

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 26 November 2021

By: Chief Executive

Title: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

Purpose: To provide an update on the Council's business and financial planning process, Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR), and the Committee's comments and requests for further information.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider the information in the attached RPPR Cabinet report of 30 September 2021 (appendix A), including the updated Medium Term Financial Plan and savings plans; and**
 - (2) identify any further work or information needed to aid the Scrutiny Committee's contribution to the RPPR process for consideration at the December RPPR Board, or as part of the Committee's ongoing work programme.**
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1. Background

1.1 This report provides the committee with updates on significant developments that have occurred in relation to Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) since the September meeting.

1.2 At the end of September Cabinet considered a RPPR update report. Following on from the State of the County report in July, the report set out an updated picture of how the Council will need to refresh its service and financial plans to deal with the level of financial uncertainty and the changing national policy agenda.

1.3 The report also confirmed that the financial situation for the Council in the medium term remains challenging and, at that time, the outcome of a three year Spending Review and its impact on local government funding was awaited. The Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Retention reforms continue to be delayed and we await more detail of the impact of health and social care reform also announced on 7 September. The report therefore provided Cabinet with the latest best assessment of the policy and financial context that will continue to inform ongoing planning for 2022/23 and beyond. The report (attached at Appendix A) included:

- updates on key national and local policy context developments since July;
- updates on the financial context and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23-2024/25, including updates to the savings plans; and
- progress on the development of proposals for one-off investments in highways, infrastructure and climate change.

1.4 For Place Scrutiny Committee the report highlights some key developments in the national and local context since State of the County for the areas within the committee's remit. These are set out in paragraph 2.1 of the attached report and include:

- information on the Levelling Up White Paper which is expected to have implications for the work of the Council including how we drive sustainable economic growth;

- climate change and how the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (published in July) will inform our plans to refresh the East Sussex Local Transport Plan; and
- new trade and border arrangements between the UK and EU, and preparations for the full implementation of border checks at Newhaven Port next summer.

1.5 The report highlights that the RPPR process, bringing together the Council's policy, business and financial planning and risk management, provides the vehicle for service and financial planning. The process of planning, through RPPR, for 2022/23 and beyond will take into consideration the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 on services and residents, alongside other trends and pressures, to form an integrated forward view of service and financial plans.

1.6 Details of the outcome of the Government's Spending Review were announced on 27 October. This included confirmation of national funding allocations for local government over the three year period 2022/23-2024/25, but the detail on allocations to individual authorities, and the methodology which will be used to calculate these for 2022/23 and the years beyond are yet to be confirmed. The impact for the County Council will not therefore be clear until detailed information in the provisional local government finance settlement is received, which is likely to be in December or early January.

2. Scrutiny engagement in RPPR

2.1 At the **September 2021 meetings** the Scrutiny Committees reviewed the Portfolio Plans for the services within the Committees' remits, the current savings plans and the Financial Budget Summary 2021/22 to ensure a baseline understanding of the current context and future pressures.

2.2 In September, the Committees were asked to identify any further information needed to inform scrutiny input to RPPR. At that time, Place Scrutiny Committee requested further information on the impact of planned savings in Trading Standards. The report to Cabinet in September confirmed the removal of the planned savings due to service pressures and the addition of funding in response to demands on the service arising from EU exit – further detail is contained within Appendix 1 of the attached report.

2.3 The **November 2021 Scrutiny Committees** are invited to:

- consider the information in the Cabinet RPPR update report (attached as Appendix A),
- review the updated MTFP (see Appendix 1 and Annex A of the Cabinet report) and updated savings schedules (see Appendix 1, Annex B of the Cabinet report)
- identify any further work or information needed to aid the Scrutiny Committee's contribution to the current year's RPPR process, for consideration at the December RPPR Board; and
- fine tune the future scrutiny work programme to ensure the committee is in the best position to contribute to the ongoing RPPR process.

2.4 The committee's **RPPR Board** will meet on 16 December 2021 to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the budget proposals and emerging portfolio plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee in January 2022. The Chairs of the People and Place Scrutiny Committees are invited to attend the RPPR boards of both committees.

2.5 The **March 2022 Scrutiny Committees** will review the process and their input into the RPPR process and receive feedback on how scrutiny input has been reflected in final plans. Any issues arising can be reflected in the future committee work programme.

2.6 Running alongside this process, there will be a number of opportunities for all Members to engage in the RPPR process.

3. Conclusion and reason for recommendations

3.1 In order to inform the discussion at the RPPR boards in December and to help formulate comments to Cabinet, the Committee is recommended to consider the updated information provided by this report and identify any further information it requires for the RPPR board meeting. The Committee is also recommended to consider any amendments to the work programme to aid its contribution to the ongoing RPPR process.

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Background Documents:

None