

Subject: Ice Rink – Great Yarmouth Town Centre

Report to: EMT - 26th May 2016

Economic Development – 6th June 2016

Report by: Group Manager: Tourism & Communications

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

That Member's consider the option of bringing the ice rink back to Great Yarmouth for Christmas 2016, building on the success of its first year and allocating funding from within the Town Centre reserve.

That member's further consider the option of a 2 or 3 year investment to reduce the annual costs of another one off event.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- a. Great Yarmouth Town Centre has experienced a steady decline in occupied shops and footfall figures. Residents, businesses and stakeholders are all concerned about this. Retailers in particular want to see some immediate improvements. This need for Town Centre improvements was further supported through a Public Consultation exercise which was undertaken at the end of 2014.
- b. Therefore a Town Centre Initiative with a £1,000,000 investment was agreed as part of the budget setting process in February 2015. Through the Town Centre Initiative funding short term improvements have been implemented while a longer term master planning exercise is undertaken to understand the future vision for the Town Centre and to support future investment.

2. IMPACT

- a. Part of the short term initiatives saw investment in Town Centre events. This included the decision to provide an Ice Rink in the Town Centre from 20th November 2015 to 3rd January 2016. The installation of the rink was a bold headline statement of the Council's commitment to the Town Centre and clearly got people talking about and visiting the Town Centre during its period of opening. This can be evidenced through footfall figures in comparison with the previous year, the highlights of which include
 - i. Lights Switch-On up 25%
 - ii. Coca-Cola Truck up 48%
 - iii. Last Wednesday before Xmas up 10%
 - iv. Boxing Day up 10%
 - v. Tuesday after Bank Holiday up 12%

- b. It has been harder to translate this footfall increase into retail spend. It was disappointing to note the lack of engagement from some traders to take the opportunity to draw customers into shop. For example many traders did not open in line with the Ice rink evening opening times where there was a clear increase in footfall into the Town Centre.
- c. Customer feedback about the rink was very positive, from schools and their children writing into the Council about their experience to website feedback which includes statements such as *"It was a success, people were loving it and all ages were using it and others were standing and watching the skaters. It was a welcome diversion and uplift for Yarmouth Town Centre and for a change"* and *"All town centers of small towns are struggling to stay alive and to be honest it would be so very easy for local business and authorities to just let it die. Life is about enjoyment and in your busy life if you stopped to either look at the fantastic Christmas lights, took a stroll through the Christmas Market or where indeed brave enough to have a go on the ice rink you would have seen happiness everywhere"*.
- d. Media coverage for the event was extremely positive with weekly articles both in the Mercury and Advertiser. However there was some feedback from Retro skate that the Ice Rink took trade away from them during its period of opening.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- a. **Ice Rink:** Assuming costs will be subject to a 2.5% rise and income is set at 5% growth.

ICE RINK (6 weeks)	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Costs (x 2.5%)	£202,239	£207,295	£212,477	£217,789
income – Admissions (x 5%)	(£66,556)	(£69,884)	(£73,378)	(£77,047)
Income – Sponsorship (x 5%)	(£27,137)	(£28,494)	(£29,918)	(£31,414)
Net Cost	£108,546	£108,917	£109,181	£109,328

- i. Building on the experience of Year 1 spare capacity periods can be specifically targeted to increase skate admissions.
- ii. Income targets have been set as a 5% annual increase; thus maintaining an annual expenditure of around £100k.
- iii. These figures are estimates; procuring the ice rink would necessitate a formal tendering process.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- a. There are potential risks, such as the Ice Rink not being of satisfactory quality (can be mitigated through appropriate tendering of service), breakdown during the operating period (build into tender adequate support arrangements) or bad weather (which could impact on potential income).

- b. The financial risk would be the failure to meet the revenue targets in terms of users and sponsorship.
- c. Health & safety risks would be mitigated through appropriate safeguards during the construction and de-rig process and through appropriate stewarding and first aid cover during opening hours.
- d. It is unlikely that the Ice Rink would ever be a self-financing venture; there would therefore be a future reputational risk when support funding is withdrawn.
- e. Request for funding is through a dedicated earmarked reserve for the Town Centre Initiative. Members are asked to note that this is “one of” money and that there are still budgetary pressures in terms of this Authorities medium term financial planning.

5. **CONCLUSIONS**

- a. Potential benefits for the installation of the Ice Rink include a major headline event that will encourage visitors outside of the Borough into our Town Centre over the Christmas period, increase footfall and make a statement of commitment to improving the Town Centre and its overall perception.
- b. The Ice Rink probably offers the highest profile opportunity albeit with a significant price tag.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Member's consider the option of bringing the ice rink back to Great Yarmouth for Christmas 2016, building on the success of its first year and allocating funding from within the Town Centre reserve.

That member's further consider the option of a 2 or 3 year investment to reduce the annual costs of another one off event.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Yes consulted and approved
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Yes consulted
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan
Financial Implications:	Yes
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Yes
Risk Implications:	Yes

Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	
Crime & Disorder:	Yes
Every Child Matters:	Yes

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