

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

Date of meeting: **16 March 2015**

By: **Chief Executive**

Title: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources 2015/16**

Purpose: **To review scrutiny’s input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process during 2014/2015.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Review its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and;**
- 2) Identify any lessons for improvement for the process in future.**

1 Background

1.1 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (i.e. aligning the Council's budget setting process with service delivery plans) has established an effective and transparent business planning process. A Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been produced and the 2015/16 round represents year three, of the three year savings plan.

1.2 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 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) and scrutiny in East Sussex

2.1 In September 2014 each scrutiny committee considered extracts from the *State of the County* report and the departmental savings and Portfolio Plans. Requests for further information or reports were made to help the scrutiny committee evaluate proposals made in the respective Portfolio Plans.

2.2 The scrutiny committees established scrutiny boards to provide a more detailed input into the RPPR process. These met in December 2014 to consider the draft portfolio plans and the impact of proposed savings. The boards:

- considered any amendments to the Portfolio Plans and how they were being delivered against the proposed key areas of budget spend for the coming year;
- assessed the potential impact of these savings on services provided to East Sussex County Council customers.

2.3 Appendix 1 summarises the comments and recommendations made by the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee RPPR board to Cabinet.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The committee is recommended to review its input into the 2015/16 RPPR process and in particular to establish whether there are lessons for improvement for the future.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Martin Jenks
Tel. No. 01273 481327
Email: martin.jenks@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Overview and Scrutiny: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) boards 2014/15

This is a summary of the outcomes, observations and findings of the scrutiny RPPR Board held in December 2014.

All the scrutiny boards considered draft Portfolio Plans and savings plans and attempted to assess the impact of both any significant budget cuts facing the County Council over the coming years and activities where savings were not necessarily being proposed but which accounted for significant use of resources.

Scrutiny boards commented on the plans being put in place and the means being proposed to protect front line services as far as practicable.

Children's Services

RPPR Board on 8 December 2014

Board: Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Stephen Shing (Vice Chair), Peter Charlton, Claire Dowling, Michael Ensor, Kim Forward, Roy Galley, Alan Shuttleworth, Francis Whetstone.

Nicola Boulter (Parent Governor Representative).

Lead Members: Councillors Nick Bennett and Sylvia Tidy

Observers: None.

Key messages to Cabinet:

1. The Board requested that future RPPR Boards (when considering the savings and impacts) should receive:
 - the level of savings shown as a percentage of the full-year budget for the relevant service, and
 - descriptions of the impacts outlined in the savings plan that have been updated to reflect the latest position (as service changes are implemented).

2. The Board wished to highlight to Cabinet:

The cumulative impact of the savings proposals for **Children's Centres** has the potential to undermine the support for some of the most vulnerable children and families and adversely impact services targeted at early years.

The proposals for savings to the **Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service (SLES)** have the potential to undermine the progress towards implementing the Excellence for All strategy and obtaining the best educational outcomes for the children and young people in East Sussex.

(However, it was noted that the savings and impact did not reflect an additional £870,000 that has been identified for 2014/15 and 2015/16 from available Dedicated Schools Grant and the Corporate Transformation Fund to fund the improvements identified in the Ofsted action plan.)

