

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 23 July 2013. Attendance:-

Councillor Glazier (Chairman)
Councillors Bennett, Bentley, Chris Dowling, Elkin, Maynard,
Simmons and Tidy

1. Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources: State of the County

1.1 The Cabinet considered a report which began our Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, the business and financial planning process, for 2014/15-2016/17.

1.2 Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, previously circulated to all Members, summarises some of the key achievements under each Portfolio for 2012/13 and highlights the key issues for future work, which will form the basis of the development of the Council Plan and Portfolio Plans and guide budget planning. Cabinet agreed the priorities which need to be taken into account in developing future business and budget plans in the light of Appendix 1.

1.3 The East Sussex Approach and its Policy Context is set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet, previously circulated to all Members. It contains an overview of the Council's aims for local people, our approach to delivering those aims, the key strategic risks that face us in the immediate future and a look ahead to changes which will affect us in the longer term. The three key approaches to the way business is carried out and adopted by the Council to deliver the priority outcomes are:

- Strategic Commissioning;
- One Council; and
- Working in Partnership.

1.4 Last year Members agreed a more focused approach to the Council Plan with four cross-cutting priority outcomes being agreed for the Council as a whole:

- Driving economic growth;
- Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm;
- Building resilience for individuals and families to live independently; and
- Making best use of our resources.

It was agreed by the Cabinet that the Portfolio Plans focus on how each Cabinet Member expects the services under his or her purview to contribute to these overarching priorities for the Council as a whole, rather than setting individual policy steers for each service.

1.5 There are no other changes proposed to the RPPR architecture this year. The new political make up of the Council means that we need to be more mindful than ever of the need to engage fully with all Members developing our priorities and savings proposals. The architecture for RPPR and the suggestions for Member engagement are summarised in Appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet, previously circulated to all Members.

1.6 The financial context within which we will be developing the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is set out in Appendix 4 of the report to Cabinet, previously circulated to all Members. In summary the Council is in the process of delivering a significant savings plan and is well placed with a three year financial strategy. The next steps include:

- Refresh of existing funding plan and projecting these forward;
- Review of existing savings and pressures as set out in the current plan;
- Review of causes of underspends in 2012/13 and opportunities to “bank” savings;
- Review our plans for 2015/16 in light of the recent Government Spending Round for that year; and
- Investigating the scope for further savings through cross-cutting reviews to support the development of a balanced budget from 2016/17 onwards.

Progress on these issues and options will be reported to Members as part of the RPPR process during the remainder of the year.

2. South East 7: update

2.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive which provided an update on the progress of the South East Seven (SE7) partnership in exploring collaborative opportunities to improve the quality of services and to achieve efficiency savings. At the meeting on 26 June the Leader of East Sussex County Council was appointed as Chairman of the SE7, and Cllr. Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council was appointed as Vice Chairman of the partnership.

2.2 Cabinet considered how the SE7 workstreams are continuing to progress and received an update on a number of the following activities:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) workstream (led by ESCC) continues to influence national thinking through the Department for Education’s/Department of Health’s SEND Pathfinder programme. As a Pathfinder Champion, the SE7 is coordinating the support across the 19 authorities in the south east region (working in partnership with Southampton). The Champion work is grant funded and East Sussex is coordinating the funding on behalf of SE7. SE7 has also been asked to support the London region Pathfinder Champion. There will also be a national role for SE7 to support other regions as required, to participate in and/or organise national conferences and to contribute to national thinking. Locally within SE7, attention has been focused on reviewing and revising our approaches building on the learning from the first stage of the Pathfinder. This will support us to scale up our work over the coming

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year in line with the challenging targets set out within the grant conditions and also to prepare for full roll out of the reforms in 2014.

· The Waste workstream has identified priority actions for delivery of savings in the short to medium term (2013-2017). Work to date has identified three initial areas for change that enable the SE7 to meet market demand and lay the ground work for realising further savings and innovation in the future. Further work will be required between June and September to build the detailed business cases for consideration by Leaders. This will estimate savings that could be delivered per authority (including boroughs and districts). This will also be key when promoting the approach and activities to district and borough councils (where relevant) and other partners in order to maximise mutual benefits. At this stage, the delivery of service improvements and savings is likely but subject to key decisions by Leaders.

2.3 The SE7 has submitted a joint bid for the Department for Communities and Local Government's Transformation Challenge Award to secure funding to support the partnership. The bid focuses on the aims and activities of the Waste and Highways workstreams which are demonstrating innovative SE7-wide approaches. The outcome of the bid is expected imminently.

2.4 The workstreams will continue to implement their action plans and will update on progress at the Leaders and Chief Executives' meeting on 26 September.

2.5 The principle is well established that where decisions need to be made which impact on service delivery across the Council, formal endorsement will be sought through the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and other relevant governance mechanisms.

23 July 2013

Keith Glazier
Chair

