



CULTURE AND PROSPERITY COMMISSION 5 December 2005

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Culture and Prosperity Commission – Selection of topic(s) for review by the Commission in 2005/06

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 It is recommended that at its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Culture and Prosperity Commission either:
 - a) agrees on a work plan topic for 2005/6, or
 - b) agrees that it will concentrate on scrutiny for the remainder of the 2005/06 municipal year

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 28 June 2005, the Culture and Prosperity Commission asked the Co-ordination Officer to provide some scoping information on possible work plan topic reviews of:

- a) Derby Markets
- b) The impact of the Westfield development on the City Centre

This information was provided to the Commission's meeting on 26 September 2005 in the form of presentations by the Markets Officer, the Managing Director of Cityscape, and the Head of City Development and Tourism. Having considered the information, the Commission resolved not to proceed with a review of either of these topics and at the suggestion of a member asked the Co-ordination Officer to prepare a scoping report on a review of the City's allotment gardens.

- 2.2 A scoping report, and a supplementary document setting out possible options for a review of allotment gardens, were prepared for the Commission's meeting on 31 October 2005.
- 2.3 Following the Culture and Prosperity pre-meeting on 17 October, a Co-ordination Officer e-mailed all Commission members to try and arrange a scene setting meeting to explore the possible scope of a review of allotment gardens. Only one member responded to this e-mail by the specified date.

- 2.4 Also following the 17 October pre-meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair and a Co-ordination Officer met with Professor Crouch of Derby University to explore the possibility of a review aimed at developing a 'tourist trail' that would link significant buildings in the northern part of the City. A report on this proposal was prepared for the Commission's meeting on 31 October 2005.
- 2.5 The Commission's meeting on 31 October was cancelled because the two Call-ins that preceded it took longer than anticipated and because it was not possible to arrange an alternative date for the meeting. In order to progress the work plan, a Co-ordination officer e-mailed all the Commission members and asked for their views on the allotment garden and tourist trail topic reviews. There was a mixed response to this e-mail. Some members suggested that it would not be appropriate for Commission members to conduct a review of allotment gardens, others were in general agreement with the tourist trail idea, and one member suggested an entirely new topic for review. It is of note that Council Cabinet has also asked the Commission to consider carrying out a review on a specific aspect of Derby Markets, such as ways of encouraging younger people to use the markets.
- 2.6 The budget work in which the Commission will be engaged after Christmas will mean that most of January will not be available for topic review work and past experience has shown that by April, most Commission members will want to concentrate on preparing for elections rather than on Commission work. This means that as of the Commission's meeting on 5 December, members will have little more than two months in which to scope, conduct and write up any new topic review. This timescale is not impossible, the Planning and Environment Commission have just completed a review that was scoped, conducted and written up between two scheduled business meetings, but to achieve any worthwhile results will require a high level of focus and commitment on the part of members.
- 2.7 Copies of the scoping reports that have been prepared so far for the Commission are contained in Appendices 2 and 3 of this report.
- 2.8 Members are reminded that there is no Constitutional requirement for Commissions to conduct work plan topic reviews and that good quality focussed scrutiny may actually enable a Commission to contribute more to the working of the Council than would a topic review.
- 2.9 Members are advised that if they do not agree on the Commission's work plan topic at the 5 December meeting it is unlikely that it will be possible to complete a worthwhile review before the end of the 2005/06 municipal year.

2.10 It is therefore recommended that at its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Commission either:

- a) agrees on a work plan topic for 2005/6, or;
- b) agrees that it will concentrate on scrutiny for the remainder of the 2005/06 municipal year

For more information contact:	David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2a and 2b – Allotment Gardens scoping reports
	Appendix 3 – ‘Tourist Trail’ scoping report

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report. Any review will have financial implications and these must be contained within the Commission's research budget

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Overview and Scrutiny topic reviews can have beneficial equalities impacts.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with any of the Council Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities.

Preliminary Scoping Report for the Culture and Prosperity Commission's Allotments Topic Review

At its meeting on 26 September 2005 the Culture and Prosperity Commission chose Allotments as a topic for consideration during its 2005/06 work plan.

The review was selected because Commission members wished to examine the usage and promotion of allotments within Derby and in particular how they fit into the Derby City Partnership's 2020 Vision.

This report provides some background information to the topic and outlines the possible scope for a review by the Commission.

1 Introduction

In February 2002 the Best Value Review of Derby City Parks was published, which included allotments. Below is the relevant extract from the executive summary to the report which refers to allotments and includes the recommendations.

1.1 Best Value Review of Derby City Parks 2002 - Extract

The leasing of City Council owned allotments to associations who manage the sites themselves has been particularly effective. This policy of encouraging self-management where possible reduces the net cost to the Council, while the associations collectively manage to meet their needs. Currently, 75% of Council owned allotment sites are leased to associations, however of the remaining five Council owned sites, two have become virtually disused over a period of years due to lack of demand, and of these, one has been allocated for an extension to an adjacent cemetery.

Seventy-six per cent of allotment plots in Derby are currently occupied and this figure could be further increased by filling vacant plots, which would generate more income.

Better communication with allotment associations will ensure that the City Council is aware of stakeholders' needs and that the service provided can be adopted to meet customers' requirements. Concerns can be raised and resolved by a regular, sustained programme of consultation.

Security is a major issue for allotments and it can be shown that the most secure sites are the ones with the highest levels of tenancy. Further provision of fencing may increase usage on vulnerable sites.

Currently, allotments are promoted in the parks service newsletter 'Parklife' and through an annual allotments competition, which provides an opportunity for media coverage. There is a need for the service to develop further opportunities for increased publicity to promote allotment gardening in Derby.

Recommendations

- a Implement a programme of regular site visits to provide a forum for addressing problems regarding allotments, including those relating to security and rebate payment.
- b Improve publicity on the advantages of allotment holding.

While the leasing of allotments to either associations or individuals falls under the remit of the Derby City Parks department, the Environmental Sustainability team are also involved in the promotion and enhancement of the City's allotments. There are a number of benefits that well managed allotments bring to individuals, communities and the wider environment.

1.2 Government Support for Allotments

The Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs, (the Committee) published a paper in 1998 on *The Future of Allotments*. In their report the committee states that it believes that the benefits of allotment sites mean that they have a critical role in modern, urban life. They list the following benefits in particular:

- Exercise
- Supply of affordable fresh vegetables
- Increased biodiversity
- Green space
- Potential for educational and therapeutic benefits for communities

The report also identifies that in the Committee's opinion many local authorities are failing to stimulate demand for allotments and this is contributing to the erosion of sites, which halved in the 30 years up to the time of the report.

The Committee noted that allotments form an important part of leisure provision and this should be reflected within local authorities' Leisure Strategy.

1.3 Links to the Council's Physical Activity Strategy

The definition of physical activity that Derby has used within its Physical Activity Strategy includes all elements of moderate intensity activity including for example, walking, cycling and gardening. The sections of the strategy are aimed at the generic challenges to encourage people to become more active.

1. Information, how, who, what, where and branding of physical activity
2. More People to lead, coach, train or advocate physical activity
3. Create and open access to facilities, venues and spaces

4. Raise the profile of Physical activity - impact on planning, transport and health improvement
5. Measure its impact and contribution.

1.4 Derby City Partnership – 2020 Vision

Derby's Community Strategy or 2020 Vision is a plan to make Derby a great place to live, work and visit. The 2020 Vision sets out what Derby City Partnership wants to achieve for Derby based on partner organisations' existing plans and strategies.

The Environment City theme group has six objectives intended to provide a diverse attractive and healthy environment. These objectives will be achieved through a number of actions, including several which can be related to the City's allotments. For example,

- Promote the benefits of local growing projects in the city from both an environmental, social and economic perspective.
- Continue to protect wildlife within the city according to the Biodiversity Greenprint for Derby.
- Improve people's access to the natural environment and their understanding of the city's natural heritage.

2 Objectives

It is suggested that the objectives of the Commission's review should be to:

1. Define how allotments fit into the 2020 vision for Derby by identifying:
 - a. The level and type of need for allotments across the City including new housing areas
 - b. How this might change in the future
 - c. The organisations that are best placed to contribute towards this vision.
2. Identify the actions needed to achieve this vision and any barriers preventing progress.
3. Make recommendations if appropriate to encourage alternative uses of the sites and safeguard the future of allotments.

3 Stakeholders of the Review

The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) identifies the following key groups involved in the running of allotments. They are:

1. Local authorities
2. Allotment societies; and
3. Individual plot holders

For the purposes of the Commission's review and in addition to the above it considers that the following are also main stakeholders to the review:

4. Derby City Partnership
5. The public

4 Methodology for the Review

If the review objectives specified in 2 above are acceptable to the Commission, then it is suggested that the following methodology could be adopted for the review.

	Requirement	Action to Achieve
1.	Familiarise the Commission with the 2002 Best Value Review report, in order to establish a starting point for the review.	Circulate a copy of the relevant sections of the report to Members of the Commission.
2.	Update the Commission on progress made within the Derby City Parks department against the recommendations made in the report. To obtain information on the following: Allotment Promotion Management of the sites Occupancy levels Uses of the sites The Council's allotments policy	Arrange meetings with the relevant officers from Derby City Parks and the Environmental Sustainability Team.
3.	Define how allotments fit into the 2020 vision for Derby	Interviews with the relevant Derby City Partners in the 'Environment City' theme group.

4.	Identify areas for improvement within the service	In addition to the interviews identified above the Commission should invite representatives of the City's allotment associations to contribute to the review.
5.	Compare allotment sites both within Derby and with other local authorities, in order to identify areas of best practice.	Attend site visits of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derby's Allotments • Other sites outside the City

5 Suggested Timetable for the Review

If the Commission are in agreement with the objectives and methodology of the review, the following timetable is suggested.

Week Commencing	Action
17 October	Circulate the following to the Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the draft scoping report b. Arrange a scene setting meeting with Derby Parks and Environmental Sustainability team officers.
24 October	Hold scene setting meeting.
31 October	Scheduled meeting Agree the objectives of the review, identify the key witnesses and appropriate site visits.
7 November	Hold further interviews Tour of Derby City Allotment sites Meeting with representatives of allotment associations
14 November	Visit to another local authority allotment site
21 November	Write up draft report
28 November	
5 December	Scheduled meeting Draft Recommendations considered by the Commission

12 December	Final report agreed with Commission either via email consultation or at a review meeting Report sent to meet 17 January Council Cabinet deadline
19 December	Council Cabinet report deadline – 21 December

This is a demanding schedule, but the review could be completed by Christmas 2005 if the Commission were in agreement and able to commit the time to carry it out.

Members will be aware that the January meeting of the Commission is allocated for consideration of the Revenue Budget. Therefore it may be advantageous to complete this review by January 2006 in order to free up the Commission's time after January for consideration of a second topic review.

6 Members' Time Commitment

Based on this timetable the provisional time commitment for Commission members would be:

- Visits – 2 days, one in Derby and one outside the City
- Interviews – 8-10 hours over two or three days
- An additional meeting to 'sign-off' the final report – if preferred this can be done via email consultation with Commission members.

KJT October 2005

Culture and Prosperity Commission

**Draft scoping report on a possible review of Allotment Gardens -
'Possible new uses for Allotment Gardens in a 21 Century urban
environment'**

1. Introduction

At their meeting on 26 September 2005 members of the Culture and Prosperity Commission considered possible topics that the Commission might review as part of its workplan for 2005/06. One of the topics suggested was a review of allotment gardens, and the Co-ordination Officers were asked to prepare a report on the potential scope of such a review for consideration at the Commission's meeting on 31 October 2005.

The possible direction of a review of allotment gardens was discussed at a subsequent meeting between the Co-ordination Officers and one of the Commission members. This report offers some suggestions as to the way in which a review of allotment gardens might be developed.

2. Background

The City currently has 27 allotment sites. Nine of these are privately owned and 18 are in Council ownership. Fourteen of these are managed by allotment associations and four are directly let by the Council. They are located in the areas marked on the accompanying plan.

As is traditional, the City's allotments are predominantly used for growing vegetables and flowers. There is no suggestion that these traditional uses should be abandoned, but it is proposed that there could be value in the Commission considering whether there other uses for allotment gardens, which are possibly more relevant to urban life in the 21st Century, that could also be encouraged?

It is therefore suggested that the aim of the Commission's review should be to look afresh at the use of allotment gardens and to see how they might be used to bring additional benefits to inner city and urban neighbourhoods where there is a shortage of green open space?

Possible uses for allotment gardens that might be investigated by a review include:

- Promotion of biodiversity
- Allotments as detached leisure gardens
- Safe play areas for young children
- The educational value of allotment gardens
- Promotion of healthy eating through the growing of good quality cheap food

- Exercise with an output
- Stress management
- Increased Lifestyle choices
- Improved Quality of Life
- Urban regeneration
- Neighbourhood improvement
- 'Best value' land use
- Civic pride/responsibility
- Local achievement
- Urban farms
- Allotment co-operatives

3. Objectives

The objectives of the review could simply be to:

- investigate the viability and practicability of possible new/additional uses of allotment gardens
- see which of the identified alternative uses it might be possible to introduce in Derby
- examine the possible benefits of introducing the uses that were seen to be most viable and practicable

4. Possible Methodology

It is thought that much useful information about alternative uses could be obtained from an Internet trawl and through discussions with Council officers.

Once this information had been assimilated the review could concentrate on what seem to be the most viable options and could investigate the practicality of employing them in Derby.

5. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the proposed review are as shown in the table below.

Terms of Reference		
	Issue	Action
1	Familiarisation with the current provision of allotment gardens in Derby	Meetings with officers and representatives of the City's Allotment Associations. If appropriate, visits to some City allotment gardens
2	Appreciation of the other options for using allotment gardens	Internet trawl by Co-ordination Officer If appropriate, visits to selected sites outside the City
3	Identification of possible options that could be introduced in Derby and of the likely benefit of those options	Consideration of information from (1) and (2) and further discussions with Council officers

6. Timescale of the Proposed Review

It is suggested that this review would take about three months to complete. As the review will have a significant 'outdoor element' it would be best to conduct it during the spring, probably between February and April.

The level of member involvement in the review will largely depend on the particular issues that the Commission wishes to consider. However it is at this stage estimated that the review will require about six meetings of around two hours duration and maybe three visits.

DRR 27 October 2005.



CULTURE AND PROSPERITY COMMISSION
31 October 2005

Report of the Chair of the Culture and Prosperity Commission

Proposed investigation of a Tourist Trail to promote the historically significant buildings and sites in the northern part of the City Centre

RECOMMENDATION

1. That as part of its 2005/06 work plan, the Culture and Prosperity Commission should investigate the possibility of developing a tourist trail linking the historically significant buildings and sites in the northern part of the City centre

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The northern part of the City Centre contains a number of the sites and buildings that are of great historical significance to Derby. However many of these are at present poorly signposted and promoted, and there is a lack of readily available information about them.
- 2.2 It is consequently suggested that it might be of benefit to Derby to develop a short 'tourist trail' that linked the historic buildings and sites in the northern part of the City centre. It is considered that the benefits of such a tourist trail could include:
 - a) Attracting more visitors to Derby's historic buildings and sites
 - b) Raising the local, regional and national profile of those sites and promoting the City's status as a tourist destination
 - c) Improving access to the northern part of the City centre
 - d) Bringing people into the northern part of the City centre. This would be of benefit to the area's shops, restaurants and other commercial enterprises and would help to off-set the 'drift to the south' that is expected when the Westfield development opens.

A tentative list of the sites and buildings that might be linked by the proposed tourist trail is given in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 2.4 It is therefore suggested that as part of its workplan for the coming year the Commission should investigate the feasibility of developing a tourist

trail linking the historically significant buildings and sites in the northern part of the City centre and should examine the likely viability of such a trail.

- 2.5 In order to improve the credibility of the investigation and provide the necessary level of expert input, it is suggested that the University of Derby is approached to see whether they would be prepared to undertake some of the work and to prepare a report for the Commission. The Commission's research budget could be used to cover the cost of engaging the University of Derby.
- 2.5 If members agree to this proposal, the work by the University of Derby could be scheduled to start in the early part of 2006. A scoping report giving more details of the proposal could then be provided to the Commission's meeting on 5 December 2005.

For more information contact:	David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Tentative list of the historic buildings and sites that might be linked by the tourist trail

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The costs of the investigation would need to be contained within the Commission's research budget.

Legal

2. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Personnel

3. There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. The improved promotion of Derby's historic buildings and sites would be of benefit to all Derby people.

Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link to the following of the Council's Corporate Objectives Values and Priorities

Objectives:

- A stimulating and high quality learning environment
- A lively and energetic cultural life
- A prosperous successful and vibrant economy

Values

- Develop effective partnerships with all stakeholders, especially Derby's residents
- Adopt new ways of working wherever these will help us do things better and provide value for money, customer focussed services

Priorities

- Improving customer service in the city centre and locally
- Minimise increases in Council Tax and increase value for money services

C&P TTrail

NOTE: During discussions at the Commission's pre-meeting on 21 November 2005, Ray Rippingale, the Assistant Director Culture, suggested that rather than looking specifically at the development of a 'Tourist Trail' it might be of more benefit for the Commission to look in more general

terms at the ways in which the Council might promote the northern part of the City.

In response to the Assistant Director's comments, the Chair explained that the intention was to use the expertise gained by the University's post-graduate students from similar work in other parts of the world to investigate the tourist potential of the northern part of the City and the promotion of known and less well known sites. This work would be fed into the overall effort to promote the northern part of the City and indeed the City as a whole.

Appendix 2

Tentative list of the historic buildings and sites that might be linked by the tourist trail

The trail could include:

- St Helen's House
- St Mary's RC church, Bridgegate
- North Parade
- Bath Street well
- The Bridge Chapel
- St Mary's Bridge
- The Silk Mill
- Queen Street Gallery
- The Cathedral
- St Mary's Gate
- The new Magistrates Court
- The Dance Centre in Chapel Street

Starting points could be St Helen's House or the Silk Mill or at one of the two Car Parks

The total distance is about 1 mile

Car Parking is available at Chapel Street or Bold Lane Car Parks

There would be easy access to the following public houses

Seven Stars
Bridge Inn
Silk Mill
The Dolphin
Blessington Carriage
Flowerpot

DRR 9 October 2005