

# ITEM 9



**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**17 March 2009**

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Commission

## **Responses of the Scrutiny Management Commission to decisions made by Council Cabinet at its meeting on 17 February 2009.**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17 February 2009 Council Cabinet decided:
  - a) To ask Scrutiny Management Commission to carry out a fundamental review of grant funding across the Council (Minutes 218/08, 219/08 and 220/08 refer)
  - b) 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, and 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 (Minute 229/08 refers)
  
- 1.2 The decisions of Council Cabinet were considered by the Scrutiny Management Commission (SMC) at its meeting on 3 March 2009 and members resolved to:
  - a) Advise Council Cabinet that whilst SMC was willing to consider and comment upon the process whereby grants are made to voluntary bodies it was not prepared to conduct the fundamental review of grant funding across the Council that was proposed by Council Cabinet.
  - b) Confirm to Council Cabinet that SMC is prepared to engage in the budget scrutiny process. However SMC considers that the base budget review should be conducted by Cabinet and that the role of scrutiny should be to consider the findings of the Cabinet's review.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet note that whilst Scrutiny Management Commission is willing to consider and comment upon the process whereby grants are made to voluntary bodies it is not prepared to conduct the fundamental review of grant funding across the Council that was proposed by

Council Cabinet.

- 2.2 That Cabinet should itself undertake the base budget review and should then ask the Scrutiny Commissions to review its findings.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Scrutiny Management Commission considered that the activities it was proposed SMC should undertake were rightly the responsibility of Council Cabinet. Members expressed a willingness to scrutinise Council Cabinet proposals in respect of these matters, but were not willing to act in the manner proposed by Cabinet.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 At their meeting on 3 March 2009 SMC agreed that as part of their 2009/10 work plan they would undertake a review of the Council's budget process. This will include consideration of the way in which budgets are set, the best way of presenting budget information to members, and what can be done to improve the process. Scoping for this review will commence in April 2009.
- 4.2 At their meeting on 3 March 2009 SMC also requested a more detailed report, including terms of reference, on the establishment of a SMC 'Finance' Sub-Commission. Members thought that such a Sub-Commission might offer an opportunity for better budget scrutiny and were in favour of evaluating it over a trial period.

### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5. None

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**Background papers:** Background Papers - None  
**List of appendices:** Appendix 1 – Implications

### 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. Effective scrutiny is of benefit to all Derby people.

**Corporate Priorities**

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

Resp to Cab