

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **11 March 2013**

By: **Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Community Services**

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources 2012/13**

Purpose of report: **To review scrutiny's input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process during 2012/13.**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee is recommended to a) review its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and b) identify any lessons for improvement for the process in future.

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### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

### **2. Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) and scrutiny in East Sussex**

2.1 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (i.e. aligning the Council's budget setting process with service delivery plans) is now established as an effective and transparent business planning process in East Sussex. The 2012/13 round began with the *State of the County 2012* report, considered by Cabinet on the 24 July 2012.

2.2 Scrutiny committees actively engage in the process, firstly to allow them to bring the experience they have gained through their work to bear and, secondly, to help inform their future work programmes.

2.3 In September 2012 each scrutiny committee considered extracts from the *State of the County* report and made comments to the Cabinet on the policy steers and their contribution to the objectives of the Council (the County Council 'Promise') prior to consideration by the full County Council.

2.4 The scrutiny committees established scrutiny boards to provide a more detailed input into the RPPR process. These met in December 2012 or January 2013 to consider the draft portfolio plans and the impact of proposed savings. The boards:

- considered whether the amended policy steers were reflected satisfactorily within the proposed key areas of budget spend for the coming year;
- considered whether all possible efficiencies were identified; and
- assessed the potential impact of these savings on services provided to East Sussex County Council customers.

2.5 Appendix 1 summarises the comments and recommendations made by the Children's Services RPPR board.

### **3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

3.1 The committee is recommended to review its input into the 2012/13 RPPR process and in particular to establish whether there are lessons for improvement for the future.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents None

### **Overview and Scrutiny: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) boards 2012/13**

This table is a summary of the outcomes, observations and findings of the **Children's Services RPPR Board** held in January 2013.

The Board considered the draft Portfolio Plans. It attempted to assess the impact of the significant budget cuts facing the County Council over the coming years, and reviewed activities where savings were not being proposed but which accounted for significant use of resources.

The Scrutiny board is supportive of the plans being put in place, and the means being proposed, to protect front line services as far as practicable. In general, the Board endorsed the decisions of the Cabinet to protect a number of key activities.

All the RPPR boards emphasised the continuing importance of presenting RPPR information in an open, clear and understandable way.

<p><b><u>Board members:</u></b> Councillors: Ensor (Chairman), Field (Vice Chairman), Mattock (Eastbourne Borough Council co-opted representative), St Pierre, Webb and Whetstone.</p> <p><b><u>Lead Members:</u></b> Councillors Elkin, Bennett and Belsey</p> <p><b><u>Observers:</u></b> Councillors Ost and Sparks</p> <p><b><u>Officers:</u></b>            Matt Dunkley, Director, Children's Services            Louise Carter, Assistant Director, Planning and Performance Management (Children's Services)            Andrew Lock, Head of Strategic Finance (Children's Services)            Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager.</p>
<p><b>Scrutiny board observations and recommendations</b></p>
<p>1) Given the level of savings required, the Board supported the approach being taken which aims to minimise the impacts as far as possible, and supported the Cabinet's proposed use of mitigation funding.</p>
<p><u>2) New ways of working</u> – the increased use of personalised budgets will give greater choice and control over the kind of support many, but not all, families receive. Care will be needed to ensure that good quality services, such as respite provision, remain viable and accessible for all parents and carers of young people who need them.</p>
<p><u>3) Re-prioritisation of resources for school improvement and intervention:</u> This change will result in greatly reduced support by the local authority for schools that are not in the 30% most underperforming group. Of particular concern will be the lack of support for improving schools on their journey to 'good' or those currently categorised as 'outstanding' or 'good' but with deteriorating performance.</p>