

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 24 November 2022

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 input to the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider the contextual information attached in preparation for the Committee's RPPR Board in December; and**
 - (2) identify any further work or information needed to support the Scrutiny Committee's contribution to the RPPR process for consideration at the RPPR Board, or as part of the Committee's ongoing work programme.**
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1. Background

1.1 In September the Committee considered the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) update report to 29 September Cabinet. Following on from the State of the County report in June, the report set out the latest assessment of the developing policy and financial outlook which will inform planning for 2023/24. The ongoing uncertainty in the planning context was outlined, including the very challenging economic conditions and the rapidly evolving policy agenda in light of national political developments. The report confirmed that national economic conditions were impacting on our projected future financial position, alongside pre-existing pressures and uncertainties.

1.2 Since September, the instability in our planning context has persisted, with significant further national economic and political developments. Following the resignation of Liz Truss, a new Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, took office on 25 October, followed by new Cabinet and ministerial appointments. The Prime Minister has indicated that his government's priorities will be economic stability, uniting the country and delivering the 2019 Conservative Party manifesto. Michael Gove has been reappointed as Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, following a departure from the post in July.

1.3 Having revised a number of the tax measures introduced in the Government's September mini budget in a statement in October, the Chancellor will make a further fiscal statement on 17 November, to be accompanied by updated economic forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility. Both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have already indicated that difficult decisions on public spending will be required to reduce the national debt. In terms of local government funding, the November fiscal statement may provide some indication of the outlook but the detail is expected to come in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, anticipated in December or early January.

1.4 The new Government's policy agenda is yet to emerge in any detail, although the stated return to previous manifesto pledges suggests an ongoing commitment to key policies such as Levelling Up. There remains uncertainty over whether, or how, other national policy proposals brought forward by previous administrations will be progressed. As the policy direction becomes

clearer, particularly in relation to reforms which impact directly on our services, we will continue to factor details into our planning.

1.5 The RPPR process, which brings together our policy, business and financial planning and risk management, continues to provide the robust mechanism to help us navigate the uncertain environment, supporting planning for 2023/24 and beyond and maintaining focus on our priority outcomes.

2. Overview of Scrutiny engagement in RPPR

2.1 Scrutiny's input to the RPPR process is ongoing, both through specific RPPR reports to each meeting and through more detailed exploration of specific issues through the wider work programme. Following on from consideration in **July** of the 2022 State of the County report and 2021/22 year end monitoring report, the **September** meetings provided an opportunity to consider further developments in the policy and financial context and how these were impacting on planning for 2023/24 and beyond.

2.2 The **November** committee meetings provide a further opportunity to request any information required by scrutiny to inform its engagement with RPPR, for consideration at the RPPR Boards to be held in December or as part of the wider work programme.

2.3 To further support the committee in its understanding of the current context and future pressures for the areas within its remit, the following attachments are provided as additional context ahead of the RPPR Board meeting:

- **Appendix 1** contains the **current Portfolio Plans** for services within the Committee's remit;
- **Appendix 2** is a copy of remaining **2023/24 savings plans** for services that are within the remit of the Committee, as set out in the February 2022 Council budget report; and
- **Appendix 3** contains extracts from the **Financial Budget Summary 2022/23** for the areas within the remit of this Committee to provide an overview of the revenue budget for these areas (the full document is at [Financial Budget Summary](#));

Members are invited to consider this background information to ensure a full understanding of the current context, ahead of considering updated plans for the year ahead.

2.4 The committee's **RPPR Board** will meet on 22 December 2022 to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the budget and emerging updated portfolio plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee in January 2023. The Chairs of the People and Place Scrutiny Committees are invited to attend the RPPR boards of both committees.

2.5 The **March 2023 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 To support its ongoing input to the RPPR process, the Committee is recommended to consider the additional contextual information provided by this report and identify any further work or information it requires for consideration at the RPPR Board, or as part of the Committee's ongoing work programme.

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