

Christmas Events in Camberley 2018-2021

Summary

To support the ongoing regeneration of Camberley Town Centre, it is proposed that the Executive agree to the principle of supporting Christmas events in Camberley for three more years up to a cost of £60k per year, with the costs to be allocated from the Regeneration Budget.

Portfolio: Leader

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 29 March 2018

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to RESOLVE that:

- (i) up to £60,000 be allocated from the Regeneration Budget to support Christmas Events in Camberley in 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21; and
- (ii) the events schedule and any procurement be delegated to the Executive Head of Business in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive.
- (iii) the evaluation of Ice Skate Camberley 2017/18 be noted

1. Resource Implications

- 1.1 £60,000 to be allocated from the existing Town Centre Regeneration budget to support the delivery of Christmas events in Camberley.
- 1.2 In line with current and forthcoming major projects to deliver an improved Town Centre, quality Christmas events, such as last year's ice rink, play a significant role in boosting the profile of Camberley's extensive Christmas offer.
- 1.3 It is intended that any future Christmas events would be delivered to a maximum net cost to the council of £60,000.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Events such as the Ice Skate Camberley contribute significantly to the Town's Christmas offer and raise its profile against key competitors and we are seeking to repeat this over the next three years.

- 2.2 An annual budget for such events that can be agreed and procured under delegated authority would allow for greater flexibility and efficiency.
- 2.3 An annual budget of £60,000 per annum for three years would allow the business team to plan future events systematically and potentially reduce costs due to economies of scale.
- 2.4 An agreed budget for three years would also allow the flexibility to consider alternative Christmas events other than ice-rinks if deemed appropriate.

3. Evaluation of Ice Skate Camberley 2017/18

- 3.1 In the Ice Skate Camberley Executive report from September 2017 it was estimated that to deliver a 16m x 15m ice-rink in the proposed location, including set up, lighting/decoration, ice-rink staff, security, marketing and utilities would be in the region of £126k. The actual gross cost was £111k.
- 3.2 It was estimated that after income received the net cost to the council could be approximately £42k. The actual net cost was £76k which was higher than estimated which was potentially as a result of a number of factors including:
 - The financial estimate attached to the September 17 Executive report was based on ticket prices of £9.50 for adults and £8.50 for children. During the competitive dialogue process with potential ice-rink providers it was identified that the standard child ticket price outlined in the September 17 Executive report was potentially too high so was reduced from £8.50 to £7.50 and a concession/group booking price of £6.50 was also introduced.
 - The financial estimate attached to the September 17 Executive report was based on 306 skating sessions, starting at 10am and ending at 10pm daily throughout the run. During the competitive dialogue process with potential ice-rink providers it was identified that this was excessive and was revised down to 249 skating sessions achieved by opening later and closing earlier on certain days throughout the run.
 - Formal agreement for last years' ice rink being made in September 2017 lead to key markets being missed, such as schools and other youth groups.
 - Using the empty Atrium unit as a ticket office requiring two ticket sales staff on duty at all times due to lone working policies which slightly increased staffing costs.

All of the above learning points would be taken into account if it was decided to deliver another Christmas ice-rink in future years.

- 3.3 Ice Skate Camberley 2017 received extensive positive media coverage including local newspapers, local radio and social media (see annex A).
- 3.4 Just over 5600 people skated over the run of the event.
- 3.5 Postcode analysis indicated that just under 50% of skaters came from the Camberley area the other 50% came from a wide range of surrounding areas including Farnborough, Sandhurst, Fleet, Guildford, Bagshot, Woking and Bracknell.
- 3.6 A post event survey was carried out and produced the following feedback:
- 85% liked the location
 - 75% said they would definitely come back next year (a further 17% said maybe)
 - 94% said the ice rink met or exceeded expectations
 - 51% combined skating with a shopping trip
 - 75% combined skating with eating out
- 3.7 12 restaurants and cafes closest to the ice rink were also surveyed and all thought the rink was a good idea and would like it to return. 7 out of the 12 attributed increased business over the period directly to the ice rink.
- 3.8 The Camberley Town Centre Marketing Group made up of representatives from The Atrium, The SQ and Collectively Camberley said *"The Ice Rink was an asset to the town centre over Christmas"*.
- 3.9 There was some feedback relating to the lack of decoration around the ice rink itself, which was in part due to space available within the service area and the need to maintain clear walk ways for health and safety reasons. Ideas had been put forward to install festive hoardings and extra lights inside the service area but were unviable due to the cost. However, if it was decided to deliver a Christmas ice-rink again in 2018/19, there would be areas that wouldn't require expenditure such as the illuminated archway which can be reused from 2017/18. Additionally, tickets could be sold via a booth on the ice-rink site so there would be no need to use an empty Atrium unit as per 2017/18, which required decoration and power. Both of these factors could release funds for further enhanced lighting and decoration of the service area.
- 3.10 There was also feedback relating to the brand-new ice skates which some found uncomfortable. This was partly due to some skaters wearing no or very thin socks. In future we would make it clearer on the website and marketing material that, as well as gloves, skater should also wear thick socks. We would also provide a stock of gloves and socks for sale at the skate kiosk as many forgot to bring them. However, the stiffness of the skates was acknowledged by the ice rink

company who have said they would consider an alternative brand/style again in future.

- 3.11 Although there were other events taking place throughout the run of the ice-rink including Millar's Ark Animal Nativity, Stilt Walkers, Christmas market and arts & crafts events, some feedback received indicated that more non-skating events in Park Street would have been welcomed. Suggestions such as live music, carol concerts, street entertainers and festive stalls selling goods and food were put forward. All of these would be considered as part of a future Christmas programme.
- 3.12 Additional feedback received indicated that despite the illuminated archway at the entrance of the rink, the site could have had been more prominent on Park Street. Bringing the entrance out further could be considered in future, subject to approval from Surrey County Council Highways.
- 3.13 One area that was highlighted as an issue last year, which was partly resolved, was grandparents who didn't want to skate bringing young children using the penguin skate aids that required on-ice supervision. To resolve this in future there could be specific skate sessions programmed for small children with extra on-ice chaperones available if it was decided to operate an ice rink again.

4. Options

- 4.1 To resolve to allocate up to £60,000 per annum from the regeneration budget to support Christmas events in Camberley for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21
- 4.2 To propose an alternative recommendation.
- 4.3 Choose not to proceed with the recommendation.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 To resolve to allocate up to £60,000 per annum from the regeneration budget to support Christmas events in Camberley for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21

6. Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities

- 6.1 This proposal supports the Council's number one priority, to deliver an improved Camberley Town Centre and contributes to making Surrey Heath an even better place to live.
- 6.2 It will also contribute sustaining and promoting the local economy over the Christmas period.

7. Legal Issues

5.1 Compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 will be required for any procurement exceeding the thresholds.

8. Governance

8.1 All financial matters will be carried out under strict audit guidelines.

8.2 Any providers will be appointed following a thorough tender process.

9. Equalities Impact

9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for any potential Christmas event or activity.

10. Community Safety

10.1 It is not anticipated events will generate additional community safety issues. Full risk assessments would be carried out as well as meetings of the Safety Advisory Group where deemed necessary.

11. Consultation

11.1 Town centre stakeholders, Town ward councillors, potentially affected shops and businesses will be consulted on any planned large scale activities or events.

12. PR and Marketing

12.1 Christmas events will enhance Camberley's image as an exciting place to visit over the Christmas period, providing something different that will set it apart from neighbouring towns.

Annexes	Annex A – PR/Marketing Report Annex B – confidential financial comparison information
Background Papers	
Author/Contact Details	Daniel Harrison - Executive Head of Business Daniel.harrison@surreyheath.gov.uk
Head of Service	Daniel Harrison - Executive Head of Business

Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

Resources	Required	Consulted
Revenue	✓	✓
Capital	✓	✓
Human Resources		
Asset Management	✓	✓
IT		
Other Issues	Required	Consulted
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	✓

Resources	Required	Consulted
Policy Framework		
Legal	✓	✓
Governance		
Sustainability		
Risk Management		
Equalities Impact Assessment		
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation		
P R & Marketing	✓	✓