



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 3 MARCH 2009

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Services

Discussion paper on the possible establishment of a 'Finance Sub Commission'

RECOMMENDATION

To consider and comment upon the value that a 'Finance Sub Committee' might add to the scrutiny process and to advise the Co-ordination Officer whether more detailed proposals are required.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 In the course of his presentation on 18 February 2009 to the Chairs and Vice Chairs Group, Councillor Robin Brown of Northamptonshire County Council informed members of the Finance, Improvement and Performance Sub Committee that had been established by Northamptonshire County Council and of its function within that Council's Scrutiny process.
- 2.2 When the subject of future budget scrutiny was raised later in the meeting by the Director of Resources the possibility of establishing some form of 'Finance Sub Commission' which could do this was considered, and the Co-ordination Officer was asked to prepare a discussion paper for consideration by members.
- 2.3 It is of note that one of the outcomes of the Council Cabinet meeting on 17 February was a recommendation that:

'the concept of pre-budget scrutiny introduced in 2008 should be repeated in future budget cycles and held at the earliest point when sufficient information is available for scrutiny commissions to make informed observations. The Council Cabinet's intention is to engage the Scrutiny Management Commission in a base budget review process as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2009'.

It is suggested that a 'Finance Sub Commission' might provide a means of engaging the Commissions more effectively in pre-budget scrutiny.

- 2.4 Preliminary Internet searches have revealed that a number of Councils operate some form of finance and performance scrutiny sub committee. One of these is Birmingham City Council and if members wished it is anticipated it would be relatively easy to obtain more information about how their process works.
- 2.5 In the course of the Internet search a copy was found of the Northamptonshire County Council report detailing the Terms of Reference of their Finance, Improvement and Performance Sub Committee. This report is attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.6 If members consider that there may be merit in establishing a finance and performance sub committee that could also be used to conduct pre-budget scrutiny, more detailed consultations can be carried out with SMC and proposals can be prepared by the Co-ordination Team.

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Background papers:	Appendix 1 – Implications
List of appendices:	Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire County Council Scrutiny Management Committee report - 21 May 2008.

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report

Equalities impact

4. None arising from this report

Corporate Objectives

5. This report has the potential to link with the following of the Council's Corporate Objectives:
 - Giving you excellent services and value for money.