

**Report to:** Place Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 23 November 2023

**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.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

**(1) consider the information in the attached RPPR Cabinet report of 7 November 2023 (appendix A), including the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and capital programme update; and**

**(2) identify any further work or information needed to aid the 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 On 7 November Cabinet considered a Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) update report. Following on from the State of the County report in June, the report sets out an updated picture of how the Council will need to refresh its service and financial plans to respond to the high level of financial uncertainty and the changing national policy agenda.

1.2 The report (attached at Appendix A) provides an update on the rapidly evolving context that will continue to inform planning for 2024/25, and includes:

- updates on key policy context developments since June;
- updates on the financial context and an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25-2026/27; and
- an update on the capital programme and next steps.

1.3 The Cabinet report sets out the broad policy context across the all the Council functions and areas which may be of particular interest to this committee include:

- confirmation that by March 2024 Government will support upper tier councils to absorb the three main functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): business representation, strategic economic planning, and responsibility for the delivery of government economic growth programmes. Transition funding will be provided in 2024/25 to support councils to take on these functions and a transition plan is in development to manage the transfer of relevant South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) functions to constituent local authorities, including ESCC. In parallel, and linked to the transition of LEP functions, work is ongoing on the new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy, with a draft planned to be in place for the new financial year.
- The announcement of a new Network North plan to improve the country's transport following the scaling back of the HS2 high speed rail scheme. Within this plan it was indicated that the south east, south west and east of England would receive access to a £2.8bn roads resurfacing fund to address potholes. In addition, the Department for Transport announced an increase to funding, from 85% to 100% of their costs at the outline business case stage, for most existing Major Road Network and Large Local Major

Road schemes which include the A22 Corridor Package (Hailsham to Stone Cross) and A259 South Coast Road Corridor (Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven). The £2 bus fare cap has also been extended until 31 December 2024.

- The announcement by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in June that it intends to ban councils charging householders for disposing of DIY waste, which ESCC currently charges for at Household Waste Recycling Sites. Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPRP) reforms have been delayed by a further year to October 2025, and DEFRA's revised 'Simpler Recycling' plans, published in October, set an expectation that all households will be able to recycle the same dry materials (paper and card, plastic, glass, metal). There will also be a requirement to provide weekly food waste collections from all households (as reported at the September Place Scrutiny Committee) and implementation of the new national requirements is expected by March 2026.
- Publication in July of an updated five year national Climate Adaptation Plan, setting out the actions that Government and others will take to adapt to the impacts of climate change from 2023 to 2028, including the role of local government.
- Confirmation that ESCC has been appointed as the responsible authority for producing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove over the next 18 months.

1.4 The report highlights that 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 2024/25 and beyond and maintaining focus on our priority outcomes.

## 2. Scrutiny engagement in RPPR planning

2.1 At the **July** meeting the committee discussed relevant parts of the 2022/23 year end monitoring report and the State of the County 2023 report, both of which had been considered by Cabinet in June. These reports enabled the committee to review current service and financial performance information, as well as considering new developments which will impact on services, to ensure a full understanding of the current context and future pressures for the areas within the remit of the committee.

2.2 At the **September** meeting the committee had the opportunity to consider what further work or information was required to support the committee's input into the RPPR planning process for the financial year 2024/25 and beyond. At the scrutiny work planning awayday, also held in September, the committee received an update from Departments on the context and current pressures since the State of the County report. This provided a further opportunity to consider issues raised and whether, or how, these should be reflected in the committee's ongoing work programme.

2.3 This **November** meeting provides an opportunity to consider further developments in the policy and financial context and how these will impact on planning for 2024/25 and beyond. The attached Cabinet report provides an update on the significant developments that have occurred since June, including those highlighted above, together with an updated Medium Term Financial Plan. Members are invited to:

- consider and comment on the developments in the planning context, particularly as they impact on services within the committee's remit;
- review the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (appendix 1 to the Cabinet report); and
- review the capital programme update (appendix 2 to the Cabinet report).

2.4 The committee's **RPPR Board** will meet on 6 December 2023 to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the budget and emerging portfolio plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee in January 2024. The Chairs of the People and Place Scrutiny Committees are invited to attend the RPPR boards of both committees to support a holistic approach.

2.5 The **March 2024** committee meeting will review the process and its 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 As part of its ongoing input to the RPPR process, this committee is recommended to consider the updated information provided by this report and identify any further information it requires for consideration at its RPPR Board to support further engagement in the planning process. The committee is also recommended to consider any amendments to its work programme to aid its contribution to the ongoing RPPR process.

**BECKY SHAW**  
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