

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny

10 September 2019

Ice Skating Update

1. Contacts

Report Author

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To receive the further information requested at the March 2019 Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding reinstatement of grass and a breakdown of costs that Chichester District Council incurred as a result of the ice rink.

3. Background

- 3.1 A report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2019 that looked at the process involved in the delivery of the ice rink project, the reported benefits to the city centre, concerns raised by some local residents and lessons learnt from the year one event.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 had been for the use of car parks to fall over previous 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.
- 3.4 Chichester BID 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.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 The report provides further information requested by the March committee regarding the reinstatement of the grass following the departure of the ice rink and a breakdown of costs that Chichester District Council incurred as a result of the ice rink.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 As part of the planning permission there was a condition for a scheme for the making good of the ground and reinstatement of the grass to be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority for approval.
- 5.2 A scheme was submitted by the contractor and meetings were held on site with Chichester Contract Services to agree the proposed works. These works were then carried out by S3K's approved grounds work contractors.
- 5.3 Unfortunately due to the weather conditions the seed did not initially take as well as hoped and therefore additional over-seeding was requested. This additional requirement was again agreed with Chichester Contract Services who on this occasion carried out the additional works, funded by the deposit held from the hire of land deposit.
- 5.4 These additional works cost £190 and therefore the remaining £810 from the hire of land deposit was returned to S3K Limited.
- 5.5 There were many elements to the ice rink project including statutory and non-statutory functions. All aspects associated with planning, licensing and noise nuisance are statutory functions and have therefore not been included in the costs associated with staff time. For some of these statutory functions there is a charge and all of these elements would be required regardless of whether the event was held on CDC land or somewhere else in the district.
- 5.6 The Council received a payment of £462 for the planning permission and £116 for discharge of the planning conditions. In addition a fee of £100 was received for the alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment license application.
- 5.7 The remaining officer time for non-statutory functions included the hire of land for the event and dealing with the customer complaints.
- 5.8 Officer time and costs for the hire of land element of the project involved staff from the Culture & Sport Team, Legal and Estates Teams. The costs calculated for this work equated to £669.79 (excluding oncosts). This cost is higher than normal hire arrangements as this was the first time an event of this nature was held and new licences needed to be produced.
- 5.9 Dealing with the complaints resulted in various levels of staff being involved in dealing and responding to these including the Chief Executive and the Council's Monitoring Officer. Complaints were in the form of emails and telephone calls and these were dealt with in line with the Council's complaints procedure with some complaints being escalated to a stage 2 and then to the Government Ombudsman.
- 5.10 All four complaints referred to the ombudsman found there was no fault by the Council in any of the complaints.
- 5.11 The costs calculated for dealing with complaints is £6,992.70 (excluding oncosts).

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 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 A large number of officer hours were spent on this project as a result of the complaints received from a small number of public. Helpfully, new guidance has been issued as to unreasonable complainants with clear guidance for Councils as to how to address intensive, frequent complaints. It is important to note that the new guidance would have been applied in any case, but the impact of the complaints on this project has informed the project group looking at how to apply the guidance at the District Council.

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 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 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.
- 9.2 The increase in visitor numbers had a positive economic impact on local businesses and car parking income, in addition to offering a quality, fun, social ambience and festive cheer experience.
- 9.3 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		X
Climate Change and Biodiversity		X

Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X

11. Appendices

11.1 None

12. Background Papers

12.1 Ice Skating Review - 12 March 2019 Overview and Scrutiny Committee