

## **Place Scrutiny RPPR Board 09 December 2025**

Present: Councillors Matthew Beaver (Chair), Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Philip Lunn, Steve Murphy, Paul Redstone, Stephen Shing and Brett Wright.

### **Summary comments for Cabinet**

1.1 The Place Scrutiny RPPR Board met on the 9 December 2024 and agreed comments to be put to Cabinet, on behalf of the parent Committee, for its consideration in January 2025. The information supplied to the Board to support its discussions comprised of:

- an RPPR Board overview report
- the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Finance Policy Statement;
- the draft portfolio plans for the Business Services (BSD), Communities Economy and Transport (CET) and Governance Services (GS) departments; and
- savings proposals for the services within the committee's remit.

1.2 The Board met before the provisional local government finance settlement 2025- 2026 was published and therefore the Board was not able to comment in detail on the Council's budgetary position.

1.3 The comments of the Place Scrutiny RPPR Board are set out below.

#### Financial Outlook

1.4 The Board reviewed the Local Government Finance Policy Statement. The Board commented that given the Government proposals for a one-year financial settlement for 2025/26, it will be important for the Council to continue to lobby for a fair funding allocation that reflects the needs of the county, both in terms of the ageing population and areas of deprivation within the county, to feed into the fair funding review and subsequent multi-year settlements for local government funding.

1.5 The Board's general view was that the Council does not want to make savings in the service areas covered by the Place Scrutiny Committee but acknowledged that the Council is facing challenging financial circumstances and that some savings are necessary to address the budget deficit.

1.6 The Board also commented that how the Council manages savings going into the future will be very important.

1.7 The Board noted that the Local Government Finance Policy Statement did not cover capital funding for transport and highways infrastructure, which will also be important for the Council in maintaining its work in this area.

#### Business Services and Communities, Economy and Transport Portfolio Plans

1.8 The Board noted the impact of reduced resources on the performance measures and targets set within the draft Portfolio Plans. In some cases, it has been necessary to revise targets to reflect the performance levels that will be achievable, once financial pressures and the proposed savings have been taken into account.

1.9 In particular, the Board discussed changes in the following performance measure targets. For the Business Services Department this included:

- The level of unsecured debt over 5 months
- Economic, social and environmental value committed through contracts
- Reducing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arising from County Council operations

For the Communities, Economy and Transport this included:

- The Percentage of Principal and Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance
- The Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance
- Lead Local Flood Authority advice provided to planning authorities
- Planning decisions performance measures
- The number of active interventions for vulnerable people who have been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse

#### Communities, Economy and Transport Savings Proposals

1.10 The Board discussed the composition of a number of savings contained within the savings proposals. For the Communities, Economy and Transport Department the Board examined the make-up of some of the larger savings proposed for the Economy Division and Waste services to understand the impact on these services. It also sought an assurance that the Trading Standards active intervention work on rogue traders and financial abuse/scams would continue to prioritise the most vulnerable people.

#### Business Services Savings Proposals

1.11 The Board discussed the progress in the review of the use of corporate buildings and in particular the work to reduce the operating costs of County Hall. It also reviewed the savings proposed for IT and Digital services.

Councillor Matthew Beaver

Chair of the Place Scrutiny Committee