

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny

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Ice Skating Review

1. Contacts

Report Author

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To receive the review report for the ice skating event.

3. Background

- 3.1 For a number of years Chichester District Council (CDC) has been contacted by interested parties to host an ice skating rink in the city centre for the Christmas period. In December 2017, following extensive consultation with residents and key stakeholders the Chichester Vision was adopted by CDC and partners. The Vision has a number of themes and actions relating to providing more events, family entertainment, improving the night time economy and supporting the High Street.
- 3.2 In March 2018 following the adoption of the Chichester Vision, it was decided to investigate a number of events and explore the Ice Skating opportunity further. In addition to this Chichester BID were reviewing the Christmas event programme due to the works to repair the Cathedral roof and were unable to hold a large event within the City.
- 3.3 An appraisal of available land within the City which would add benefit to the Christmas event programme and a soft market test was undertaken. A number of organisations expressed an interest in holding an Ice Skating event this resulted in a brief being developed and sent out to all interested parties at the end of July 2018 requesting returns by the end of August.
- 3.4 Only one organisation responded to the formal request and discussions were entered in to with S3K Limited. Following planning and licensing approval, the ice skating rink was delivered in Priory Park, Chichester and was open to the public from 1 December 2018 – 6 January 2019.
- 3.5 During the event, 19,072 skaters took to the ice; in addition to this there were a large number of spectators who entered the event area.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 The report is to review the process involved in the implementation of the ice skating rink, the operational period of the rink, the breakdown period and investigate further, opportunities for the ice skating rink to return to Chichester for Christmas 2019.

- 4.2 There were a number of Chichester District Council officers and departments involved in the development and delivery of the ice skating project.
- 4.3 The Culture and Sport Division were responsible for the licence for the use of the land including liaison with the contractor, review of insurance and health and safety information and compliance monitoring. Numerous meetings were held with the contractor between September and the end of November to discuss site access and logistics. During this time meetings were held with the Estates, Legal, Corporate Health and Safety and Chichester Contract Services Teams to develop the Licence and to undertake condition surveys before access to site was granted. Site visits continued during the construction, clearance and operational phase of the project.
- 4.4 A complaints log was held for the event duration and 40 independent complaints were received from 9 members of the public.
- 4.5 The Development Management Division managed the planning application process, discharge and compliance with the planning conditions.
- 4.6 The planning application was received on 2 October 2018, for the operation of an ice rink and ancillary uses to be housed in temporary structures between the dates of 1 December 2018 and 7 Jan 2019. It was proposed that the set up would commence on 24 November and the ice melt and de-rig would take place between the 2 January 2019 and 7 January 2019. Whilst the application contained limited information on certain technical issues at that stage, the information submitted met the Council's local validation requirements and the national validation requirements and so was made valid. It was necessary however, to obtain further/amended information regarding noise impacts, highway impacts, external lighting details and the proposed dates of operation.
- 4.7 The submission of the application at the start of October was close to the proposed commencement date, and whilst there was sufficient time for officers to assess the application, including further details submitted by the applicant, due to the lead in time to the Planning Committee it was not possible to include all of the consultation responses in the main report and negotiations were on-going, particularly in respect of noise impacts. The time frame for the committee report preparation led to use of the update sheet to provide additional information to the Planning Committee. Whilst all the relevant information was made available to the Planning Committee, the preferred approach would be to include this within the main agenda, with minimum further updates provided at a later date to allow members to consider the issues as a whole prior to the committee meeting.
- 4.8 The development had a temporary impact upon the character of the area and the setting of the listed buildings, and this was considered acceptable.
- 4.9 The Environmental Protection Team considered the predictive noise report (planning desktop noise assessment) and noise management plan that were submitted as part of the planning application. Officers discussed these with the contractor's acoustician, leading to a revised submission. The event had acoustic complexity due to the plant used for making and maintaining the ice resulting in conditions regarding noise and other operational issues being imposed as part of the planning permission.

- 4.10 When the chillers and generator were initially turned on, the noise exceeded the limits imposed by the planning condition, but this was addressed by the contractor through the installation of sound proofing material around the plant areas and no further breaches of this condition were recorded and no statutory nuisance identified.
- 4.11 The Communications, Licensing and Events Division managed the application for a premises licence for the event. Due to a significant number of objections received for the premises licence, the Licensing Team in conjunction with the council's Legal Services convened an Alcohol & Entertainment Licensing Sub-Committee on 21 November 2018 in order to determine a time limited Premises Licence authorising the sale of alcohol. The Sub Committee, having considered all the relevant evidence before them, determined to grant permission under the Licensing Act 2003 by way of a Premises Licence.
- 4.12 There were no reported incidents in connection with the sale of alcohol/regulated entertainment reported to the Licensing Team throughout the duration of the ice rink.
- 4.13 Car parking tickets sold including payment by phone and app increased by just under 5,000 users for the car parks within the city during December 2018 when compared to the previous December. The recent pattern has been for the use of car parks to fall over recent months when compared to the previous year. Christmas Park and Ride use also increased slightly during December 2018 when compared to the previous year's figures.
- 4.14 Chichester BID have reported a general increase in visitors to the City in December 2018 although the shopper camera count in East Street went down by 7.3%. There were 1,999,820 visits to the area in December 2017 and counters recorded 2,067,300 in December 2018. That's an increase of 67,480 visits overall, some of which will have been people attending the ice rink, as well as the general entertainment/events within the city. Retailers have reported on a decent sales period over the Christmas period but no reliable conversion data is available.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Following the success of the Christmas 2018 ice skating rink, the contractor is keen to bring a rink back to the City for Christmas 2019.
- 5.2 The preferred site for this would be Priory Park due to the close proximity of the site to the city centre encouraging footfall to the event and into the city and being well served by a large car park to the north.
- 5.3 Lessons learnt from the year one event:
- 5.3.1 The lead in timescale for this year's event was very short following the market testing. The time therefore that the contractor had for planning and licensing was very limited and the set-up time on site was very short. Discussing proposals for the event at an early stage would allow more time for pre-planning advice and a longer lead in time for set up and marketing for the event.

- 5.3.2 There was not an existing licence template specifically for this type of event therefore resources were required to draft a licence. Now that we have a licence this will save time with any future event proposals.
- 5.3.3 The Planning officers consider that should a future planning application be made, that a lower marquee should be explored with the applicant and if a fence is required then a lower, more attractive enclosure should be provided to allow views in and out of the attraction because the close boarded temporary fence erected resulted in a very hard and urban edge to the development.
- 5.3.4 Furthermore, greater consideration should be given to the design of the noise mitigation measures so these are less visually dominant. Should a similar event take place in the future it would be preferable if a 3 phase electrical connection could be available; this would not only reduce the noise because generators would not be required, but it would also reduce the extent of the plant enclosures and necessary noise mitigation measures that had a significant visual impact. The 3 phase electrical connection would also be of benefit to other hirers/users of the park.
- 5.3.5 No weddings or any other events booked in the Guildhall were cancelled this year as a result of the ice skating rink. The operation of the rink however ceased during the one wedding that did take place and music was silenced for the other events in the Guildhall during the period. If the ice rink is to return to the site then future events within the Guildhall would need to be made aware of the presence of the ice rink.

5.4 The contractor has identified that if they are to return to Chichester this year they would like to consider developing the Christmas offer further through links with Christmas markets and other festive activities to further enhance and compliment the events provided by Chichester BID and Cultural Partners within the city.

5.5 In order to provide sufficient time the contractor would like to submit a pre-planning enquiry in March.

6. Alternatives Considered

6.1 As a Council we have adopted the Chichester Vision and are looking at opportunities to deliver additional events for families, support the City offer and generate addition income. This could be achieved by hiring of Council land, increasing the footfall to the city with a positive impact on spend in the city centre whilst also promoting a community event.

6.2 A number of sites within the city centre were considered for the location of an ice rink. Due to alternative uses such as winter sports pitches, provision of public car parking and markets these were not viable, resulting in the use of the events space within Priory Park.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

7.1 Following a procurement exercise through negotiations with the contractor the hire of land for year 1 of the event was offered at a peppercorn rent.

- 7.2 All costs and risks associated with the operation of the event were with the contractor.
- 7.3 A large deposit was also secured in advance of the event to ensure suitable reinstatement of the site was undertaken.
- 7.4 A large number of officer hours were spent on this project as a result of the requirement for planning committee, a licensing sub-committee and noise monitoring. A large number of hours were also spent dealing with enquiries and complaints received from a small number of public.
- 7.5 The event space within Priory Park has been returned to public open space following the event.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Initial contact was made with Friends of Priory Park, Chichester BID, Visit Chichester and the Chichester Vision steering group once an expression of interest for the ice rink had been received.
- 8.2 Chichester BID, Visit Chichester and Chichester Vision were supportive of the proposal in principal and the Friends of Priory Park requested further information and then offered support for a rink in Chichester but did not support the location of Priory Park. Friends of Priory Park have submitted a document for OSC which can be found in appendix 1. Responses to these concerns have been answered and added to the same document.
- 8.3 During the planning and licensing application process all statutory responsible authorities were consulted and members of the public were notified of the applications.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 In previous years, Chichester BID held a large fireworks display as part of their programme of Christmas activities but this was not the case for Christmas 2018 due to the works to the cathedral roof.
- 9.2 The aim of this project was to provide a fun activity for all ages that complemented the Chichester BID Christmas activities and encouraged visitors to the city over the Christmas period. This was also an opportunity to promote the Council by delivering a quality event within the city including positive promotion of the city to young people.
- 9.3 The increase in visitor numbers has a positive economic impact on local businesses and car parking income, in addition to offering a quality, fun, social ambience and festive cheer experience.
- 9.4 The proposal contributes to a number of actions within the Chichester Vision and links to theme three of the vision: A leading Visitor Destination: - presenting a lively and attractive offering of high quality leisure opportunities, and providing a variety of events and activities.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		
Climate Change and Biodiversity		
Human Rights and Equality Impact - Allowed wheelchair access on to ice which is not offered at other local rinks.	X	
Safeguarding and Early Help		
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		
Health and Wellbeing Positive - active recreation	X	

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix One - Friends of Priory Park comments

12. Background Papers

12.1 None