							the effectiveness of the land use planning strategy for events in Cheltenham, this will provide the evidence base to develop a business plan and case for future planning applications.		Adam Reynolds	
Explanatory notes Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical) Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability) Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close											

Interim Event Strategy
See attachment.

Appendix 2