

# **Overview and Scrutiny Board**

## **Neighbourhoods Theme**

### **A Review of Council Owned Shopping Parades**

**Final Report December 2011**



**DELIVERED**  
**BY SCRUTINY** ✓

## Chair's Comment (Foreword)



This report represents the findings of the second of three reviews that I have been asked to chair by the Overview and Scrutiny Board in my role as the Lead Scrutiny Member for the Neighbourhoods theme during 2011/12. This review has focused on the impact that council owned shopping parades have on our neighbourhoods and the health and well being of Knowsley residents. The main aim of the review was to seek to understand the role and purpose of these shopping parades and how we can, in our role as landlord, seek to ensure that these assets have a positive impact on our communities.

Members provided significant challenge during the working group sessions, which prompted many questions and much debate. The range of expert witnesses invited from within the council, and also Public Health greatly assisted the working group to make informed recommendations to improve the environmental impact of these parades and to reduce any negative impacts that certain retail activities can have on the health and well being of our residents.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to members of the working group, particularly my Deputy Lead Member, Marie Stuart, for their input into the review and also to the expert witnesses and officers for their interesting and valuable contributions.

Councillor Diane Reid  
Chair of the Council Owned Shopping Parades Working Group

Members of the Working Group:

Councillors Marie Stuart (Vice-Chair), Bill Brennan, Ray Halpin, Brian O'Hare, Shannon Arnall, Dave Tully, Dennis Baum, John Greer and Ian Smith

# **A Review of the Council Owned Shopping Parades**

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## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 There are 56 shopping parades within Knowsley, of which 35 are privately owned and 21 are owned by the council. These shopping parades can be valuable assets within the community as they provide a convenient source of goods and services to local residents. In addition, the local shops can provide a natural setting for residents to engage with each other, particularly elderly residents who may only have limited contact with family and friends. Therefore local shopping parades can enhance community cohesion within an area.
- 1.2 In recent years there has been a noticeable change to the mix of trades operating within local shopping parades and the range of goods and services that they provide. For example, at a national level there has been an increase in the number of solariums, taxi offices and fast food takeaways that are situated in local shopping parades and this trend is also present in Knowsley. At the same time there has been a reduction in post offices and local butchers. These are largely due to market forces - i.e. supply and demand and affect almost everybody in the local communities, which the shopping parade serves.
- 1.3 It has also been recognised that shopping parades can attract anti-social behaviour and crime with the widespread provision of certain products such as fast food and alcohol having a potentially detrimental effect on the health and well being of residents.
- 1.4 As stated above the business activities and provision of services that take place within all shopping parades across the Borough are largely based upon supply and demand, although certain activities are regulated by national guidance, particularly through the planning and licensing regimes. However the authority can have a much more influential role where it owns the shopping parades.
- 1.5 Consequently, in setting its workplan for 2011/2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Board felt that it was important to understand the position within the Borough and to identify ways in which any issues could be addressed. Therefore the focus of the review has been on the Council Owned Shopping Parades within the Borough.
- 1.6 In undertaking the review, the Working Group recognised that some of the changes could only be applied to new businesses as they sought to locate within the shopping parades. Existing tenants have rights, through existing lease agreements and existing planning permission, which provide them with security. Although the introduction of any new policy would also apply to existing tenants who request to change their lease conditions and business activities.

- 1.7 In addition, the Working Group recognised the importance of the financial contributions that the existing shopping parades make to the council's wider budget position and also that any proposed changes to the existing arrangements would need to be considered in the light of the current budget situation.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Taking into account all of the information and evidence gathered, working group members make the following series of recommendations:

### 2.2 Strategy Approach – moving forward

***Recommendation 1 – The council should retain ownership, and continue to manage its Shopping Parade portfolio for the reasons set out within the report.***

***Recommendation 2 – A detailed review should be undertaken of each shopping parade to assess its contribution towards the local community that it serves with a view to developing a repairs and maintenance programme incorporating any necessary physical improvements.***

### 2.3 Developing a Policy

***Recommendation 3 – The council should introduce a formal policy for the management of the council owned shopping parades.***

***Recommendation 4 – The management policy should aim to influence the type of businesses that operate in the council's shopping parades, including a complete ban on any new off-licences and betting shops and limitations on the number of fast food takeaways.***

***Recommendation 5 – The council should seek to retain, attract and encourage certain traditional businesses, particularly where they provide healthy products, such as butchers and green grocers, through for example the introduction of financial or other incentives.***

***Recommendation 6 – The council should seek to minimise the negative environmental and health impacts of the shopping parades, through the range of initiatives available to it as landlord, including for example, introducing service charges where applicable and promoting responsible retailer schemes.***

2.4 Wider Issues applying to all shopping parades

***Recommendation 7 – The Borough Treasurer should be requested to contact all local retailers to ensure that they are taking advantage of any small business rate relief, to which they may be entitled.***

***Recommendation 8 – The council should work with fast food takeaways to improve the nutritional content of takeaway food and the information on display to consumers, as well as continue to work with Heart of Mersey to develop an adaptation of the Food Charter to apply to takeaways***

***Recommendation 9 – The council should consider the merits of introducing supplementary planning guidance to influence the location and number of fast food takeaways across the Borough.***

***Recommendation 10 – Any findings or best practice arising from this review should be shared with the tenants and landlords of privately owned shopping parades.***

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 The Borough of Knowsley has 56 shopping parades, 21 of which are owned by the council with the remainder privately owned. The council owns 153 retail units within its shopping parades. These units include a range of retailers including hairdressers, newsagents, fast food takeaways and off licences, which generate in the region of £0.770m per year for the council.
- 3.1.2 Shopping parades are valuable community assets that provide local residents with access to a range of goods and services. They also act as a focal point for residents to engage with each other thus promoting cohesion within the community. This is particularly the case for elderly residents who may only have limited contact with family and friends.
- 3.1.3 On a national basis there has been a recent decline in both the number of local shopping parades and the range of goods and services that they provide. This development has been facilitated by an increase in the number of large supermarkets, due to popular demand, which provide ready and cheap access to the kind of products only previously available in local shops. This has led to a reduction in the number of butchers, green grocers and other facilities at a local level.
- 3.1.4 In addition shopping parades have not only been seen as a focus for anti-social behaviour and crime but also as having a negative influence on the health and well being of local residents through the increased availability of alcohol and fast food.
- 3.1.5 Whilst the business activities and provision of services that take place within all shopping parades across the Borough is largely influenced by national guidance, particularly through planning and licensing law, a council is able to exert more influence where it owns the shopping parades in question.

#### **3.2 Reasons for the Review**

Therefore given the background to the review, its overall aim was to develop a vision for the council owned shopping parades across the Borough to ensure that they contribute positively to the council's key aims and objectives.



### **3.3 Terms of Reference**

The main objectives of the Working Group were to:

- To examine and understand existing practice in relation to the Borough's council-owned shopping parades;
- To compare the council's approach to that practiced elsewhere;
- To assess the impact on the Borough's neighbourhoods of shopping parades in terms of health, the environment and crime and disorder; and
- To identify the priorities for the future management of the shopping parades within the council's ownership.

### **3.4 Methodology**

3.4.1 At the initial meeting of the Working Group, members considered and determined the scope of the review. The methodology adopted included the provision of documentary evidence, including research undertaken by the council and the PCT, together with a number of presentations from the relevant Service Managers from across the council. In addition, the evidence received also included reference to a specific case. The expert witnesses included: -

Ian Capper	Head of Asset Management
Tracy Dickinson	Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection
Patrick McCarten	Head of Employment and Skills
Matt Ashton	Assistant Director of Public Health
Jon Dyson	Head of Waste and Street Scene Services
Caroline Davis	Technical Advisor – Street Scene Services
Jemma Jones	Senior Legal Advisor – Crime and Disorder
Nicola Haigh	Community Safety Manager (Huyton)
Nora Brinkley	Business and Sector Development Manager

The evidence sessions were delivered as follows:

#### **3.4.2 Evidence Gathering Session 1**

The first evidence gathering session took place on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011. The main purpose of this session was to identify the various management practices that were available and to compare these with the current practice in Knowsley. This evidence was provided by Ian Capper, Head of Asset Management, who gave a presentation to the Working Group, which outlined the various approaches that are adopted in other areas of the Country.

In addition, evidence was provided by Nora Brinkley (Business and Sector Development Manager) which detailed the financial support and business advice that is available to retailers as small businesses, or start up businesses, within the Borough.

This session also included a short presentation from Patrick McCarten (Head of Employment and Skills) entitled “Knowsley Retail Academy” and this highlighted the help that the council can provide retailers with in terms of recruitment.

The detailed outcomes from this session are set out in Appendix 1

### **3.4.3 Evidence Gathering Session 2**

The second evidence gathering session, which took place on 2 November 2011 focused upon the health and environmental impacts that council owned shopping parades have on the local community.

This evidence relating to the health impacts was given by way of a presentation by Tracy Dickinson (Head of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection) and Matt Ashton (Assistant Director – Public Health). The evidence with regard to the environmental impacts was provided by way of a presentation from Jon Dyson (Head of Waste and Street Scene Services).

The detailed outcomes from this session are set out in Appendix 2

### **3.4.4 Evidence Gathering Session 3**

The third and final evidence gathering session, which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 focused upon the link between crime and anti-social behaviour and the council’s shopping parades. This evidence was given by way of a presentation by Jemma Jones (Senior Legal Advisor – Crime and Disorder) and Nicola Haigh (Community Safety Manager).

The detailed outcomes from this session are set out in Appendix 3

### **3.4.5 Special Evidence Gathering Session**

In addition to the three programmed evidence gathering sessions, a further meeting was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 to capture all of the key issues raised during the review to ensure that the final report included the collective view of the Working Group can to make certain that any policies, which were recommended for development accurately reflected the views of the Group.

#### **3.4.6 Wrap-up Meeting:**

A final meeting of the Working Group was then held to discuss the issues arising from the review and to agree its final recommendations and approve a draft copy of the final report.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Strategic Approach**

- 4.1.1 The Working Group received information about the various management models that had been adopted in other local authorities. From the information presented to the Working Group most local authorities had transferred their shops portfolio as part of a housing stock transfer to a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Trust. This was not the case in Knowsley, as the Council retained its shops following the transfer of the housing stock to Knowsley Housing Trust in July 2002.
- 4.1.2 The Working Group also received evidence in the form of a background document, which provided details for each of the Council's shopping parades, in terms of location, income, voids and mix of trades. Only limited information was available about the condition of each of the shopping parades and therefore the requirement for any future level of investment was unknown. However, it was reported that a programme of condition surveys was underway and it is anticipated that this exercise would be completed in the new year.
- 4.1.2 The Working Group considered the options and it was found that the current management arrangements allowed the local authority a level of control, which it is able to assert as owner. This control includes being able to influence the types of businesses and the way that they operate within the shopping parades. It was noted also that, as owner, the Council was entitled to receive the rental income from the tenants.
- 4.1.3 In Knowsley, it was noted that the current level of voids in the Council owned shopping parades was generally very low at less than 5%. There was a broad range of trades within the parades, and overall they generated in the region of £0.600m net income, which was particularly important given the council's overall revenue budget position. Taking on board this information, the Working Group was satisfied that there were a number of positive reasons for the council to retain ownership of its shopping parades.
- 4.1.5 The background documentation also demonstrated that each parade impacted upon their local community to a different extent. For example, Woolfall Heath shops were in poor condition, under-utilised, and traditionally had a high level of voids and consequently it had been agreed that this parade would be demolished.
- 4.1.6 The Working Group felt therefore that there would be merit in undertaking a detailed review of each council owned shopping parade to determine its contribution and value to the local community with a view to to developing a repairs and maintenance programme incorporating any necessary physical improvements.

***Recommendation 1 – The council should retain ownership, and continue to manage its Shopping Parade portfolio for the reasons set out within the report.***

***Recommendation 2 – A detailed review should be undertaken of each shopping parade to assess its contribution towards the local community that it serves with a view to developing a repairs and maintenance programme incorporating any necessary physical improvements.***

#### 4.2 Management Policy

- 4.2.1 A key document presented to the Working Group was entitled “the health impacts of Council Owned Shopping Parades”. This paper was produced jointly between the council’s Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Service and Public Health and it discussed in detail the impacts that certain types of retailer, such as Hot Food Takeaways, Off-licenses and Bookmakers, had on the communities they served.
- 4.2.2 The report detailed the significant negative impacts that certain businesses can have on an individuals’ health and well-being, particularly young people. It was noted that an informal policy had been operating for a number of years, which included a ban on any new off licenses or betting shops in the council’s shopping parades, although no written policy could be located. This was evident from previous requests from businesses and it was also found that some tenancy/lease agreements included a clause banning the sale of alcohol.
- 4.2.3 Consequently, the Working Group felt that it was important to introduce a formal policy around the management of the shopping parades and that this, when developed, would provide clarity to all parties.
- 4.2.4 The Working Group heard that there was a clear link between gambling and alcohol abuse and that many gambling addicts were also addicted to alcohol. There had been a rise in on-line betting and bookmakers are also now introducing Fixed Odds Betting Terminals in store, which were highly addictive and particularly attracted young males. Also, the rates of depression and attempted suicide among gambling addicts and the level of crime committed by gambling addicts were higher than the national average across the whole population.

- 4.2.5 As stated above, it was established that an informal policy currently existed, which included a complete ban on any new off-licenses or betting shops. Following the evidence provided by Tracy Dickinson (Head of Environmental Health) and Matt Ashton (Assistant Director – Public Health), which outlined the associated risks with these types of businesses and particularly the potential harm to young people the Working Group endorsed that this existing approach should be fully formalised.
- 4.2.6 The Working Group also acknowledged that off licenses and betting shops could be popular in the community. This had been demonstrated by a request in 2011 to transform a solarium into an off-licence, which had been accompanied by a petition from local residents. Nevertheless, the Working Group endorsed transforming existing informal practice into a formal ban.
- 4.2.7 In addition, it was recognised that certain business types could potentially have a greater impact on the local environment than others. At the same time, the Working Group was convinced that local environmental quality should not just be viewed as a cosmetic issue, but as an essential part of local social and economic sustainability.
- 4.2.8 This was outlined in a presentation from Jon Dyson (Head of Waste and Street Scene Services), which highlighted that traditional shopping parade businesses such as newsagents, fast food takeaways and betting shops often generated more litter than other commercial outlets such as post offices. The importance of responsible containment / management of waste through appropriate commercial waste collection arrangements was also highlighted.
- 4.2.9 The Working Group also received evidence regarding the different ways that the council, as landlord, could influence the various business activities, without introducing a formal ban. These potential methods included a requirement for new retailers to sign up to an acceptable behaviour contract such as a 'Responsible Retailer Agreement or to adopt good practice such as that reflected in voluntary codes of practice e.g. 'Food on the Go'. It was felt that this may be applicable to newsagents, fast food retailers and betting shops whose business can result in higher levels of littering.
- 4.2.10 The Working Group also noted that the council provided a number of environmental services to businesses on a commercial basis, such as commercial waste removal and pest control and there was a clear opportunity for the council to promote these services to shop tenants, which could both generate additional income for the council and also have a positive impact on the shopping parades.

- 4.2.11 The Working Group felt that the steady decline in the more traditional local businesses, such as green grocers, family butchers and post offices was not a positive trend, as these businesses can provide a valuable service to the local community. Therefore the Working Group felt that any council policy should try to retain and/or increase the number of these businesses within the council's shopping parades by providing financial or other incentives. It was acknowledged however, that any decision to offer financial or other incentives to attract certain trades must be affordable.
- 4.2.12 The focus of the final evidence gathering session was on establishing whether there were any links between the shopping parades and crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). It was clear from the evidence that there was a link as shopping parades became a focal point for young people, particularly during the early evening time. The evidence also indicated that levels of ASB at council owned parades were generally greater than those in non-council owned parades. It was recognised that this was thought to be because of the location of the council-owned parades rather than the management arrangements of those parades.
- 4.2.13 Further evidence showed that levels of ASB and crime tended to be greater in the evening, particularly where the shops were open, sheltered and lit, thus attracting young people.
- 4.2.14 It was also reported to the Working Group that the council currently worked with tenants to identify appropriate crime prevention measures, however shop tenants were often reluctant to incur even small amounts of expenditure.
- 4.2.15 Nevertheless, the Working Group agreed that tenants had a responsibility to work with the council to reduce ASB and crime, even if there was a cost involved. The council could no longer sustain a position where the tenants were heavily reliant upon the council. The Working Group felt that we had to manage expectations and that tenants should do more themselves to address the issues. Therefore it was agreed that the Council should look to introduce appropriate responsible retailer schemes and actively encourage tenants to work alongside the council.
- 4.2.16 The Working Group felt that the introduction of CCTV should also be encouraged, where appropriate. However it was acknowledged that this would also need to be funded by tenants, possibility through a service charge arrangement. It was also suggested that any improvements /changes in council owned parades should be extended to non-council owned parades as part of a wider review.

***Recommendation 3 – The council should introduce a formal policy for the management of the Council owned shopping parades.***

***Recommendation 4 – The management policy should aim to influence the type of businesses that operate in the council's shopping parades, including a complete ban on any new off-licences and betting shops and limitations on the number of fast food takeaways.***

***Recommendation 5 – The council should seek to retain, attract and encourage certain traditional businesses, particularly where they provide healthy products, such as butchers and green grocers, through for example the introduction of financial or other incentives.***

***Recommendation 6 – The council should seek to minimise the negative environmental and health impacts of the shopping parades, through the range of initiatives available to it as landlord, including for example, introducing service charges where applicable and promoting responsible retailer schemes.***

#### 4.3 Wider Issues applying to all shopping parades in Knowsley

4.3.1 The Working Group was also provided with evidence about the extent of the support provided to shop tenants, as small businesses in Knowsley, by the Council's Business Liaison team. This support was provided in a number of forms and included grants to start up businesses, business advice and guidance and training for potential new staff by the newly created Retail Academy. The Working Group acknowledged the important and valuable support that was provided and welcomed the fact that this support was available to all retailers in Knowsley, not just those in council owned shopping parades.

4.3.2 The Working Group also enquired about the possibility of providing business rate relief to these businesses. It was reported to the Working Group that discretionary rate relief was only available to non-profit making businesses, for example Charity Shops.

4.3.3 In addition to the above, further research identified that businesses with a rateable value of less than £15,000 were eligible to receive small businesses rate relief, although this was due to change from 31 March 2013 as part of the proposals contained within the Localism Bill. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the Borough Treasurer should be requested to contact all shop retailers across the Borough to ensure that they were taking advantage of this relief.



- 4.3.4 A key aspect of the presentation provided to the Working Group on the health impacts of the council owned shopping parades was the outcome of a nutritional sampling research project, which was developed by Environmental Health and Public Health, and funded by the Knowsley at Heart Board. This research took place between March and May 2011 and involved analysing the nutritional content of popular takeaway dishes served by fast food outlets in Knowsley.
- 4.3.5 This research demonstrated that some meals being served provided more than 3 times the guideline daily amount per meal in terms of saturated fat and calorie content. In some cases, these dishes also contained more than twice the guideline daily amount per meal of salt.
- 4.3.6 In general terms the research also found that the food on sale was of a poor quality, portion sizes were excessive and food labelling was very poor or non-existent.
- 4.3.7 The Working Group were also advised of the work that the council's Environmental Health and Public Health teams do with takeaway businesses in terms of educating them in relation to improving food standards and healthy eating. Reference was also made to the Merseyside Food Charter and the work that was on-going to create a Takeaways Food Charter.
- 4.3.8 The Working Group acknowledged that a number of the findings and recommendations that the review had prompted were equally applicable to privately owned shopping parades. These common aspects included improving food standards, security reviews and encouraging shop keepers to sign up to responsible retailer schemes.
- 4.3.9 Whilst not a key aspect of the review, reference was made during the evidence gathering sessions to the potential to use supplementary planning guidance to limit the number of takeaways within the Borough and for example to prevent new takeaways appearing within a certain distance of schools. This approach had been adopted in St. Helens and could apply to all shopping parades, both private and Council owned.

***Recommendation 7 – The Borough Treasurer should be requested to contact all local retailers to ensure that they are taking advantage of any small business rate relief, to which they may be entitled.***

***Recommendation 8 – The council should work with fast food takeaways to improve the nutritional content of takeaway food and the information on display to consumers, as well as continue to work with Heart of Mersey to develop an adaptation of the Food Charter to apply to takeaways***

***Recommendation 9 – The council should consider the merits of introducing supplementary planning guidance to influence the location and number of fast food takeaways across the Borough.***

***Recommendation 10 – Any findings or best practice arising from this review should be shared with the tenants and landlords of privately owned shopping parades.***

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This review has enabled a considerable amount of evidence to be considered from expert witnesses, as well as a significant volume of documentary evidence including research, current working practices and operational policies, alongside best practice that already exists in other areas.

The Working Group feels that they have developed a set of recommendations which will help to ensure that local shopping parades, particularly those that remain in Council ownership, make an overall positive contribution to the communities in which they are located.

## **6. APPENDICES**

1. Summary note - Evidence Taking Session 1 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011
2. Summary note - Evidence Taking Session 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011
3. Summary note - Evidence Taking Session 3 – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011
4. Summary note - Evidence Taking Session 4 – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD</b> <b>Review of Council Owned Shopping Parades Working Group</b> <b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011</b> <b>Summary of Meeting</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Diane Reid</li> <li>• Councillor Marie Stuart</li> <li>• Councillor Dave Tully</li> <li>• Councillor Brian O'Hare</li> <li>• Councillor Shannon Arnall</li> <li>• Councillor Ray Halpin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Butterworth</li> <li>• Ian Capper</li> <li>• Patrick McCarten</li> <li>• Nora Brinkley</li> <li>• Holly Kennedy</li> </ul>
<b>Detail of Evidence Provided</b>	
<b><i>List of documentary evidence considered at meeting</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information providing details of council owned shopping parades, including location, trades, void levels and rent levels.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr O'Hare queried whether the document was complete as it excluded Manor Farm Road shops</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Potential Findings</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The document would be reviewed and updated.</li> </ul>	
<b>Expert Witness (1)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Capper presented a paper entitled "review of approaches adopted by other local authorities". The paper identified the various arrangements in a small number of other local authorities, which had replied to a request for this information. The paper highlighted that most authorities had transferred their shopping parades to the local housing association. Ian Capper also presented a further paper entitled "summary of current management arrangements" which explained the legal relationship between the council and its tenants.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That a transfer or sale could generate significant capital receipts (potentially in the region of £6m), however the council would lose a significant annual revenue stream in the region of £0.600m.</li> <li>• That the transfer of shops to a third party, such as a housing association removed any form of control away from the local authority.</li> <li>• Each shopping parade is different in terms of voids, backlog repairs and mix of trades and therefore provides a different contribution to the local neighbourhood.</li> <li>• It was also clarified that the council does not own any maisonettes above any of its shop units, although it does own office space in certain parades.</li> <li>• The various roles that the authority has, as landlord, licensing authority and planning authority was discussed. The working group felt that these</li> </ul>	

<p>roles were not always clear to tenants and this could cause confusion, and specific reference was made to a recent case at “5 Loweswater Way”. It was felt that this could lead to great expense to both tenants and the council in terms of officer time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference was made to existing council policy around betting shops and other night time activities, although a specific document could not be located.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Findings</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a number of options available to the Council in terms of ownership and these would have significant financial implications and impact upon the council’s ability to control the activities that take place within them.</li> <li>• The council has the ability, as the landlord, to control the activities that take place within its shopping parades and the opening hours which are operated by its tenants. This control would not be there if the council disposed of its shopping parades to a third party.</li> <li>• The council has separate roles when considering activities that take place within the Borough, for example its role as “licensing authority” and its role as “planning authority” and that there are clear statutory guidelines and requirements, which the council must follow when acting in these roles. However, its role as landlord is complete separate and the above roles do not fetter its ability to control the trades within its own shopping parades.</li> <li>• No specific policy document could be located, which provided the basis on which to move forward and control/encourage the trades/activities, which took place within the council’s shopping parades.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expert Witness (2)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nora Brinkley presented a paper which summarised the financial support and business advice available to small businesses and start up businesses within the Borough. The paper identified two funding streams, one for new businesses to support job creation and one for more established businesses to encourage growth. In addition, Nora explained the business advice that was provided by the council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues Raised?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding was currently available although this may reduce in the future due to the council’s financial position.</li> <li>• Businesses were made aware of the advice and funding through a variety of ways, including general advertising and direct contact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Findings</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council’s business liaison team worked actively with the retail sector in the Borough to provide advice, support and funding on both a general and ad hoc basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expert Witness (3)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrick McCarten talked through a presentation entitled “Knowsley Retail Academy” and highlighted the help that the council can provide retailers within in terms of recruitment and also the background and role of the new Retail Academy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues Raised?</b></p>

- The Retail Academy is receiving 12 new applicants each day and has created 14 jobs already.
- Attendance is not compulsory although this was queried and would be clarified.
- The courses were run over 4, 8 or 12 weeks (2 days per week) travel costs were paid and uniforms provided.

***Potential Findings***

- The Retail Academy provided a source of training for individuals who wanted to work in the retail sector and a potential source of trained for all retailers across the Borough.

***Draft Recommendations***

- As a general principle, the council should retain ownership of its shopping parades as this provides a level of control on the activities that take place within them.
- Although consideration could be given to reviewing the contribution that each individual shopping parade makes to the local area, given the level of backlog repairs and number of voids, which may lead to further proposals.
- A clear policy outlining the range of trades, operating hours and other activities should be developed taking on board the relevant financial considerations and the impact that individual trades may have in the local community, including for example, health and environmental considerations.

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD</b> <b>Review of Council Owned Shopping Parades Working Group</b> <b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011</b> <b>Summary of Meeting</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Diane Reid</li> <li>• Councillor Marie Stuart</li> <li>• Councillor Dave Tully</li> <li>• Councillor Shannon Arnall</li> <li>• Councillor Brian O'Hare</li> <li>• Councillor Bill Brennan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Butterworth</li> <li>• Tracy Dickinson</li> <li>• Jon Dyson</li> <li>• Caroline Davies</li> <li>• Matt Ashton</li> <li>• Katherine Taylor</li> <li>• Holly Kennedy</li> </ul>
<b>Detail of Evidence Provided</b>	
<b><i>List of documentary evidence considered at meeting</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information providing details of health and environmental impacts of Council-owned shopping parades, was distributed prior to the meeting and this was discussed as part of the officer presentations.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None – please see below</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Potential Findings</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	
<b>Expert Witness (1)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracy Dickinson and Matt Ashton provided a presentation entitled the health and environmental impacts of Council-owned shopping parades.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presentation focused mainly on the impacts of the following retail types, hot food takeaways, off-licenses, bookmakers, solaria and hair and beauty premises. TD identified the potential negative health impacts such as poor nutrition, poor quality food, litter problems, noise pollution and odour problems.</li> <li>• There are 59 hot food takeaway outlets currently registered with Knowsley Council. Of the 59 hot food takeaways in the borough approximately 20 are located within Council-owned shopping parades, making up 13% of Council-owned stock. A significant amount of work has been undertaken in Knowsley to fully understand the nutritional standard of takeaway food and therefore its impact on the health of the residents. Two food samples were collected from each outlet by the Council's Environmental Health Team between March and May 2011. The type and number of dishes chosen was based on research into popular takeaway food dishes and a number of other criteria. On collection the dishes were analysed for the portion size, calories, fats, salt etc. Portion size was found to be a major issue in the majority of meal-types. Some of the largest portions sampled were over 1kg in weight. In many cases the large portion sizes were the main cause of a dish containing way over 100% of recommended daily</li> </ul>	

amounts for fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar.

- There are 66 premises which are licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises within Knowsley. These include supermarkets, petrol stations, corner shops / grocery shops, general stores and traditional off licences. There are 23 traditional off-licences in Knowsley with 10 located within Council-owned shopping parades, making up 6.5% of Council-owned stock. Alcohol misuse negatively impacts on health and wellbeing in terms of heart disease, cancers, cirrhosis of the liver, mental wellbeing, behavioural problems, teenage pregnancy, domestic abuse, crime and anti-social behaviour. There is particularly concern around underage drinking and a report released recently by Alcohol Concern shows a link between the density of off-licensed premises and harm from alcohol in underage drinkers. Similar to hot food takeaways, off-licences can also be associated with anti-social behaviour and noise problems, due to groups of mainly young people congregating outside. In addition, violence towards staff and armed robbery can also be an issue, having a direct negative impact on the health and wellbeing of staff.
- There are 19 bookmakers in Knowsley and 5 are located within Council-owned shopping parades, making up 3.2% of Council-owned stock. There is a link between gambling and alcohol abuse. Many gambling addicts are also addicted to alcohol. Rates of depression and attempted suicide among gambling addicts are around double the national average. Gambling addicts are also more likely to go to prison as a result of criminal activity. This is almost entirely theft and fraud. If a gambling problem is left to develop, debts can spiral out of control and people can become withdrawn and depressed, which can affect their professional lives and relationships with other people. In addition, this can lead to consumers approaching illegal money lenders, loan sharks and unregulated debt management companies to help them get out of trouble.
- Knowsley currently has approximately 60 sunbed/solariums within the borough, with 6 solariums within Council-owned property (4% of Council-owned stock). There are no unmanned sunbed premises or equipment in council premises. The operation of tanning equipment may expose staff and will expose customers to UV radiation. There is now a wealth of evidence regarding the adverse ill health effects and injuries caused by UV radiation. Short term risks include burns, skin dryness and itching and eye irritation/ conjunctivitis. Long term health risks are skin cancer, cataracts and premature aging of the skin. Strong evidence also shows that the risks are greater to young people using sunbeds. Since April 2011, anyone who provides a sunbed for tanning at a premise must now comply with the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010. The main requirement is to prevent under 18 year olds from using tanning equipment.
- Knowsley has approximately 70 hair and beauty salons in the borough. There are 17 hairdressers within Council-owned premises, but no record of the number of beauty salons. Previous visits to the premises highlighted common areas of concern in relation to the potential risk of dermatitis to staff through poor awareness of the condition, a lack of controls to minimise the effects of contact with water, poor understanding of chemicals used and a lack of monitoring of staff to address any potential

cases of dermatitis at an early stage.
<b>Potential Findings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In many cases the large portion sizes were the main cause of a dish containing way over 100% of recommended daily amounts for fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar.</li> <li>• There is particularly concern around underage drinking and a report released recently by Alcohol Concern shows a link between the density of off-licensed premises and harm from alcohol in underage drinkers.</li> <li>• There is a link between gambling and alcohol abuse. Many gambling addicts are also addicted to alcohol.</li> <li>• Strong evidence also shows that the risks are greater to young people using sunbeds.</li> <li>• MB advised we have to follow guidance on the planning permission, licensing and inspections but we as a landlord can control the use of a premises.</li> <li>• MB also raised the fact that when purchasing a sandwich/pasta from a retailer, the calorie content is on the packaging, also when purchasing a bottle of wine from an off license you can see how many units of alcohol are in it so is there anything we can do in our takeaways to let people know. Maybe the introduction of a byelaw may address this issue?</li> <li>• It was suggested that the feasibility of offering incentives to encourage new “healthy” businesses should be considered.</li> </ul>
<b>Expert Witness (2)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jon Dyson presented a paper entitled “shopping parades and environmental quality”. The paper focused mainly on the impacts of the following retail types, hot food takeaways, off-licenses, bookmakers, solaria and hair and beauty premises have on local environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues Raised?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly maintained, dirty retail and commercial areas do not stimulate investment and are not appealing to prospective customers and the wider community. The quality of the local environment is therefore important for local businesses, because it can help to initially draw in and attract customers.</li> <li>• It is also important to note that if shops are allowed to fall into disrepair this can create unsafe or "no-go" areas, which have a wider impact upon their surrounding communities. Similarly, run-down neighbourhoods are not attractive places for prospective house buyers, and can even reduce local property prices. The quality of the local environment is therefore far more than just a cosmetic issue: it forms an essential part of social and economic sustainability, regardless of local deprivation.</li> <li>• By way of broad national context, over 30 million tonnes of litter are collected from our streets every year and it costs council tax payers £780 million a year (money that could be better utilised in delivering essential services and supporting investment in communities).</li> <li>• The type of litter generated in and around Shopping Parades varies depending on the retail offer. General litter i.e. confectionary packaging, cigarette stubs (and other smoking materials), betting slips, drinks containers / cans and fast food / packaging tends to be the most predominant type of litter in Other Retail and Commercial areas.</li> </ul>



- Certain retail outlets will be associated with higher levels of littering, such as fast food outlets. Litter from these premises will include all the associated packaging and paraphernalia associated with fast food, often large pieces of litter which are very visible to members of the public. In some cases the actual food becomes the litter, which not only stains the ground but can attract vermin and pose additional health and safety risks.
- It is also worth noting that the range of shops in ORC areas tends to differ for a number of reasons. Areas with higher levels of deprivation often have a poor local economy and this in turn can affect the types of business attracted to the area.
- Commercial waste and the adequate containment of waste can also impact on the LEQ of an area. This is waste that has originated directly from the premises within the shopping parades. All businesses have a legal responsibility i.e. Duty of Care to ensure that they produce, store, transport and dispose of their business waste without harming the environment under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Section 34) and the Environmental Protection Act (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991. This however is a key issue with a number of tenants perhaps being unaware of their obligations, claiming ignorance or having inadequate contracts in place (in order to reduce their costs) i.e. insufficient storage capacity or inadequate frequency of collection.

***Potential Findings***

- The environmental quality in and around shopping parades is important in terms of maintaining and attracting new tenants/businesses.
- The cost of litter collection and enforcement is significant and therefore it is important to educate and encourage responsible behaviour in both customers and shopkeepers.
- Shopkeepers need to understand their responsibilities better and can be educated/encouraged through a range of responsible retailer schemes. For example, Recycle on the Go, Food on the Go and other local initiatives schemes. Consideration should be given to building these into lease agreement in future to help control the litter problems.

***Draft Recommendations***

- Given the negative impacts on the community consideration should be given to limiting the number of hot food takeaways, off licenses and betting shops in shop owned shopping parades.
- The feasibility of introducing food labelling (similar to McDonalds) should be considered with regard to takeaway food, including the potential use of new legislation.
- Consideration should be given to requiring shop tenants to sign up to appropriate responsible retailer schemes as part of their lease conditions.

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD</b> <b>Review of Council Owned Shopping Parades Working Group</b> <b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b> <b>Summary of Meeting</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Diane Reid</li> <li>• Councillor Marie Stuart</li> <li>• Councillor Dave Tully</li> <li>• Councillor Shannon Arnall</li> <li>• Councillor Brian O'Hare</li> <li>• Councillor Bill Brennan</li> <li>• Cllr Ray Halpin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Butterworth</li> <li>• Jemma Jones</li> <li>• Nicola Haigh</li> <li>• Ian Capper</li> <li>• Holly Kennedy</li> </ul>
Detail of Evidence Provided	
<b>List of documentary evidence considered at meeting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no background documents for the meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>Issues Raised?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Applicable</li> </ul>	
<b>Potential Findings</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Applicable</li> </ul>	
Expert Witness (1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jemma Jones provided a presentation entitled 'Analysis of Crime &amp; Disorder'. JJ identified the impacts anti-social behaviour has on Council-owned shopping parades.</li> <li>• Within Knowsley there are 22 designated shopping parades, which are owned and managed by the Local Authority. There are also over 35 privately owned shopping parades/areas in the borough. There are no council owned shopping parades in the areas of Halewood, Cronton and Whiston and only one located within Prescot.</li> <li>• JJ explained that making comparisons is difficult as the number of parades is not the same and that aspects of each parade are different – for example parades may have a different type of store (a late night off license may attract more ASB than say a florist irrespective of the ownership of the parade itself) also as the analysis was done at a street level individual repeat &amp; problematic callers may skew the results slightly. Nevertheless a simple comparison, using an average, shows the following for ASB calls on the street.  <b>Council owned</b> – total of 652 – 22 parades = average of 29.6 incidents  <b>Non council owned</b> – total of 759 – 35 parades = average of 21.7 incidents</li> <li>• JJ explained that shopping parades in Knowsley experience ASB due to the location and are often attractors for ASB as they are the centrepiece of communities. Also the nature of shops (newsagents, take-aways &amp; off licenses in particular) will attract and generate ASB calls, particularly as these trades open in the evening. Some parades will also 'enable' ASB</li> </ul>	

<p>with poor lighting and poor CCTV coverage and a lack of a 'suitable capable guardian'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ASB data has shown that both Council &amp; Non Council owned parades suffer from ASB and the streets that they are located on (residents who live near these locations will often suffer ASB by groups of individuals travelling to/from the shops or experience the impact from groups congregating near them) also see an impact. Although, it is difficult to show one type of parade suffers higher ASB than others.</li> <li>• Raw data may show higher volumes of ASB &amp; business crimes at some locations compared to others but difficulties with sample sizes and the data involved makes definite conclusions difficult.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues Raised?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has suggested, and this was supported by the evidence to some degree, that parades with shops open in the evening generated higher levels of ASB.</li> <li>• As a general point, it was felt that when the shops were shut that they were prone to graffiti and this needed to be dealt with better.</li> <li>• It was noted that Betting shop security was generally lower than it should be and therefore this attracted crime, particularly robberies.</li> <li>• The question of whether the levels of ASB in Huyton were as high as in Kirkby was raised and this was found to be broadly the case.</li> <li>• It was suggested that the removal of canopies deterred young people from gathering in the area and therefore this reduced ASB levels.</li> <li>• Gating schemes in Kirkby were a good security measure and it was suggested that this type of deterrent should be considered elsewhere.</li> <li>• The question was asked whether reductions in ASB levels could be linked to the reduction in the number of teenagers in the Borough.</li> <li>• There was a discussion about the use of CCTV and it was felt that increased usage, linked to Stretton Way, could be beneficial, although it was recognised that shop tenants would need to contribute to this.</li> <li>• It was noted that responsible retailer schemes could be introduced as a measure to reduce ASB and crime.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The levels of ASB at council owned parades was generally greater than those in non-council owned parades but this was because of their location as opposed to the management arrangements.</li> <li>• ASB and crime was greater in the evening, particularly where the shops were open, sheltered and lit which attracted young people.</li> <li>• Tenants had a responsibility to work with the council to reduce ASB and crime, even if there was a cost involved, therefore the council should look to introduce appropriate responsible retailer schemes.</li> <li>• The introduction of CCTV should be encouraged, where appropriate although this would need to be funded by tenants, possibility through a service charge arrangement.</li> <li>• It was also suggested that any improvements /changes in Council owned parades should be extended to non-council owned parades as part of a wider review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Draft Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration should be given as to whether the council introduces a</li> </ul>

policy which discourages or does not allow trading outside of normal working hours.

- Considerations should be given to undertaking a security assessment of each parade to identify any additional security measures that are required.
- The Council as landlord should seek to encourage tenants to join/participate in responsible retailer schemes.

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD</b> <b>Review of Council Owned Shopping Parades Working Group</b> <b>Wednesday 23rd November 2011</b> <b>Summary of Meeting</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Diane Reid</li> <li>• Councillor Dave Tully</li> <li>• Councillor Brian O'Hare</li> <li>• Mark Butterworth</li> <li>• Jemma Jones</li> <li>• Ian Capper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracy Dickinson</li> <li>• Jon Dyson</li> <li>• Caroline Davies</li> <li>• Catherine Taylor</li> <li>• Holly Kennedy</li> </ul>
<b>Detail of Evidence Provided</b>	
<b><i>List of documentary evidence considered at meeting</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no background documents for the meeting</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Applicable</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Potential Findings</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Applicable</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Expert Witness (1)</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Butterworth provided a presentation entitled 'Summary of Key Issues'. MB provided an overview on the three previous evidence gathering sessions.</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Issues Raised?</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been established that the shops are valued in the community and well used although they can create issues. It was also established that the Council can retain control of the business activities and opening hours as landlord which therefore established that we want to retain ownership of the shopping parades.</li> <li>• Although it would be prudent to undertake a further review of each individual parade to assess its contribution/impact on the local community and that we need a formal policy for the management of Council owned shopping parades.</li> <li>• We need to decide whether we want to influence the type of businesses that operate i.e. ban, limit, discourage, or encourage businesses such as Hot Food Takeaways, Off Licenses, Sun bed shops, Betting Shops, Fresh food outlets, Newsagents/general stores. Also how we want to influence these businesses by reducing the opening hours to say (7pm), or by adjusting rent levels and providing incentives, also by adding services charges for pest control and waste management or adding conditions such as responsible retailer schemes.</li> <li>• It was also noted that other issues to be considered would be to look to influence food labelling in hot food takeaways to allow customer to make informed decisions on what the calorie/fat contents are before buying.</li> </ul>	

- Look to support shop tenants as small businesses in terms i.e. grants, advice and also staff training and also look to undertake a security review of each shopping parade to design out crime.
- It was also noted that tenants had a responsibility to help to reduce any negative impacts and that they should not rely on the council as much, therefore we should actively encourage the shopkeepers to do more.

***Potential Findings***

- The Council has a social responsibility to prevent underage sales at off licences and we have the ability to control this.
- Informally the Council have had a policy in place for a number of years preventing new hot takeaways, off licences and betting shops, this should be made formal.
- Shopkeepers should work along the council to address any negative impacts.

***Draft Recommendations***

- It was recommended that the Council retain ownership of their shopping parades but conduct a review for each parade on an individual basis.
- To develop and implement a formal policy for the management of Council owned shopping parades and to include a ban on off licences and also betting shops.
- To provide incentives to encourage such as reduction in business rates, rent level etc to valuable local services such as post offices, butches, and greengrocers.