



SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION

Date: January 2025	
Name of person proposing topic:	Councillor Chris Day
Contact:	
Suggested title of topic:	Leisure & Culture Venues long term vision and investment plan
What is the issue that scrutiny needs to address?	
<p>(From the risk register) If the council does not have a long term vision & investment plan in place for its leisure & culture venues then significant unplanned maintenance, repairs & investment may be required to keep the venues running & it may undermine the ability of the Trust (or any future provider) to run leisure & culture services in a profitable way.</p> <p>This risk is one of the top 4 on the risk register that all have a score of 20 – so identified as one of the biggest risks facing the Council.</p> <p>Internal Audit consider that the actions to control this risk are at too early a stage for them to be able add value at this point in time.</p> <p>Among the potential impacts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Unplanned closure of facilities at short notice leading to inconvenience for users (residents), loss of revenue, potential compensation claims (e.g. to artists & producers if an event has to be cancelled), higher than necessary costs from having to make emergency as opposed to planned repairs- Reputational damage to Council from the above – not being seen as a ‘good steward’ of leisure and cultural venues.- Difficulties in finding a future operator of the venues when the Trust’s contract is due for renewal if venues are perceived as being substandard and inadequately maintained.- Demands for higher subsidy fee by Trust or future operator to compensate for risk of unplanned forced closures of venues or reduced forecast income due to substandard venues.- Deterioration of fabric of facilities may lead to damage that would otherwise have been avoided, resulting in high costs being incurred from more extensive maintenance and repair work being required. <p>Over the last 12 months Leisure@ has experienced unplanned closures due to discovery of RAAC and flooding.</p> <p>Licensed athletics matches cannot be held using the Prince of Wales stadium track as it has failed testing. The last time the track was resurfaced was some 20 years ago – the expected life of a running track is between 10 and 15 years.</p>	

What do you feel could be achieved by a scrutiny review (outcomes)	
<p>The current control details/mitigation actions detailed in the risk register are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed maintenance plan to be develop[ed] - Project to review and appraise venues and identify investment required - Phase 2 sports strategy <p>These actions appear to be in an early stage of development. Bringing this issue to Overview & Scrutiny now will enable Members to assess whether the planned actions are adequate to address the risks and suggest improvements that would strengthen the Council's mitigation strategy.</p> <p>Working alongside the development and review stage would be better than a review performed 'after the event' as it would avoid the need for completed plans and investment projects to be revisited and thereby avoiding potential delays and inefficiencies.</p> <p>It could also provide added impetus that would speed up the transition from planning and reviewing stage to implementation and actions that reduce the risk.</p>	
If there a strict time constraint?	As detailed above, I believe the most benefit would be obtained by scrutiny during the period plans and projects are being created rather than after they have been completed.
Is the topic important to the people of Cheltenham?	Yes – it encompasses a wide variety of venues that are used by many residents
Does the topic involve a poorly performing service or high public dissatisfaction with a service?	Unplanned closures have occurred during the last 12 months resulting in public dissatisfaction. The state of the running track at PoW has led to negative publicity.
Is it related to the Council's corporate objectives?	Priority 4 - Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity Priority 5 - Being a more modern, efficient and financially-sustainable council
Any other comments:	

OFFICER IMPLICATIONS (for office use only)

Date:	27 January 2025
Officer name:	Claire Hughes
Officer title:	Director of Governance and Customer Services
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Please give your comments on this proposed topic, for example: is there any other similar review planned or in progress, are there any potential resource constraints?	
<p>The mitigations for this risk are at the early stage of development. Specialist resource will be required to advance some of the actions, such as the options appraisal for the venues and active conversations are underway as to the sourcing of that resource.</p> <p>It is recommended that this request is shared with Cllr Horwood as the relevant cabinet member for his input.</p> <p>A briefing note to update the committee about the work to produce a physical activity and sports strategy action plan for Cheltenham will be included with the agenda for the meeting on 24 February.</p> <p>The note will make reference to the two studies that have recently been completed, the playing pitch strategy and the built facilities strategy. The latter in particular, sets out some recommendations in relation to both Leisure At Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales Stadium.</p> <p>It is then planned to have a wider discussion item about the action plan ahead of it going to Cabinet on 8 April.</p>	