

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 20 November 2025

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 information in the attached RPPR Cabinet report of 11 November 2025 (appendix A) with a focus on services within this committee's remit; and

(2) identify any further work or information needed to aid 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.

1. Background

1.1 On 11 November Cabinet considered a Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) update report. Following on from the State of the County report in June, this report outlined the latest financial and service planning outlook for the Council. It also highlighted significant ongoing uncertainties, particularly around future funding, national policy reforms, and changes to local government structures, with key details still awaited that will be essential to inform our planning. A further update on the planning position will be reported to Cabinet in December.

1.2 The RPPR Cabinet report (attached at Appendix A) includes:

- an updated overall assessment of the planning position and financial outlook;
- updates on key policy context developments since the State of the County report;
- the CIPFA Assurance Review report and the proposed response to recommendations;
- an updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and reserves position; and
- an update on the capital programme.

1.3 The key specific pressures and policy developments set out in the report which relate to services within this committee's remit are summarised below.

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)

- Local demographic pressures and increasingly complex needs driving demand and high costs;
- Plans to establish a Fair Pay Agreement for care workers;
- Funding reforms, including changes to the Better Care Fund;
- National health service reforms, including the NHS 10 Year Plan, which includes a greater focus on neighbourhood health and structural changes to Integrated Care Boards

Children's Services

- Increased demand and more complex needs among children and families, combined with high costs for services;
- High demand in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including rising numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and pressure on home to school transport
- National policy reforms, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life strategy and Youth Employment Guarantee.
- A delay to the awaited Schools White Paper, which is expected to set out reforms to the SEND system.

1.4 Further detail on the above areas is set out in the Cabinet report and the committee is invited to consider and comment on the implications of these developments for service planning and delivery.

3. Scrutiny engagement in RPPR planning

3.1 Scrutiny's engagement in RPPR planning is ongoing throughout the year, through specific RPPR reports and topics included in the wider scrutiny work programme. At the **July** meeting the People Scrutiny Committee discussed relevant parts of the 2024/25 year end monitoring report and the State of the County 2025 report, which enabled the committee to review both the current context and future pressures for the areas within the remit of the committee.

3.2 At its **September** meeting the committee reviewed its work programme to ensure it best supported scrutiny's role in the ongoing RPPR process. The committee considered key risks in relation to pressures and costs in ASCH and Children's Services and agreed to scrutinise home to school transport and review the care quality commission (CQC) assessment of adult social care.

3.3 The scrutiny work planning **awayday** held in October provided an opportunity to further consider current and forthcoming challenges for the services within the committee's remit and how these should be reflected in the work programme. The People Scrutiny Committee agreed to continue its input into shaping local responses to the challenges and high costs in the SEND system, including responding to anticipated national reforms. The committee also agreed to consider how ASCH supports carers, in light of growing demand for care.

3.4 As well as the specific policy context developments set out above, the **November** meeting provides an opportunity to consider the wider current planning and financial outlook, as set out in the attached Cabinet report. Members are invited to:

- consider and comment on the latest planning position;
- review the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (appendix 1 to the Cabinet report);
- consider the proposed next steps to work towards a balanced budget for 2026/27; and
- review the capital programme update (appendix 4 to the Cabinet report); and
- identify any further work or information needed to aid 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.

3.5 The People Scrutiny Committee's **RPPR Board** will meet on 11 December 2025 to consider the further RPPR planning update to Cabinet in December and 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 2026. The Chairs of the People and Place Scrutiny Committees are invited to attend the RPPR boards of both committees.

3.6 In **March 2026** the committee will review the process and its input into the RPPR process. Any issues arising can be reflected in the future committee work programme.

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

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