

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **9 September 2005**

By: **Director of Law and Performance Management**

Title: **Reconciling Policy and Resources**

Purpose: **To seek the Committee's views on the direction of travel and policy steers being developed for the Lead Member portfolio for 2006-07**

RECOMMENDATION – to consider any preliminary comments it wishes to make on the planning assumptions set out in the Cabinet report Reconciling Policy and Resources – State of County 2005.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Reconciling Policy and Resources process is the ongoing mechanism used each year by the County Council to bring into line our policies and services with the resources available to deliver them. The Cabinet began this policy and budget planning process for 2006/07 at its meeting on 15 July 2005. A copy of the report to Cabinet and the supporting appendices is attached to this report.

1.2 The Cabinet agreed to:

- a. *recommend the County Council to agree the policy steers as the basis for the Reconciling Policy and Resources work for 2006/07 and beyond;*
- b. *request portfolio holders and Chief Officers to develop their service plans and to model the consequent saving proposals, on the basis of the initial financial guidelines, set out in Annex 1;*
- c. *ask portfolio holders and Chief Officers to maximise productivity and other efficiencies, ensuring at least 2% savings to contribute to the above guidelines, are delivered through this route by:*
 - *challenging and understanding high unit cost areas*
 - *scoping further opportunities for efficiencies over the medium term*
 - *continuing to focus on specific service quality improvement agenda*
- d. *note that the development of the guidelines will be monitored through the 2 by 2 process and any revisions to the guidelines will be considered during the year in the normal way;*
- e. *authorise the Deputy Leader to begin the process of communication and consultation regarding Reconciling Policy and Resources for next year; and*
- f. *note that it is anticipated the Scrutiny involvement in the process will be in line with the successful approach adopted for 2005/06 and the Deputy Leader will consult on how best Scrutiny can assist in the review of productivity and efficiency.*

1.3 Scrutiny committees are now being asked to contribute to the Reconciling Policy and Resources process for 2006/07 by considering the attached report and providing any preliminary views about their relevant areas of service. Any comments will be considered by Cabinet members in the process of refining the policy steers and financial plans taking place through October and November 2005

1.4 As in previous years, in addition to the whole Council debating the developing strategy at appropriate times, it is proposed that individual portfolios (ie Lead Member and respective Chief Officers) share their more developed thinking, and draft proformas, with their respective scrutiny committees during the November/December round of meetings.

1.5 This year the committee is being asked to explore and probe, more closely than in previous years, the portfolio's response to the productivity and efficiency agenda.

1.6 In addition the Lead Members, Councillor Glazier, Councillor Simmons, and Councillor Mrs Stroude and Chief Officer, Matt Dunkley, will hold a consultation meeting with Councillor Gadd, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, before the end of November 2005, and the Deputy Leader will also arrange a series of three meetings with Scrutiny Chairmen. The first of these meetings will take place around early October, the second in late November and the third in January before Cabinet's final recommendation to the full Council in February.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to discuss the report and consider any preliminary comments it wishes to make on the planning assumptions set out in the Cabinet report Reconciling Policy and Resources – State of County 2005.

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Director of Law and Performance Management

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
Report to Cabinet 15 July 2005