

Cheltenham Christmas Ice Rink 2025



Key

	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified. No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified. No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	Not applicable or no cause for concern.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified. Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified. Changes needed before proceeding.

This summary of the CIAT should be used to aid your decision making. Please note that red/amber segments simply mean that mitigations and changes should take place not that the project cannot go ahead.

GHGs

-2

The power supply for the site will consist of a high-capacity battery system supplemented by a silenced generator. The generator will operate exclusively on sustainably sourced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) rather than conventional diesel. Based on data from the 2023 and 2024 events, the battery unit, in conjunction with a trickle feed from the mains supply, is expected to power operations for approximately 21–23 hours per day. The generator will be required for an estimated 1–3 hours daily, operating only during sociable hours (8am-8pm) and not overnight. This system is fully self-contained, with automatic switching between power sources as required. The generator is housed in a super-silenced enclosure rated at 55dB(A) at a distance of 7m without additional mitigation. This technology was first deployed in the UK for an installation of this nature at the 2023 Cheltenham Ice Rink, where it proved to be highly effective in reducing both emissions and noise pollution. The 2023 event recorded a 98.7% reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and a 12.7% reduction in fuel consumption compared to the 2021 event. The 2024 event achieved similar efficiencies, though direct comparisons are limited due to a shorter operating period.

At present, there is insufficient power capacity in Imperial Gardens to support the event entirely off-grid. However, plans are in place to address this in the near future. A specialist has been commissioned to assess more efficient energy alternatives, with an investigation set to commence in mid-February 2025. This study will explore the feasibility of connecting to the Town Hall's main power supply. If viable, this solution could provide long-term benefits for other event organisers, with the potential for the council to hire out the necessary infrastructure to support future sustainable energy initiatives. Given the high energy demands associated with maintaining the ice, integrating the rink's supply with the Town Hall's infrastructure would significantly increase its energy usage over the event period. However, this approach is expected to be more sustainable and operationally efficient than continuing with the battery/generator hybrid system used in previous years.

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Air quality	-2	<p>There is likely to be a small, temporary increase in the number of vehicles on the road as people visit the attraction.</p> <p>HVO fuel will be used in place of traditional diesel. HVO demonstrates large reductions in emissions of nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) relative to conventional diesel - 30% and 85% respectively. If power investigations prove successful (see response to 1. GHG's) no generator, nor fuel, will be required.</p>	0
Sustainable Transport	2	<p>In our marketing material we are emphasising the convenient, central location of the ice rink and listing the various ways in which people can reach the attraction using more sustainable modes of travel. This will include by foot, rail, bus, where to find electric car charging points etc. We will make enquiries with GCC to see if we can offer a combi-ticket which includes park and ride from the Arle Court Transport Hub.</p>	0
Land use change	-2	<p>The quadrant will need to be returned following removal of the rink. This will be booked well in advance and the work will commence the week after the rink is removed to ensure minimal impact on the aesthetics of the garden. The flower beds will be replanted in early February, which would be the case regardless of whether the rink takes place or not. Experience from the 2023-24/2024-25 events has shown that the turf took well and that the impact of the event was barely discernible within 2-3 weeks of the closing date.</p>	0
Biodiversity	-2	<p>This event will have a short-term impact on the park's biodiversity due to increased footfall and consequent noise. There will also be a temporary, very slight increase in artificial light levels which may impact nocturnal animals.</p>	0
Soil and waterway health	0	0	0

Climate Change Adaptation	2	<p>The implementation of a more sustainable power solution for the 2023 and 2024 ice rink events has set a strong example for other event organisers in Cheltenham. Lessons learned from this initiative have been shared with other event providers, including Cheltenham Festivals, to showcase the potential of battery power solutions.</p> <p>Building on insights gained from energy demand reviews over the past two years, a specialist has been commissioned to assess more efficient energy alternatives, with an investigation set to commence in mid-February 2025. This study will explore the feasibility of connecting to the Town Hall's main power supply. If viable, this solution could provide long-term benefits for other event organisers, with the potential for the council to hire out the necessary infrastructure to support future sustainable energy initiatives.</p>	0
Energy Use	-2	<p>The ice rink undeniably requires a lot of power to run. Consumption is at its highest during ice creation which takes place over several days of the build phase. Once the rink is live this settles at a lower level as the ice is simply maintained. The ambient temperature will also have an impact on energy use over the course of the event.</p>	0
Sustainable Materials	-2	<p>Where possible, this project will reuse materials from previous years e.g. skate exchange desks and benches. The procurement process for the main supplier considered sustainability credentials within the scoring. Sustainability criteria will also be included within the requirements when procuring other elements e.g. signage and catering. For example, full lifecycle of product and no single use plastic permitted.</p>	0
Waste	-1	<p>Waste bins situated throughout the structure allow for the collection of waste. Marketing Cheltenham will work with the catering supplier and any sponsors to ensure that suitable recycling options are made available. Marketing Cheltenham will sign this in a user-friendly way. No waste is left on site overnight.</p> <p>As much event infrastructure as possible will be reused for a third year. The site is walked on exit to ensure it is handed back in a satisfactory condition.</p> <p>Where possible everything regarding the ice rink is operated on a paperless basis, machines are contactless and ticketing software confirmed via email and QR code in person on arrival.</p>	0

Social	Scores	Justification	Recommendat
Food	0	Worth noting that the headline sponsor in 2024 was a supermarket. Their sponsorship activity generated surplus stock which was gratefully received by the Cheltenham Food Network.	0
Health	2	This event will encourage people to be physically active and promote social connection.	0
Housing	0	0	0
Education	-2	Schools will be encouraged to attend and offered preferential rates to help facilitate access at suitable times of day. HAF funding will be applied for to offer free skating sessions to families and young people who may otherwise not be able to afford to attend. SEND and pre-school sessions will also be in place.	0
Community	1	This event will bring people from the community together to enjoy spending time in our green spaces. It will bring a new audience to Imperial Gardens with the hope they will connect with the space and return in the future.	0
Culture	4	The ice rink will be a key attraction for a diverse community audience over the winter period. Accessibility is at the heart of the project. The ice rink is fully accessible to people with additional or alternative access needs. With varied opening hours, specialised sessions i.e. Relaxed Sessions, student themed nights, and discounted tickets for families, the council strive to make the event as accessible as possible.	0
Accessibility	2	The ice rink will be accessible with ramps and specific Relaxed Sessions will be run at various times/days to encourage those with access needs to participate safely and comfortably. A dedicated taster session will be held ahead of public opening to ensure all necessary considerations have been made. Extremely positive feedback was received by users with additional or alternative access needs in 2024. An Accessibility Video Guide was created for 2024 outlining exactly what to expect, before and during a visit to the ice rink. The site is located in the town centre and is easily accessible by foot, car or using public transport. It is anticipated that discount codes will be offered to families of children experiencing hardship via HAF to help overcome financial barriers.	0

Local Economy and Jobs	8	<p>This is best demonstrated by a looking at post-event analysis from 2024 with similar results forecast for 2025:</p> <p>An independent economic impact assessment shows that a total of £1.6m was spent in Cheltenham by all those visiting the ice rink in 2024. A total of £530,000 of this is classed as ‘additional’ and would not have occurred without the presence of the ice rink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% of all those who had visited Cheltenham Ice Rink said it had been the main reason for their visit to Cheltenham/coming into the town. • A total of £900k additional business turnover occurred in Cheltenham as a result of the presence of the ice rink (indirect and induced) and this additional money supports 12 FTE jobs or 15 estimated actual jobs in the town. <p>Car parking revenue figures for December 2024 show that the council over-performed on parking revenues by over £28,000 highlighting significant numbers of additional visitors to the town during the ice rink period.</p> <p>In 2024 approx 30,000 visits were made to the ice rink. Many local suppliers were used throughout the project, with a total spend value of approx. £128k. 22 local people were employed by the ice rink during the event. Local businesses were promoted via the onsite advertising and sponsorship as well as social media and websites.</p>	0
Safety	1	<p>With greater footfall and lighting in the area, this should automatically present fewer opportunities for crime. The rink will be covered by multiple CCTV cameras and there will be an overnight security presence during non-operational hours. All PAYE staff will be First Aid trained and able to provide a quick response in the event of an accident/injury.</p>	0
Equity	1	<p>Those with access needs have been carefully considered. The rink will be accessible by ramp and is fully wheelchair accessible. In addition, there will be Relaxed Sessions, reduced rate tickets will be available to those in need and free carer tickets will be available. In 2024, over 500 tickets were given away thanks to the partnership with NCLB and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.</p>	0

Democratic Voice	4	<p>A thorough resident engagement plan was created for 2024's event and this resulted in positive engagement with and feedback from the residents of Imperial Square. This feedback highlighted improvements in the look and feel of the rink, responsive issue management, communication, and power solutions. Post-event wash-ups have already taken place and communication is ongoing with representatives from FISG to build upon that success as we look ahead to 2025.</p> <p>A planning application will soon be submitted which will offer local stakeholders the opportunity to input with support/areas of concern.</p>	0
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