

To examine the various roles of council-owned neighbourhood parades to explore how effectively these are currently being discharged and what improvements might be made for the future.

Suggested by Councillor Lanzer.

Proposed Scope

The proposed scope was to include the important revenue stream derived from the 11 parades and also their value as community assets in terms of providing local shopping facilities for the neighbourhoods and beyond.

Councillor Lanzer met with Democratic Services and Finance to discuss the topic further to ascertain requirements, to narrow down specifics from the suggestion and to highlight exactly what was required from the scope and objectives. These should include (but not limited to) –

- How has the current policy, ([Property Strategy - May 2004](#)) worked with regard to the revenue stream and how important is this revenue stream to council services?
- How do the parades meet the perception of being 'community assets', such as providing retailing enabling residents to shop without the need to travel, thus suggesting the need to have diversity of use.
- How the uses on the parades have changed over time: what is the rate of turnover of the trades on the parades?
 - Number of vacancies.
 - Current tenant/user mix.
- Does the balance of different users on the Parade meet the objectives of the Local Plan?
- How has the waiting list for Parade units changed over the period of the policy?
- What use is required by the applicants on the waiting list?
- Clarity on the rent review/lease renewal process.
- Analysis of the real increase in rents allowing for inflation (RPI).
- What is the policy with regard to the flat over the retail unit?
- What is the policy with regard to the 21 year rule on extensions to the property?
- What is the policy for responsibility for maintenance?
- How is a potential tenant's ability to run a business assessed? Are there ways to help support tenants to run a business, such as training?
- What options might there be for change?

Proposed Outcome/Objectives

The current neighbourhood parade policy was adopted in May 2004 when it was decided to adopt a more commercial approach. With this policy being nearly 16 years old, there is an opportunity to examine its effectiveness over a considerable period of time and the influence that it has had on meeting the range of objectives associated with the neighbourhood parades.

The desired outcome would be an appraisal of the effectiveness of current neighbourhood parade policies in meeting agreed objectives since May 2004 and consideration of possible changes for the future.

Given the nature of the questions being raised, this lends itself more to a one off comprehensive report and presentation to OSC rather than to a scrutiny review, particularly given the Council's current work on *Commercialisation*, which potentially could lead to duplication.

The information identified under the above scope and objectives is currently available. Consequently it is proposed that a report and presentation are produced for the first OSC meeting in the municipal year to fully scrutinise the objectives identified in detail as opposed to establishing a Scrutiny Panel consisting of a few members.

The opportunity to scrutinise the information in depth allows all OSC members to be present and obtain the information – being able to analyse issues thoroughly in a single session.

Preliminary recommendations:

- 1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission review the viability of the proposal.**
- 2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission defers a full scrutiny review due to the detailed, comprehensive information and evidence already in existence, together with the Council's current work on *Commercialisation*.**
- 3) Instead the Commission receives a presentation and full report at a meeting (planned for the first in the municipal year) to fully scrutinise the above objectives in detail.**
- 4) Following (3), should it be determined that a Panel still be required and supported:**
 - a) Seek nominations (via Democratic Services) for the membership for the Panel, in accordance with political proportionality.**
 - b) Establish an early scoping meeting with the Scrutiny Panel.**
 - c) Allow the Chair to confirm the terms of reference for the review.**