

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

Date: **19 November 2014**

By: **Chief Executive**

Title of report: **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)**

Purpose of report: **To enable the Committee to continue its engagement in the Council's business and financial planning process (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources) for 2015/16 and beyond.**

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider the responses to any outstanding points from the September scrutiny committee deliberations on RPPR;**
 - (2) agree the membership of the RPPR Scrutiny Board to meet on 15 December 2014; and**
 - (3) identify any further work or information needed to aid scrutiny's contribution to the RPPR process for consideration at the December RPPR Board.**
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1. Financial implications

1.1 The *State of the County 2014* report was agreed by Cabinet on 22 July 2014. That report initiates the Council's business and financial planning process known as *Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources* (RPPR) for 2015/16 and beyond. It outlines the national and local policy, financial and performance context and provides the background for the development of the detailed business and financial plans that will eventually be agreed by the County Council early in 2015. It is available at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetingpapers/cabinet/2014/22july.

1.2 The Council Plan encompasses four cross-cutting **priority outcomes** for the Council as a whole. The priority outcomes provide a focus for decisions about spending and savings and will direct work across the Council. The priority outcomes are:

- Driving economic growth;
- Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm;
- Helping people help themselves; and
- Making the best use of our resources.

2. Scrutiny engagement in RPPR

2.1 When developing portfolio plans for next year, Cabinet Members are focusing on how services we and our partners provide contribute to the four priority outcomes. With diminishing resources available in future, the Council needs to develop ever more innovation in achieving efficiencies and 'providing more for less'. The kinds of strategies that are becoming increasingly apparent include: ensuring fair and effective demand management for the services we wish to provide; and focusing on earlier intervention, where appropriate, to prevent more costly intervention 'further down the line'.

2.2 Scrutiny's engagement in the RPPR process is vitally important. The **September 2014 scrutiny committees** examined the current portfolio and savings plans to become familiar with the scope and functions of the Cabinet portfolios within their remit. The committees assessed how services were performing against previously agreed targets and budgets, and questioned Lead Members and senior officers about the impacts of previous spending decisions. The committee identified a number of questions for further scrutiny. These included a request for further information on the proposals and impacts of the £80,000 savings for the Countryside Management Service.

2.3 Further information relating to these points will be presented in a verbal update by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

2.4 The committee is asked to agree the Membership of its RPPR scrutiny review board which will consider the developing portfolio plans and savings proposals in more detail as they emerge in December. Members are invited to volunteer to be on the Board.

3. Next steps

3.1 Each scrutiny committee will provide commentary and recommendations to be taken into account by Cabinet and Council before a final decision is taken on next year's budget and Council Plan early in 2015. In recent years, the messages sent by scrutiny to Cabinet have predominantly highlighted the *impact* of proposed spending plans on services provided by the County Council and its partners. Increasingly, however, scrutiny has also:

- proposed mitigating action to offset perceived negative impacts of spending reductions in some cases
- recommended shifts in the balance of priorities between different activities, giving prominence to priorities that have emerged from the evidence scrutiny has uncovered;
- made judgements about value for money for areas of above-average costs;
- sought to identify additional efficiencies; and
- challenged performance targets to try to ensure better return on investment through increased performance.

3.2 The **RPPR scrutiny review boards** will meet in December 2014 to agree the detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging portfolio plans and savings proposals to put to Cabinet on behalf of their parent scrutiny committees. The Chairs of all the scrutiny committees are invited to attend all the scrutiny review boards.

3.3 The **March 2015 scrutiny committees** will review the process and their input into the RPP&R process, and make recommendations for improvements for the future RPPR process.

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Background Documents

None