

Briefing Note – Race Week

Committee name: Overview & Scrutiny

Date: 3 July 2023

Responsible officer: Head of Public Protection

This note provides information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the officer indicated.

This briefing note updates Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the 2023 races planning arrangements. In particular, O&S requested an update on what worked (successes), what didn't work, and how can we learn from this moving forward.

Background & Summary

The 2023 Cheltenham Festival was held between Tuesday 14 March and Friday 17 March 2023.

Due to a number of factors, including the ASB witnessed during the 2022 Festival, the Jockey Club reduced the numbers of spectators.

In 2023, the racecourse anticipated more than 250,000 racegoers over the four days of the festival. They had made some changes to capacities across all four days, limiting numbers to 68,500 (a reduction of more than 5,000 on Gold Cup day) to alleviate some of the pressures experienced last year and improve the experience for customers and residents.

This year's event was affected by train strikes on Thursday (16/05) and Saturday (18/05). The racecourse estimates that approx. 66,000 people arrive by train.

The new LRF Chair, Deputy Chief Constable Shaun West, stood up a precautionary SCG for the event. This was the first time an SCG has been stood up for the Festival.

2023 Planning Context

Planning arrangements for the 2023 March Festival included a raft of additional planning measures in light of increased public urination and other forms of ASB during the 2022 Festival.

Members are reminded that these additional measures included the Jockey Club's "Love your Turf" campaign, additional police & PCSO presence at key times along key ingress and egress routes and additional CBC resourcing to support the police deployment along with additional toilet units around the town centre.

Members can refer to the [January 2023](#) & [February 2023](#) O&S Briefing papers for further context.

Representatives from the Constabulary and the Jockey Club have been invited to attend this meeting to provide updates for their respective agencies. This briefing note therefore is limited to information held and reported from a CBC perspective.

Successes

The “War on Wee”

During the 2023 Festival, the authority launched its “War on Wee” campaign. Through this campaign, the authority rolled out additional temporary toilets, a public awareness campaign and supported local businesses by making fluid repellent paint available for use to mitigate and deter public urination.

For reference, the authority was able to supply 23 residential properties and business premises with fluid repellent paint.

The “War on Wee”, along with the other measures implemented, played an important part in seeing a substantial reduction in the number of complaints received by the authority.

Complaints received directly by CBC

2023*
Alleged unlawful street trading – 5
Parking related – 2 (relating to multiple issues)
ASB/Public Urination – 4

* Note complaints would have been made directly to the racecourse as well but CBC is unable to compare year on year because we do not hold this information. Officers emailed Members from Pittville, Swindon Village and Prestbury requesting information of complaints made directly to them. This data includes the feedback from Members.

Members can compare the number of complaints above with the numbers received during the 2022 Festival included at Appendix 1. Members will note a noticeable and positive difference.

Improvements for 2024 & lessons learnt

The authority and partners, individually and collectively, undertake comprehensive planning reviews and debriefs to assess the effectiveness of planning arrangements for the Festival.

On the whole, authority and its partners considers the delivery of the 2023 March Festival a success. We do however recognise that there continues to be areas for improvement:

1. Whilst the additional temporary toilets addressed public urination in the town centre, public urination remains an issue particularly along alleyways off the High Street, Post Office Lane and alleyways off Ormond Place.
2. The designated Stage Coach loading area on the High Street continues to cause problems with long queues obstructing pedestrians, littering and reports of anti-social behaviour by race goers. There is also the additional problem of the county council suspending the Pittville Taxi Rank which acts as a feeder location for Stage Coach busses.

3. Away from the town centre, there were several issues arising from the traffic management arrangements, summarised below:

Park & Ride – taxi pick up/drop off	<p>There were several issues reported by taxi and private hire drivers accessing the new pick up and drop off point by the park and ride. These related to being denied access to the most suitable roads leading to it (i.e. Albert Road), the entrance blocked by cars and busses and pedestrians on Evesham Road (at the Albemarle Gate junction where the barriers ended) which unnecessarily prolonged journeys.</p> <p>This meant that taxi and private hire drivers eventually gave up trying to service the racecourse.</p>
Saville Close & Hilltop Road	<p>Complaints of out of town taxis and busses blocking causing an obstruction on Saville Close & Hilltop Road, parking on the footway and blocking resident's drives.</p> <p>Residents reported these drivers being "unapologetic", blaming GCC for the traffic management arrangements.</p>
Tatchley Roundabout/ Bouncers Lane	<p>SEP marshals directing traffic out of Bouncers Lane, but ignored the other junctions.</p>
Paddocks Lane/Tommy Taylor	<p>SEP marshals on the Swindon Lane junction did not challenge entry to closed roads (Swindon Lane junction).</p> <p>No SEP marshals to police the Traffic Regulation Order.</p> <p>The race course commented that doing a better job protecting the likes of Walnut Close and West Approach have created elevated pressure on Paddocks Lane and Tommy Taylors Lane in particular and "these two roads will need significant attention when we come to planning next year."</p>

4. Park Stores was again a focus for public urination. Unlike last year there was no multi-urinal facility parked in the lay-by – this was replaced by two single units positioned behind the large sign for the Pittville Campus. This falls within scope of the "Love your Turf" campaign and will be feedback to the Jockey Club.

5. Whilst the fluid repellent paint assisted local residents and businesses, the initiative was rushed for a number of reasons beyond the control of officers. If the authority intends to roll out a similar initiative, it will assist officers to make such a decision early.

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Appendix 1 - 2022 Complaints received directly by CBC

Location	Complainant	Issues
Pittville – Park and surrounding area	Public, Elected Members x 3	Numerous complaints of public urination
Town centre	Public, Elected Members & CBC staff	Numerous complaints of public urination
New Barn Lane	MPs office on behalf of a constituent	“...a proportion of racegoers left litter, vomit and urine in their wake, with foul and abusive language directed at anyone who would dare challenge them.”
No specific location	Member of the public	Excessive littering and public urination
Lexington Square	CBC Elected Member	“Following the Festival Meeting there is always some complaints from residents about anti-social behaviour etc. but this year I have never known so many complaints particularly from Lexington Square, where a number of racegoers decided it was a public convenience.”
Swindon Lane and Paddocks Lane	CBC Elected Member (part of same complaint as above)	“Swindon Lane and Paddocks Lane residents have complained about racegoers using their gardens as toilets, and taxis dropping off customers in Paddocks Lane so as to avoid the

		racecourse.”
Swindon Lane	CBC Elected Member (part of same complaint as above)	“Failure of the racecourse to ensure that litter was removed from Swindon Lane in particular.”
Portland Street	Local business	Excessive noise from popup bars.
Walnut Close	Local residents	“taxi’s parking and race goers with damage to a wall”.
Gloucester/Roman Road	CBC Elected Member	Overcrowding on the public pavement, some consumption of alcohol on the street.
Town centre car parking	Public via social media	In previous years, CBC offered free parking in its car parks after 13.00 to encourage people/local residents to still come in to the town centre. It has been reported that on social media many local residents did miss this offer.