

Report to: **Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **14 March 2012**

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

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources 2011/12**

Purpose of report: **To review Scrutiny input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process during 2011/12.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is recommended to review its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process to establish whether there are lessons for improvement for the process in future.

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 (ie. aligning the Council's budget setting process with service delivery plans) is now firmly established as an effective and transparent business planning process in East Sussex. The 2011/12 round began with the inclusion on the 26 July 2011 Cabinet of the State of the County 2011 report.

2.2 Scrutiny committees actively engaged 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 2011 each scrutiny committee considered extracts from the *State of the County* report and made comments to Lead Members on the relevant policy steers and their contribution to the objectives of the whole Council (the County Council Promise) prior to consideration by County Council.

2.4 The scrutiny committees established scrutiny boards to act on their behalf and provide a detailed input into the RPPR process. These met in December 2011 to consider the draft Portfolio Plans and impact of proposed savings. In particular the scrutiny boards:

- Considered whether the amended Policy Steers reflected the proposed 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 This report aims to assist scrutiny to become more effective in future RPPR rounds and to enable consideration of the specific commentary relating to each committee.

2.6 Appendix 1 summarises the comments and recommendations made by the scrutiny committee and board during the later stages outlined above. In addition to making specific recommendations, scrutiny sought and was given assurances, on a range of related matters.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is recommended to review its input into the 2011/12 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and in particular to establish whether there are lessons for improvement for the future.

SIMON HUGHES

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Community Services

Contact Officer: Paul Dean

Tel No. 01273 481751

Local Members: All

Background Documents

None

Overview and Scrutiny: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) boards 2011/12

This table is a summary of the outcomes, observations and findings of the scrutiny RPPR Board held in December 2011.

All the scrutiny boards considered draft Portfolio Plans and attempted to assess the impact of both any significant budget cuts facing the County Council over the coming years and those activities where savings are not necessarily being proposed but which account for significant use of resources. Scrutiny boards are largely supportive of the plans being put in place and the means being proposed to protect front line services as far as practicable. As a consequence of this work, they have identified new priorities for scrutiny work programmes in the coming year.

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

Economy, Transport & Environment RPPR Board – 15 December 2011

Board: Councillors Stogdon (Chairman) and Freeman

Lead Member: Councillor Maynard

Observer: Councillor Sparks

Scrutiny board comments	Actions taken
<p>The proposed savings and impacts are endorsed subject to the following comments and observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Rights of Way maintenance and staffing:</u> medium impact saving of £285,000 (0.9% of the budget): care should be taken to manage public disaffection and to clarify the longer term legal and financial implications, i.e., to provide an assurance that longer term liabilities would not be increased by making this short term saving. <p><u>Policy steer 1: improve the condition of our roads:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The general approach and specific initiatives are supported. ▪ <u>Street lighting:</u> local pilot schemes to save energy through switching street lights off at certain times, or using lower wattage or dimmed lanterns, appear to be so successful that it makes sense to expand these schemes as rapidly as possible across the County. The proposed capital investment should, if possible, be expanded even further to help minimise future 	<p>Our activity on Rights of Way maintenance will be more focussed in the future on our highest priority and most frequented routes. Work on other sections of the Rights of Way network will become more reactive. Subject to a staff consultation we propose a new staffing structure to improve efficiency and this would go some way to mitigate the impact of the cuts. We will continue to engage with key stakeholder groups to explain the rationale and seek their input.</p> <p>Since the Scrutiny RPPR Board meeting, the second pilot scheme in Uckfield has been implemented and well received including the extensive consultation event. The bid to the capital programme to secure the investment needed for the county wide (excluding the urban areas of Eastbourne and Hastings) roll-out has also since been approved and the detailed programme is now being developed with our main contractor.</p>

Scrutiny board comments	Actions taken
<p>liabilities such as the Carbon Tax and increasing energy costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The appointment of local <u>highway stewards</u> is welcomed although not all Members have yet heard from them. Making contact with local members and parish clerks should be an early priority for stewards. ▪ <u>Highways performance indicators</u> are being formulated and the public satisfaction measures will assume great importance given that the public were 'least satisfied' with pavement and road maintenance in the 2010 residents' panel survey. The progress made over the past two years resulting from additional funding to improve A and B roads in the County is welcomed and has resulted in many favourable comments by the public. Continuing this type and level of investment should be considered to ensure we maintain and enhance the public satisfaction with our highways work. <p><u>Policy steer 2: Achieve a fair balance between economic growth and the protection of our urban, rural, and coastal environment, and</u></p> <p><u>Policy Steer 1 (Strategic Management and Economic Development): Raise the prosperity of East Sussex through a sharp focus on employment, skills and planned infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The expenditure per head of population on <u>economic development</u> is 40% of the benchmark figure (2009/10). Part of the reason for this is that East Sussex has chosen to exercise this discretionary activity through local leadership and influence rather than by significant 'direct intervention'. ▪ The new focus of linking the Council's <u>capital programme</u> to economic development is endorsed and supported. The detailed criteria for selection of individual economic development schemes are not set out and it would be helpful in future if a clear rationale is provided for projects put forward. 	<p>At the time of the Scrutiny RPPR Board meeting the Stewards had only recently been appointed. Opportunities for Members to meet groups of Stewards were arranged in January and all Stewards have now made contact with their Local Member. In addition details including photographs and mobile contact numbers were included in last months edition of ETE In Your Area which now has a wide circulation including to Parish Clerks.</p> <p>A bid for a further one year of investment at £4.5m was included in the proposed capital programme and this has since been approved allowing the significant improvements to be extended.</p> <p>With the latest budget the County Council's position is changing. While our approach has been largely one of influence and leadership until now, the new Capital Programme is more focussed to direct intervention and includes a number of projects and programmes centred around improving economic performance. As the funding is capital based it will not alter the benchmarking currently used and we will establish new mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of this level of</p>

Scrutiny board comments	Actions taken
<p>This applies particularly to potentially controversial proposals such as the wind turbine feasibility project where, without such a rationale, it is not possible to demonstrate whether this is the most appropriate, or a particularly popular, means of providing income and renewable energy for East Sussex. Any rationale needs to demonstrate also that any alternative or additional options for investment in economic development have received proper consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The annual cost per hectare for the <u>management of East Sussex open spaces</u> (£20.92 in 2009/10) is significantly larger than the benchmark figure (£7.32); an explanation is requested in due course. <p><u>Policy Steer 3: Minimise the amount of the country's waste sent to landfill or landraise.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The overall approach and specific initiatives are endorsed. ▪ The currently high <u>waste disposal costs</u> for East Sussex compared to the benchmark figure are expected to improve relative to other authorities who have not yet entered into disposal contracts. The benefits of the ERF will lead to significant reductions in the use of landfill and improved performance generally, as evidenced by Hampshire who was one of the first to enter into a disposal contract. ▪ Raising <u>public awareness</u> of what happens to waste in East Sussex together with other specific initiatives (e.g., collecting food waste) should reduce the volume of waste produced. <p><u>Policy Steer 4: Make our roads safer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The statistics show an improving road safety picture in East Sussex for 2010 and 2011 but in 2009/10 we still compared poorly with other authorities on <u>road traffic casualties</u> over the nationally used 4-year period. ▪ County Council <u>expenditure on road safety</u> per head of population (£4.80 in 2009/10) is 20% less than the benchmark figure (£6.06). This raises the question as to why there is this difference and whether our expenditure on road safety is sufficient. ▪ The work to clarify the role of the <u>Safer Sussex Roads Partnership and the</u> 	<p>investment.</p> <p>The capital programme also includes a sum of £6m over the four years as an Economic Development Intervention Fund. This provides the capacity for new projects to be supported from anywhere in the County Council throughout this timeframe. A criteria for assessment of opportunities is being developed,</p> <p>Work to establish the reasons for the apparent significant variation is on-going.</p> <p>Agreed this needs careful monitoring although our more targeted approach to our road safety activities corresponds with an improvement in our performance at this current level of investment.</p> <p>Acknowledged. The data role is a key remaining activity for SSRP and using this data the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Board set the strategic direction and which activities we will</p>

Scrutiny board comments	Actions taken
<p data-bbox="241 225 1216 288"><u>East Sussex Casualty Reduction Board</u> to bring about efficiencies and reduce duplication is welcomed.</p> <ul data-bbox="197 309 1216 627" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="197 309 1216 440">▪ Care is needed not to give an impression that <u>engineering solutions</u> only have a minimal role in improving road safety in future. The criteria for schemes should be examined to take account of long term data and local perception of the safety of particular roads.<li data-bbox="197 461 1216 627">▪ The effectiveness of <u>road safety education</u> in directly reducing road casualties remains hard to prove due the acknowledged difficulty of collecting enough data to demonstrate 'cause and effect'. However, we should continue to try to collate the evidence as it emerges to ensure that our programmes are effective and provide value for money.	<p data-bbox="1234 225 1339 252">pursue.</p>