



COUNCIL CABINET 18 March 2008

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission

Scrutiny Management Commission – Response to Petitions

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That Council Cabinet notes the report of the Scrutiny Management Commission and the Commission's decision to establish a Sub-Commission to consider petitions.
- 1.2 That Council Cabinet members attend the Sub-Commission meetings where petitions about matters that fall within their portfolios are considered.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 29 January 2008 the Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC) considered five petitions that had been referred to the Commission because they related to matters which affected more than one ward of the City.

Issue(s)

- 2.2 Several of the petitions considered by the Scrutiny Management Commission on 29 January had been presented to the Council in the latter part of 2007. However, because of the relative infrequency of SMC meetings it was not possible for the Commission to consider them sooner.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Management Commission is aware of the Government's current consultation on 'Local Petitions and Calls for Action' and appreciates that this may result in legislation and/or guidelines on the response to petitions being issued to local authorities. However, members are also aware that any guidelines resulting from the consultation are not likely to be issued until sometime in 2009.

Conclusions of the Commission

- 2.4 Members felt that, in the interests of good customer service, petitions should be considered as soon as possible, and were concerned at the delay in considering some of the petitions that were heard at the meeting on 29 January.
- 2.5 To resolve this issue members agreed to establish a 'Petitions' Sub-Commission of the Scrutiny Management Commission. The Sub-Commission is intended as an interim measure that will function until any guidelines on the response to petitions are issued by Government. Once any guidelines have been issued, the Sub-Commission can be re-configured or dissolved in accordance with the advice that the guidelines contain.
- 2.6 It is intended that the Sub-Commission, which comprises the Chair and Vice Chair of the SMC and Councillor Hillary Jones, will meet as and when required specifically to consider petitions. Petitioners will be given the opportunity to present their petitions to the Sub-Commission. The relevant Council Cabinet member and senior officer will be invited to the Sub-Commission meeting and will be given the opportunity to respond to the petition.

Recommendations of the Commission

- 2.7 It is recommended that Council Cabinet note the report of the Scrutiny Management Commission and that Council Cabinet members attend the Sub-Commission meetings where petitions about matters that fall within their portfolios are considered.

Reasons for the Commission's Recommendations

- 2.8 To improve the Council's response to petitions in the interim period until guidelines on the response to petitions are issued by Government.

For more information contact:	David Romaine 01332 255598 e-mail david.romaine@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	Background Papers - None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant additional costs associated with holding the sub-Commission meetings.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Any improvement in the way in which the Council responds to petitions will have the potential to benefit all Derby people.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report has the potential to link with all the Council's Corporate priorities