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Telford & Wrekin
C O U N C I L

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

CABINET

Date Thursday, 10 June 2021 Time 10.00 am
Venue Telford College, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2NP

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Cabinet Members:

Councillor R A Overton	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services
Councillor A J Burford	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care
Councillor E M Callear	Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Visitor Economy
Councillor L D Carter	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration
Councillor R C Evans	Cabinet Member for Council Finance and Governance
Councillor C Healy	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment
Councillor S A W Reynolds	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning
Councillor P Watling	Cabinet Member for Cooperative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships
Councillor D Wright	Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Councillor S Davies	Leader

Invitees:

Councillor W L Tomlinson	Liberal Democrats
Councillor N A Dugmore	Conservative

AGENDA

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET – 10 JUNE 2021****COUNCIL – 22 JULY 2021****SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING REPORT – 2020/21 OUTTURN****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: FINANCE & HR (CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.)****LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR RAE EVANS****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES****1.1 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Financial Outturn**

Telford & Wrekin Council has a long track record of sound financial management and started 2020/21 in a healthy financial position. It is a testament to Cabinet Members and Senior and wider management teams that, despite the significant and unprecedented financial pressures relating to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Council has ended the year within budget. This is a solid basis upon which to move into 2021/22 and demonstrates ongoing financial resilience in the most challenging of circumstances.

The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) has had a huge impact across the country. During this unprecedented year, the Council has continued to provide all its usual services, subject to national restrictions, as well as providing additional support to Telford & Wrekin residents and businesses. The mid-year budget report, presented to Cabinet in January 2021, highlighted the breadth and scale of the huge amount of additional work which has taken place during 2020/21. This has included: during the initial stages of the pandemic being one of the top ten quickest councils in the country to distribute vital grant support, now totalling almost £50m, to local businesses; allocating over £30m business rates relief to businesses in the borough; granting council tax holidays to over 10,000 households; supporting the vaccination roll out, the provision of effective, testing facilities and track and trace processes; providing additional support to local care providers; providing more than 200 Kindles to care home residents and local hospital patients; providing laptops to schools to support learning; supporting local high street businesses; and when permitted re-opening facilities safely and quickly.

All this additional support has been at a time when many of our income streams have been under pressure and comes after more than a decade of severe financial constraint due to Government grant cuts and increasing demand for many Council services, Covid-19 has resulted in

pressures from increased costs, particularly relating to the provision of Social Care and safeguarding the most vulnerable in our community; the purchase of essential personal, protective equipment; income shortfalls relating to closed facilities and services.

Throughout the year, the Council continued to demonstrate robust financial management. Clearly, there are a number of significant variations from the approved budget which relate to Covid-19 however spend has been effectively managed and supported by the Covid emergency grant funding.

Importantly the Council has not had to make any unplanned use of reserves in 2020/21 and has retained a prudent level of balances set aside which will support the delivery of the medium-term Service & Financial Planning Strategy and support a high level of financial resilience in future years, as we will continue to feel the longer-term impacts of Covid including national funding pressures and, at the same time also, face the uncertainties of planned changes to the local government funding system.

The gross revenue budget for 2020/21 was £414m and the net budget was £129m. The estimated revenue outturn position is within budget by £0.039m (which is equivalent to only -0.03% of net budget) after the proposed transfers to reserves and balances have been made. This position has been achieved after delivering £2.9m of budget savings in 2020/21, on top of the £123.5m made since 2009/10 giving a total of just over £126.4m ongoing savings - equivalent to around £700 for every person living in the borough.

The year-end position has also allowed a number of one off investments in key areas to be made helping to make the borough a better place to live, work, learn, visit and do business in. These include:

- £1.655m, providing 3-year funding for Community Action Teams
- £1.250m, for Covid Recovery and Regeneration activities
- £1.000m, for a new Pride in Your Parks Programme
- £1.000m, for Cultural, tourism and public event initiatives and activities
- £0.510m, to provide continued support to tackle Youth Unemployment
- £0.300m, funding over 3 years to support work on protecting and maintaining public Rights of Way

The funding outlook for the medium term is very uncertain. Due to the impact of Covid19, the major planned reforms to the local government finance system have been postponed with no date for implementation confirmed; changes to the New Homes Bonus system are, however, expected to come in to force during 2022/23; and changes to Adult Social Care (ASC) funding through the long awaited ASC Green paper are also potentially expected. Using the limited information that was available

when the budget was set in March, it was anticipated that the Council would need to deliver the £8.8m savings already identified for 2021/22 and 2022/23 plus around £10.7m of further savings over the two years 2022/23 and 2023/24, taking the total savings to £146m by the end of 2023/24.

Clearly, there were a number of significant variations from the approved budget in 2020/21, the majority of these related to Covid-19.

1.2 2020/21 Capital Outturn.

Capital spend ended the year at £57.71m against an approved estimate of £63.7m which was in the main due to re-phasing expenditure into 2021/22. The re-phasing of planned spending will generate some further treasury management benefits in 2021/22.

1.3 Income Monitoring

While collection rates were impacted by Covid-19 the severity of this was part-mitigated by: the deferral/payment holidays offered to council tax payers at the beginning of the pandemic; hardship payments to working age Council Tax Support Recipients; and, Business Support Grants and the 100% retail discount for the hospitality, leisure and accommodation business sectors.

It is difficult to predict the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on income collection going forward and the position will be closely monitored in 2021/22. Ultimately, all debt will be pursued and will continue to be collected after the end of the financial year with appropriate recovery avenues being pursued at appropriate times.

1.4 NuPlace Ltd

NuPlace is the council's wholly owned housing investment company. It was set up primarily to improve standards in the private rented sector and to offer homes for life to tenants operated by a responsible and responsive landlord. It is a separate legal entity and as such prepares its own accounts; in addition the Council is also required to prepare consolidated group accounts which incorporate NuPlace's financial position as part of the Statement of Accounts. The unaudited accounts show that NuPlace generated an operating profit after interest and taxation of £0.463m in 2020/21 (£0.428m in 2019/20). The company issued a dividend of £0.156m during the year which was paid to the Council as its sole investor. The Council also received other income from NuPlace totalling £1.5m during 2020/21, (£1.2m in 2019/20) net of additional interest and other marginal costs. The financial benefits that arise from NuPlace are invested in providing front line services such as providing Adult Social Care and have helped to reduce the budget savings that would otherwise have had to been made as a result of Government grant cuts in recent years.

1.5 **General**

The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 extend the deadlines for authorities to complete the annual accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The period of public inspection is now on, or before, the first working day in August and the audited Statement of Accounts (SOA) must be published by 30 September at the latest. The draft SOA was considered at the Audit Committee at the end of May, and the period of public inspection runs during June. Subject to the external audit being completed by Grant Thornton, it is anticipated that the final, audited SOA will be presented to the 28 September Audit Committee.

1.6 Summaries of the outturn on revenue and capital along with major variations are shown as appendices to this report.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Cabinet Members are asked to approve the following recommendations which will go forward to Full Council for final approval:

- (i) To approve:
 - the Revenue outturn position for 2020/21, which remains subject to audit by the Council's external auditors, and related virements in Appendix 3
 - the transfers and changes to reserves and associated approval to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team (as determined by the Chief Executive) and after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to spend the reserves detailed in section 5 and Appendix 5
- (ii) To approve the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, re-phasing and virements shown in Appendix 4 and as summarised in the report
- (iii) To grant delegated authority to the Director: Finance & HR to make any changes required as the outturn is finalised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Governance
- (iv) To note the performance against income targets
- (v) To approve the 2021/22 Public Health Grant and update the 2021/22 budget strategy accordingly

3.0 **SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Delivery of all priority objectives depend on the effective use of available resources. Financial

		management ensures best use of resources.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE		Outturn forms the basis of the formal statement of accounts which will be presented to the Audit Committee in draft format in May. The statement of accounts will then be audited and the final version will be published before the 30 September deadline subject to timely completion of the external audit.
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The financial impacts are detailed throughout the report.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	None directly arising from this report. The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and to take action if overspends /shortfalls emerge. The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 have changed the dates for publication of the audited Statement of Accounts to 30 September and the period of public inspection to on or before the first working day in August, for 2020/21 and 2021/22, as a result of the disruption caused by coronavirus. AL – 13.5.21
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	Budget holders actively manage their budgets and the many financial risks and challenges that Council services face, examples include the risk of a particularly harsh winter which would impact adversely on the winter gritting and adult social care budgets, the increasing dependency on income from a wide range of activities and the risk of interest rate movements. The Council has comprehensive risk management arrangements in place and an appropriate level of contingency within its revenue budget as detailed in this report.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.0 2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET

4.1 The Council had a gross revenue budget of £414m for 2020/21 and the final net revenue outturn position is as follows (a more detailed summary is provided in Appendix I):

	£m
Net Budget	128.975
Net Expenditure	128.936
Net Position	-0.039
Percentage Net Variance	-0.03%

4.2 Variations by Service Delivery Unit are summarised below and further detail is provided in Appendix 2.

Service Area	Final Budget £	Outturn £	Variance £
Prosperity & Investment	(7,034,390)	(5,587,392)	1,446,998
Finance & Resources	14,524,364	8,717,409	(5,806,955)
Policy & Governance	709,044	1,273,991	564,947
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	36,804,310	38,577,952	1,773,641
Education & Skills	8,222,966	9,824,552	1,601,586
Adult Social Care	45,773,650	51,229,562	5,455,912
Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning	2,899,852	3,597,230	697,378
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	25,570,061	25,550,313	(19,748)
Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	602,507	6,923,198	6,320,691
Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	1,866,918	1,983,438	116,520
Corporate Communications	20,840	210,759	189,919
Corporate Items (incl. Covid Funding)	(985,243)	(13,176,433)	(12,191,190)
Total	128,974,880	129,124,579	149,699
Funding Streams	(128,974,880)	(129,163,288)	(188,408)
Net Position	(0)	(38,709)	(38,709)

This table shows the position for each service area after the transfers to reserves detailed in section 5 of this report. The figures in the above

table exclude budgets and variances on capital charges which are “non-controllable” accounting entries.

The outturn for 2020/21 has clearly been significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic. The variances in service area outturn positions shown above are to a very large extent due to additional spending pressures and income reductions caused by the pandemic.

- 4.3 Service variances over £0.250m are highlighted; all other variances over £50k are detailed in Appendix 2.

Service Area	Variance £m
<u>Property & Investment</u>	
Property Investment Portfolio – shortfall in rental income due to Covid-19.	+0.694
Car Parks – income shortfall as a result of Covid-19 closures	+0.358
<u>Finance & Human Resources</u>	
Treasury Management – a combination of continued borrowing at lower than budgeted short term rates and projected long term rates being lower than anticipated.	-5.692
<u>Policy & Governance</u>	
CSE Enquiry – costs during 2020/21 which include the impact of delays caused by the Covid pandemic.	+0.747
<u>Children’s Safeguarding & Family Support</u>	
Staffing – Whilst T&W Childrens Services have significantly lower reliance on agency staffing than National and Regional colleagues, there are occasions where maternity and long term sickness events have to be covered by agency appointments. This therefore gives rise to an overall pressure on staffing budgets. Additional costs relating to Covid-19 is also included.	+0.289
Health Funding – income from Health is significantly lower than in 2019/20. This is mainly due to one specific case who is no longer eligible for support and another individual with health needs being paid directly by the CCG rather than by the Council.	+0.324
Children With Disabilities – underspend as many recipients are clinically vulnerable and were shielded during the pandemic and uptake of activities and services were lower.	-0.284

This is now starting to recover again as shielding ends and face to face services resume.	
<u>Education & Skills</u>	
Arthog – challenging income targets together with the impact of Covid-19 which has prevented income generation throughout the year.	+0.768
Job Box – the removal of opportunities to meet clients fact to face due to Covid-19 has reduced the amount of income generated.	+0.362
<u>Adult Social Care</u>	
Purchasing, Long Term Care – support provided to care providers and clients due to Covid-19 and increased levels of care needs.	+6.903
Purchasing, In House Charging for care – reduced expenditure, mainly for day care provision, due to Covid closures.	-1.557
Purchasing, Short Term Reablement care – £3.1m relates to contracts procured and reimbursed by the CCG for Covid-19 discharges.	+5.045
Income – overachievement of client contributions towards care.	-0.552
Income – NHS Contributions joint funding contributions	-0.861
Income – NHS Transforming Care Partnership pooled fund contribution	-0.280
Income – NHS Contributions, including winter pressures and Covid contracts beds	-5.029
Operational Teams – cost of the use of agency staff, net of the saving resulting from vacancies	+0.326
My Options – reduced income from charges mainly for ASC	+1.045
<u>Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning</u>	
Personal Protective Equipment – costs of purchasing PPE as a result of Covid-19	+0.553

<u>Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services</u>	
There are no variances over £250k to report.	
<u>Communities, Customer & Commercial Services</u>	
Leisure Operations – loss of budgeted income relating to closures required due to Covid-19.	+3.777
Catering – loss of income due to Covid-19 closures.	+0.911
Theatre – loss of income due to Covid-19 closure	+0.494
Housing Benefit Subsidy – impact of suspending recovery of overpayments and costs relating to emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless people during the pandemic, which is ineligible for subsidy.	+0.311
Grant Income – additional grants received in respect of Welfare Reform	-0.279
<u>Housing, Employment & Infrastructure</u>	
Homelessness – costs associated with preventing homelessness during the Covid-19 pandemic.	+0.664
Homelessness – income to support homelessness costs above, including housing benefit income claimed, one off grant funding from MHCLG and one off partner funding.	-0.616

Transfers to reserves are detailed in Appendix 5.

4.4 Public Health

Responsibility for Public Health transferred to the Council from the NHS in April 2013 together with the associated specific ring-fenced grant funding. In 2020/21 this grant totalled £12.702m. The conditions of the grant are that it must be used to address health needs and improve health and well-being in the community. Improving public health outcomes is delivered across a number of Service Areas and a summary of the grant in 2020/21 is shown in the table below:

	£
Public Health Reserve (grant bfwd from 2019/20)	1,033,665
Public Health Grant allocation 2020/21	12,702,182
Total Funding	13,735,847
Funding applied during 2020/21	12,070,295
Grant carried forward to 2021/22	1,665,552

The Public Health Grant for 2020/21 was announced after the budget strategy was approved and is therefore included in this report for formal approval: 2021/22 Public Health Grant: £12,808,327.

4.5 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

Dedicated Schools Grant totalled £101.318m in 2020/21, a small underspend of £0.456m (0.45%) during the year was added to the surplus of £0.12m brought forward to 2020/21 from the previous year, this meant that a year-end surplus of £0.576m has been carried forward to 2021/22.

The maintenance of a positive DSG balance is particularly noteworthy as the national pressure on the high needs element of DSG continues and has resulted in many local authorities incurring substantial DSG deficits. These pressures are also apparent in Telford & Wrekin. However, the Council's strong financial control, investment in additional staff focusing on post 16 and residential provision and positive relationships with schools have enabled budgetary control to be maintained. In addition, the national recognition of high needs cost pressures has led to additional resources being allocated to councils, including Telford & Wrekin.

The Council has a constructive relationship with the local Schools Forum and continues to work hard to tackle the high needs pressures in partnership with the Forum, schools and other providers of education.

5.0 **RESERVES & BALANCES**

5.1 The main General and Special Fund balances were £5.229m at 1 April 2020. The position on the main General and Special Fund Balances is now:

	£m
Balances at 1 st April 2020	5.229
Approved use (Full Council 26.11.20)	(0.200)
Transfer into reserve (see Appendix 5)	+0.151
2020/21 Final Contribution to Balances	+0.039
Balances at 31st March 2021	5.219

The General/Special Fund balance forms part of the Council's overall reserves and balances.

- 5.2 In addition to the General and Special Fund Balances, the Council has general contingencies of £3.95m in 2021/22 and a prudent level of balances available to support the medium term strategy. The Government has also announced that the Sales, Fees & Charges compensation scheme (which compensates councils for 75% of eligible income shortfalls above a 5% deductible) will be extended to include the first 3 months of 2021/22; and further, another tranche of emergency funding is being awarded in 2021/22, totalling £5.178m for Telford & Wrekin Council, to cover ongoing Covid-related pressures.
- 5.3 A number of specific transfers to reserves are proposed which support the Council's priorities, Covid recovery and regeneration and the future service and financial planning strategy. These are included in the overall outturn position and are detailed in Appendix 5.
- 5.4 The balance of the Public Health ring-fenced grant has also been carried forward to 2021/22 (in line with the grant conditions see section 4.4 above) as has the residual balance of other grants received in year, in line with accounting requirements.
- 5.5 As planned and reported in financial monitoring reports to Cabinet during the year, funds have also been set aside to cover Council Tax and Business Rates income shortfalls which have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. New accounting legislation requires shortfalls to be spread over 3 years, however setting aside funds in reserves in 2020/21 avoids placing an additional burden on the budget in these years. In total £4.9m has been earmarked to support these funding streams, £1m for Council Tax and £3.9m for Business Rates.

6.0 2020/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The capital programme for 2020/21 totalled £63.70m; spend at year end was £57.71m giving a year end variation of £5.99m which is summarised in the table below:

Service Area	Approved Estimate £m	Spend £m	% Spend £m	Year End Variance £m
Adult Social Care	0.21	0.09	44%	-0.12
Prosperity & Investment	23.41	23.22	99%	-0.19
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	22.89	20.48	89%	-2.41
Education & Skills	5.13	5.97	116%	+0.84
Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	5.45	4.74	87%	-0.71
Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	3.56	2.52	71%	-1.04
Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning	0.07	0.00	5%	-0.07
Policy & Governance	0.09	0.03	36%	-0.06
Finance & Human Resources	2.89	0.66	23%	-2.23
Total	63.70	57.71	91%	-5.99

Note: The approved estimate excludes the new allocations, slippage and virements detailed in Appendix 4

6.2 The main scheme re-phasing to future years is shown below with detail included in Appendix 4.

	£m
<u>Prosperity & Investment</u>	
Property Investment Programme – rephasing of programme including starter units at Newport Innovation and Enterprise Park within the £50m Growth Fund allocation.	+0.26
Asset management plan – rephasing of works within the Councils delivery programme	-0.10
Stronger Communities – programme delivery in line with construction profile	+0.67
Housing Investment – programme rephased in line with construction profile	+1.30
HE Land Deal, Board Schemes and Liability sites – rephasing of spend, mainly site preparation	-1.02
Get Building Fund – spend rephased to 2021/22	-1.13
<u>Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services</u>	
Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package – rephasing of final retention under contract	-0.44
Integrated transport, highways, footpaths and drainage – schemes fully committed, but redirection of resources due to flooding in the Ironbridge Gorge	-1.01
Environmental Improvements – schemes fully committed, rephased to 2021/22	-0.45
LED Lighting – re-phased in line with programme delivery	-0.13
Service and financial approved schemes – fully committed for delivery in 2021/22	-0.17
A442 Challenge Fund – scheme design completed for delivery in 2021/22	-0.25
Active Travel Grant – scheme committed over a 2 year delivery period	-0.17

Safer Routes to Schools – accelerated programme delivery	+0.16
<u>Education & Skills</u> Other School Schemes – spend rephased in particular on secondary school expansion projects in line with contractor schedules	+0.81
<u>Housing, Employment & Infrastructure</u> Pride in Your High Street – fully committed to spend in 2021/22 Housing - rephasing of spend, dependent upon third party project delivery Housing – reprofile of empty property and affordable warmth funding	-0.13 -0.43 -0.15
<u>Communities, Customer & Commercial Services</u> ICT/eGov – spend re-profiled to 2020/21, all fully committed to future years Customer Services System Development – spend fully committed in future years Legacy Fund Schemes – spend committed to future years Climate Change – re-profiling of projects to delivery in 2021/22	-0.45 -0.16 -0.19 -0.13
<u>Finance & Human Resources</u> Capitalisation of Efficiency Schemes/Severance costs	-2.23

- 6.3 There are a number of new approvals, virements and slippage which are also detailed in Appendix 4 and require formal approval.
- 6.4 The funding for the capital programme in 2020/21 included £5.785m estimated income from capital receipts. The actual income received in year was lower at £2.55m – the difference was mainly due to some receipts being delayed.

7.0 NUPLACE

- 7.1 2020/21 was the sixth year of operation for Nuplace Ltd, the Council's wholly owned housing investment company. It was set up primarily to improve standards in the private rented sector and to offer homes for life to tenants operated by a responsible and responsive landlord. The principal activity of which is the procurement of the construction and management of private and affordable residential property for rent. The company was impacted by the COVID19 pandemic during 2022/21. Construction works at two development sites were suspended in March 2020 for a period of approximately 6 weeks, however the contractor remobilised and work is progressing, as a result sites are due to complete later than previously anticipated. Nuplace is working with its tenants to continue to offer support where appropriate.

Despite the challenges, the company completed the development of 37 units at Rowan View, Snedshill, taking the number of properties completed and available to let at 31 March 2021 to 366, of which 42 are available at affordable rents. In addition, 54 units at Maple Fields, Dothill are expected to reach completion within the first quarter of 2021/22, with 19 of the units being developed to accessible and adaptable standards and ring-fenced for people who are over 55 or have a proven physical disability on a rental basis. Development has commenced on 46 housing units at Southwater Way in Telford Town Centre, of which 11 will be affordable housing, bringing the Nuplace portfolio to 466 units

In accordance with the Company's accounting policy, the housing portfolio was revalued at the year end, which has resulted in an increase in value of 9% (£5.3m) over the eight completed sites.

- 7.2 Nuplace Ltd is a separate legal entity and as such will prepare its own Statement of Accounts and comply with company regulations. The accounts will be independently audited. As Nuplace is wholly owned by Telford & Wrekin Council, the Council is required to prepare Group Accounts as part of its Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 which will consolidate the Council and Nuplace's financial position.
- 7.3 Nuplace distributed a final dividend of £0.01 per ordinary share registered on 24th February 2021, totalling £156,000. The company reported an operating profit before taxation of £0.620m, £0.463m after tax. It should be noted that the Council has received income totalling £1.65m from Nuplace during 2020/21 net of additional interest and other costs which is a combination of interest paid relating to the loan agreement, dividend income and services Nuplace purchased from the Council. The Council will also benefit from additional Council Tax, and New Homes Bonus as Nuplace properties are completed. The financial benefits that arise from Nuplace are invested in providing front line services such as providing Adult Social Care and have helped to reduce the budget savings that would otherwise have had to been made as a result of Government grant cuts in recent years.

8.0 **CORPORATE INCOME MONITORING**

8.1 The Council's budget includes significant income streams which are regularly monitored. The three main areas are Council Tax, NNDR (business rates) and Sales Ledger. Out-turn information relating to these is provided below. The Council pursues outstanding debt vigorously, until all possible recovery avenues have been exhausted, but also prudently provides for bad debts in its accounts. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Council suspended usual recovery action, since recovery action recommended in August, the Council has adopted a proactive and supportive approach to debt recovery.

8.2 Collection rates for 2020/21 are:

2020/21 Outturn	
	Actual
Council Tax Collection	97.09%
NNDR Collection	96.34%
Sales Ledger Outstanding Debt	6.25%

8.3 **Council Tax (£92.4m)**

The percentage of the current year liability for council tax which the authority should have received during the year, as a percentage of annual collectable debit. The measure does not take account of debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. The final collection figure for all financial years exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2019/20 97.3%

Performance is cumulative during the year and expressed against the complete year's debit.

Year End Actual	Last year Actual
97.09%	97.3%

Council Tax collection has out-turned at 0.21% behind last year's performance. Collection performance appears to have out-turned in a better position than was expected which in part will be due to:

- The deferral / payment holidays we offered at the start of the Covid pandemic
- The Covid hardship payments of £150 to working age Council Tax Reduction recipients
- Increased levels of surplus cash flow for households during the lockdown

8.4 NNDR-Business Rates (£47m)

The % of business rates for 2020/21 that should have been collected during the year. This target, as for council tax, ignores our continuing collection of earlier years' liabilities.

The measure does not take into account the debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. As a general rule the final collection figure for any financial year exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2019/20 97.60%

Year End Actual	Last year Actual
96.34%	97.60%

NDR collection has out-turned at 1.26% behind last year's performance. Collection appears to have out-turned in a better position than was expected earlier in the year due to:

- The deferral / payment holidays we offered at the start of the Covid pandemic
- Almost £50m in Business Support Grants paid to businesses by the Council assisted with cash flow
- 100% retail discount relief for those in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors.

There were a high level of appeals during 2020/21, which the Valuation Agency Office process. The value of outstanding appeals at the end of the year was in excess of £102m; clearly not all of these will be successful and those that are successful will not result in a reduction in rateable value to zero. However, if this trend continues, 2021/22 NDR income will be impacted. The position will therefore be closely monitored during 2021/22.

8.5 Sales Ledger (£60.2m)

This includes general debt and Social Care debt. Debt below 2 months is classified as a normal credit period.

The target percent is set relating cumulative debt outstanding from all years to the current annual debit. The targets and performance of income collection for 2020/21 are as follows:

Age of debt	Annual Target %	March 2021	
		£m	%
Total	4.70	3,763	6.25%

Sales ledger is outside of target although can tend to fluctuate from one month to the next. Some collection difficulties have been experienced due to Covid pandemic.

8.6 It is difficult to predict the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on income collection going forward and the position will be monitored closely during 2021/22. As mentioned in Section 5.5, funds have been set aside in reserves to meet the estimated cost of Business Rates and Council Tax shortfalls and future funding uncertainties.

9.0 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

05/03/2020 – Council, Service & Financial Planning Strategy

18/06/2020 - Cabinet, 2019/20 Outturn Report

09/07/2020 – Cabinet, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

16/07/2020 – Full Council, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

05/11/2020 – Cabinet, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

26/11/2020 – Full Council, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

07/01/2021 – Cabinet, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

14/01/2021 – Full Council, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

18/02/2021 – Cabinet, 2020/21 Financial Monitoring Report

10.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2020/21 Budget Strategy and Financial Ledger reports

2021/22 Budget Strategy

2020/21 Financial Management Reports

Report Prepared by:

Ken Clarke, Director: Finance & H.R. (C.F.O.) – 01952 383100;

Pauline Harris, Corporate Finance Manager – 01952 383701

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Summary Outturn Position 2020 / 21

Service Area	Final Budget	Outturn	Variance	Capital Charges	Other
	£	£	£	£	£
Prosperity & Investment	(4,422,820)	(6,394,184)	(1,971,364)	(3,418,363)	1,446,999
Finance & Resources	14,524,364	8,717,409	(5,806,955)	0	(5,806,955)
Policy & Governance	713,594	1,278,609	565,015	68	564,947
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	36,923,250	38,696,966	1,773,715	74	1,773,641
Education & Skills	12,399,326	14,592,996	2,193,670	592,084	1,601,586
Adult Social Care	45,800,390	51,243,177	5,442,787	(13,125)	5,455,912
Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning	2,899,852	3,597,230	697,378	0	697,378
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	30,764,341	31,778,798	1,014,457	1,034,206	(19,749)
Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	3,134,257	9,454,946	6,320,689	(2)	6,320,691
Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	1,866,918	1,983,438	116,520	0	116,520
Corporate Communications	20,840	210,759	189,919	0	189,919
Corporate Items (incl. Covid Funding)	(15,649,433)	(26,035,564)	(10,386,132)	1,805,059	(12,191,190)
Total	128,974,880	129,124,579	149,699	0	149,699
Total Funding	(128,974,880)	(129,163,288)	(188,408)	0	(188,408)
Net Position	(0)	(38,709)	(38,709)	0	(38,709)

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description	Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
				Capital Charges	Other	
	£	£	£	£	£	
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support						
CIC Placements	19,176,231	19,268,771	92,541		92,541	The number of children and young people in residential placements has fallen over the past year, although the average cost of such placements has risen. A comparatively large number of young people in residential placements will turn 18 over the next 2 years and this should also have an impact upon reducing costs. The numbers and costs of children in external foster placements has also fallen as the strategy of investing in internal foster carers has begun to change the balance of placements towards internal carers.
Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support	317,895	457,089	139,194		139,194	This expenditure comprises Post 18 Staying Put and Leaving Care payments, both of which have been under pressure as a result of Covid-related statutory guidance, with all looked after children turning 18 being offered staying put arrangements to continue in their current placement for an extended period of time. Leaving care payments have also been increased to accommodate the vulnerability of this cohort of young people during the pandemic.
Health Funding	(400,000)	(76,239)	323,761		323,761	The projected income from Health is significantly lower than in 2019/20. This is largely due to one young person for whom significant contributions had been received no longer being eligible for such support and another individual with significant health needs being paid for directly by the CCG rather than via T&W. Nonetheless, the service continues to liaise with health colleagues regarding funding contributions for children in care with health issues, as the level of income is now significantly .
Staffing - salaries	12,082,319	11,814,744	(267,575)		(267,575)	The underspend reflects the impact of vacancies and staff appointments at below the top of scale.
Staffing - Agency Costs	0	556,440	556,440		556,440	In some cases vacancies need to be covered by agency appointments which generally cost around one-third more than an equivalent substantive LA appointment, resulting in additional pressure to the Safeguarding budget. In addition, in specific areas of the service agency staff are being placed to maintain levels of caseload appropriate to the experience of staff. However as these staff, such as newly qualified social workers, gain experience and with the progression framework now in place assists retention of staff, the need for additional agency staff should reduce. Despite the impact of CV19, expenditure on agency staff in 2020/21 was significantly less than incurred in 2019/20.
Children with Disabilities	1,319,142	1,035,099	(284,043)		(284,043)	Many young people in receipt of payments are clinically vulnerable and shielding from CV19. As a result, they did not participate in activities to the same degree as 2019/20. In addition, use of the respite facility at Acorn Way has been much reduced due to CV19.
Children in Care Adoption Allowances	391,050	240,231	(150,819)		(150,819)	When children are adopted through external agencies (rather than by carers recruited by the joint adoption service) a significant fee is payable. In 2019/20 an unusually high number of children were placed via agencies and so significant costs were incurred, leading to the 2020/21 budget being significantly increased. The number of external placements was lower in 2020/21.
Joint Adoption Service	609,847	569,265	(40,582)		(40,582)	The increases in the costs of the joint adoption service in recent years were not continued in 2020/21.
Under £50k	2,522,092	3,547,025	1,024,933	74	1,024,859	
Additional year end transfers to reserves		400,000	400,000		400,000	See Appendix 5
Independent Review - Staffing	721,130	707,137	(13,993)		(13,993)	
Independent Review - Under £50k	183,545	177,404	(6,141)		(6,141)	
Total Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	36,923,250	38,696,966	1,773,715	74	1,773,641	

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description	Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments	
				Capital Charges	Other		
	£	£	£	£	£		
Education & Skills							
Specialist Services	1,124,320	1,161,331	37,011	0	37,011	There was some loss of income from schools over the summer term due to the impact of CV19. However these additional costs have been offset by savings from vacancies, etc.	
Traded Advisory Service	102,875	123,336	20,461	0	20,461	There was some loss of income from schools over the summer term due to the impact of CV19. However most of these costs have been offset due to savings from vacancies, etc.	
School Transport	2,896,951	2,891,686	(5,265)	0	(5,265)	For much of the year there was uncertainty concerning the net financial impact from partial school closures, support for transport operators, the transport requirements arising from social distancing and the availability of additional government grant. However, over the year as a whole, the Council has been able to operate at close to its original budget for pre 16 transport	
Post 16 Transport	288,911	373,453	84,542	0	84,542	The general comments above for pre 16 transport also apply for post 16 transport, although for post 16 transport (which is for high needs pupils), the requirement to provide provision through the year combined with social distancing in transport arrangements has resulted in expenditure exceeding budget.	
Arthog	307,619	1,096,095	788,476	20,528	767,948	The impact of CV19 has made it impossible to undertake Arthog's usual activity and thus generate the associated income. Some of the loss of income has been able to be offset by savings on expenditure.	
Music Service	65,468	81,190	15,722	0	15,722	Significant income has been lost as a result of CV19 restrictions but these have been offset by salary and other savings as tutors are employed on a flexible basis.	
Skills Service Delivery	(75,162)	(6,755)	68,407	0	68,407	This represents a savings target that was not able to be achieved in-year. The service will continue to look for opportunities to achieve this saving, which was made more challenging in 2020/21 by the impact of CV19 on income generation.	
Job Box	(386,983)	(24,923)	362,060	0	362,060	The removal of opportunities to meet clients face to face due to CV19 reduced the income generated from 'Prospect Services (the National Careers Service). As CV19 restrictions ease, a more usual pattern of income generation is anticipated.	
Work Ready, Life Ready	757,709	673,252	(84,456)	0	(84,456)	As with other areas of activity, there was uncertainty during the year concerning the amount of income that would be received, particularly from government grants. However in this area income received was more similar to normal levels than had been anticipated earlier in the year.	
Transfers to Reserves	0	523,250	523,250	0	523,250	See Appendix 5	
Variations under £50,000	7,317,617	7,701,079	383,462	571,556	(188,094)		
Total Education & Skills	12,399,326	14,592,996	2,193,670	592,084	1,601,586		
Adult Social Care							
Purchasing - all types of Long term care	Residential/Residential EMI care, Nursing/Nursing EMI care, Homecare, Direct Payments, Shared Lives, Supported Accommodation and Supported Living, Daycare: Spot and Block contracts	48,002,111	54,905,453	6,903,342		6,903,342	As a result of CV-19, various actions to support providers and clients were implemented, these included an additional 10% payment to providers in the first quarter. The variation also reflects pressure on levels of care needed throughout the year as a result of the pandemic.
Purchasing	In House charging for Care	4,960,280	3,403,179	(1,557,101)		(1,557,101)	Reduced expenditure on internal care provision, mainly day care from Covid induced closure of services resulting in reduced income to the provider-see below

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments			
					£	£		£	Capital	Other
									Charges	£
My Options-Adults & Children's services	Trading accounts	523,664	1,568,728	1,045,064		1,045,064	Reduced income from charges mainly for Adult Social Care clients, and this is reflected as a reduced pressure on Long Term Care above.			
My Options-Adults & Children's services	Contributions to reserves	0	20,000	20,000		20,000	See Appendix 5			
Purchasing-short term reablement care(through BCF)	Bed based care and Homecare for up to 6 weeks	2,037,763	7,083,099	5,045,336		5,045,336	The variation includes additional pressures in relation to processes to support hospital discharge during the pandemic as well as increased activity in relation to non-covid related discharge and admissions avoidance. All Covid related spend was re-imbursed by the CCG which is reflected in increased income below.			
Purchasing-short term reablement care(through BCF)	Contributions to reserves	0	500,000	500,000		500,000	See Appendix 5			
Income	Client contributions	(6,549,245)	(7,101,613)	(552,368)		(552,368)	Overachievement of client contributions, offset by the impact of charges being suspended for a limited period due to Covid.			
	NHS Contributions -Joint Funding contributions	(1,407,067)	(2,267,814)	(860,747)		(860,747)	Continued positive outcomes from working closely with CCG identifying health contributions.			
	NHS Contributions -Transforming Care Partnership(TCP)	0	(280,004)	(280,004)		(280,004)	Pooled fund contribution to clients moved under TCP programme			
	NHS Contributions Winter Pressures/risk share BCF/Cov	0	(5,029,219)	(5,029,219)		(4,569,958)	Funding from the CCG associated with Covid contracts beds and BCF/Winter pressure			
	NHS contribution other Covid		0	0		(459,261)	CCG funding for additional spot contract costs re Covid			
Fleet Transport	Transport charges mainly My Options	949,030	718,379	(230,651)		(230,651)	Reduced charges based mainly on reduced usage of fleet transport but also reduced usage and cost of non-fleet transport due to Covid restricting access to services			
Operational Teams	Contributions to reserves	0	225,000	225,000		225,000	See Appendix 5			
	Operational Team vacancies	0	(752,077)	(752,077)		(752,077)	Savings in staffing expenditure resulting from staff turnover			
	Use of agency staff to cover vacancies	0	1,078,345	1,078,345		960,700	Expenditure on agency staff to cover vacancies above			
						117,645	Continuance of agency staff to deal with increased demand due to Covid			
Operational Teams	Variations under £50k	(2,716,146)	(2,828,279)	(112,133)	(13,125)	(99,008)				
Total Adult Social Care		45,800,390	51,243,177	5,442,787	(13,125)	5,455,912				
Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning										
Procurement	Procurement of PPE	0	552,911	552,911		552,911	Net cost of the purchase of PPE			
Supporting People		313,249	522,019	208,770		208,770	Impact of loss of saving as a result of COVID19, full year savings could not be achieved			
Test & Trace Grant	Infection Control	1,162,281	319,371	(842,910)		(842,910)	Covid Spend			
Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant (COMF)	Rapid Testing	4,149,489	167,233	(3,982,256)		(3,982,256)	Covid Spend			

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments			
					£	£		£	Capital	Other
									Charges	£
Covid Grants	Grant Income	(5,311,770)	(5,311,770)	0		0	Grant income			
Covid Grants	Contribution to reserves		4,825,166	4,825,166		4,825,166	Carryforward of Test & Trace and COMF grant to cover future spend			
Commissioning SLA's	Public Health Eligible Expenditure	323,910	178,304	(145,606)		(145,606)	Public Health spend			
Stop Smoking Service	Public Health Eligible Expenditure	277,589	91,522	(186,067)		(186,067)	Public Health Spend			
Sexual Health Services	Public Health Eligible Expenditure	1,351,795	1,257,309	(94,486)		(94,486)	Public Health Spend			
NHS Health Checks	Public Health Eligible Expenditure	74,680	10,430	(64,250)		(64,250)	Public Helth Spend			
Public Health Grant	Contribution to reserves		624,902	624,902		624,902	Public Health Grant transferred into reserves			
Variations under £50,000		558,629	359,833	(198,796)		(198,796)				
Total Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning		2,899,852	3,597,230	697,378	0	697,378				
Housing, Employment & Infrastructure										
<u>Housing</u>	Homelessness - Prevention, Bed and Breakfast gross costs	70,000	734,158	664,158		664,158	Homelessness gross cost for the provision of Prevention and Bed and Breakfast costs associated with 'Everyone In'.			
	Homelessness - Prevention, Bed and Breakfast Income	0	(616,213)	(616,213)		(616,213)	A combination of Housing benefit income, one off grant funding from MHCLG and one off partner funding to support the costs of Homelessness.			
Variations under £50,000		0	42,175	42,175		42,175	Covid pressure from additional resources to support the high volumes of Homelessness due to Covid.			
<u>Inward Investment & Business Support</u>	Employees	645,820	545,727	(100,093)		(100,093)	One off underspends arising from vacancy management during the review and subsequent re-structure across HE&I.			
	Contributions to Reserves	0	116,000	116,000		116,000	See Appendix 5			
Variations under £50,000		1,151,098	1,161,591	10,493		10,493	Various Covid income pressures.			
Total Housing, Employment & Infrastructure		1,866,918	1,983,438	116,520	0	116,520				
Policy & Governance										
Legal										
CSE Enquiry	Employees	0	64,280	64,280		64,280	Costs of the ongoing CSE Enquiry			
	Supplies & Services	230	2,373,299	2,373,069		2,373,069	Costs of the ongoing CSE Enquiry			
	Contingency contribution	0	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)		(1,000,000)	Approved use of contingency			
	Contribution from Reserves	0	(690,000)	(690,000)		(690,000)	Reserve funding set aside for the CSE Enquiry			

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
					Capital Charges	Other	
		£	£	£	£	£	
Electoral Registration	Supplies & Services	69,030	145,611	76,581		76,581	Costs relating to the discharge of the Electoral Registration Officer's duty to inform electors of options to cast their vote and, highlighting ability to vote by post in the context of a global pandemic. Additional costs including letter, postage and printing.
Insurance	Budgeted contributions to reserve	524,500	274,500	(250,000)		(250,000)	Lower than budgeted contribution to reserves.
	Contribution to Reserves	0	40,000	40,000		40,000	See Appendix 5
Variations under £50,000		119,834	70,920	(48,914)	68	(48,982)	Covid related income pressures
Total Policy & Governance		713,594	1,278,609	565,015	68	564,947	
Prosperity & Investment							
Regeneration & Investment	Net PIP and Service Charges	(6,690,890)	(5,996,838)	694,052		694,052	Impact of rent reductions and potential bad debt as a result of Covid implications and the ability to market properties during the pandemic.
	Net Car Parks Income and running costs	(297,970)	59,790	357,760		357,760	Carpark closures due to Covid leading to income shortfalls
R&I Management	Employees - Management account	782,410	678,841	(103,569)		(103,569)	One off underspends arising from vacancy management due to difficulties in recruiting during Covid.
	Employees	0	(91,200)	(91,200)		(91,200)	Homes England contribution towards staffing costs.
	Contribution to Reserves	0	147,000	147,000		147,000	See Appendix 5
BIT	Premises - linked to specific savings target	(194,000)	0	194,000		0	Delivery of saving delayed due to Covid.
	Property Costs	7,046,870	8,224,130	1,177,260	1,010,230	167,030	Pressure from ensuring Office premises are covid safe, offset by utility underspends.
BiT management	Employees	1,626,760	1,728,295	101,535		101,535	Use of agency staff required to support the delivery of DFG during Covid in addition to a savings target not deliverable during Covid.
	Supplies & Services	39,690	119,495	79,805		79,805	One off ICT licensing and support costs for specific BiT software.
	Income	(2,644,810)	(2,573,026)	71,784		71,784	Shortfall on income due to external capital schemes slipped into 21/22 due to Covid.
Development Management						0	
Development Management	Income	(1,070,330)	(1,313,329)	(242,999)		(242,999)	Over delivery of Planning fee income, net of covid pressure on Highways income.
Rights of Way	Contribution to Reserves	0	68,709	68,709		68,709	Contribution to support RoW capital projects.
Building Control	Employees	444,000	363,696	(80,304)		(80,304)	One off underspends arising from vacancy management in addition to the difficulty in recruiting to posts.
	Supplies & Services	93,590	29,283	(64,307)		(64,307)	License costs benefit in year due to short delay in a new system implementation.
Variations under £50,000		(3,558,140)	(7,839,028)	(4,280,888)	(4,428,593)	147,705	
Total Prosperity & Investment		(4,422,820)	(6,394,184)	(1,971,364)	(3,418,363)	1,446,999	

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
					Capital Charges	Other	
		£	£	£	£	£	
Communities, Customer & Commercial Services							
Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Income - Contributions from reserves (to be delivered from savings)	(84,280)	0	84,280		84,280	Staff from team have been and are still partially redeployed during Covid response which has impacted on progress on identifying alternative savings and new model now being developed to better support Council-wide income generation. Existing pressure linked to income targets, including £75k energy saving target. Original plan to install a private wire at the solar farm was not progressed after Ofgem decision that this would result in loss of Feed in Tariff income. Option of major expansion of District Heat Network in progress (BEIS funding secured for feasibility study) but not a short-term option. Shortfall of £43.5k against advertising income target, contract to support delivery of target delayed by Covid but put in place Sept 2020. £17.2k shortfall against roundabout sponsorship income
Co-Operative Council	Income	(75,000)	0	75,000		75,000	See comments above re. Private Wire
ICT Corporate Service Staffing	Income	(332,345)	(140,124)	192,221		192,221	Shortfall projected against project income
ICT Schools Supp&Services	Supplies & Services	731,945	793,708	61,763		61,763	Overspend arising from additional WAN costs and license costs in relation to schools. These costs have not been built into the current pricing model for schools but will be included in the 2021/22 pricing model.
ICT Corporate Supply&Services	Supplies & Services	1,415,160	1,478,682	63,522		63,522	Overspend arising from additional license costs, Capita & Brightcloud
Photocopying & Print Holding a/c	Income	(185,000)	(95,282)	89,718		89,718	Shortfall against income from MFD's due to lower printing volumes as a result of home working
ICT Schools Trading	Various	0	88,683	88,683		88,683	Cost of additional equipment purchased for schools for which no income has been received. COVID Variations include Laptops for Learners, which is a net cost after accounting for income to be received from schools and donations.
Housing Benefits Subsidy	Income	(47,841,730)	(47,530,891)	310,839		310,839	Impact of suspending the recovery of overpayments from ongoing benefit and a reduction in recovery of overpayments in the debtors system. Overall overpayments income is £289k lower than in 2019/20. The figures also include costs of £158k in relation to emergency bed & breakfast accommodation for homeless people as a result of COVID which is ineligible for subsidy.
Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team	Employees	653,480	749,005	95,525		95,525	Savings target of £160k which will not be fully delivered as a result of COVID19, offset by grants received in respect of Welfare Reform.
Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team	Supplies & Services	158,388	91,673	(66,715)		(66,715)	Underspends on postage and printing
Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team	Income	(832,035)	(1,110,848)	(278,813)		(278,813)	Additional government grants received in respect of Welfare Reform
Discretionary Awards and Welfare Benefits Team	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	292,496	292,496		292,496	Transfer of unspent Test & Trace grant to reserves to cover costs to be incurred in 2021/22
Births Deaths & Marriages	Various	10,040	142,588	132,548		132,548	Income shortfalls as a result of reduction in number of ceremonies offset by reduction in staffing costs.
Cemeteries	Income	(230,100)	(306,781)	(76,681)		(76,681)	Additional income received as a result of an increase in burials.
Oakengates Theatre	Various	188,350	587,212	398,862		398,862	Theatre closed all year, loss of income from Theatre offset by reductions in Supplies & Services spend. The Theatre is currently being used as the rapid testing centre.
Oakengates Theatre Bar	Various	(28,030)	67,362	95,392		95,392	Loss of income from Theatre Bar as a result of closure all year. As above.
Leisure	Income	(5,164,085)	(1,387,340)	3,776,745		3,776,745	Reflects the impact of the loss income from Leisure/Ice Rink closures in April – July 2020, November 2020 and January to March 2021. This has also prevented the planned unfreezing of direct debits for Aspirations members, and implementation of a small price increase in January 2021.

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
					Capital Charges	Other	
		£	£	£	£	£	
Education Catering	Income - net of food costs	(3,220,754)	(2,527,774)	692,980		692,980	Net impact on School catering after charging Free School Meals (FSM) & Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) less budgeted food costs to Schools. Includes costs associated with FSM deliveries 2 weeks end of Spring Term.
Commercial Catering	Income - net of food costs	(208,420)	9,505	217,925		217,925	Impact of Café Go and the Ice Rink Café being closed all year.
Cleaning - Primary School	Supplies & Services	167,383	11,229	(156,154)		(156,154)	Contingency for shortfalls against income targets, this has been released to assist the bottom line pressure
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable - CEV	Income	0	(167,953)	(167,953)		(167,953)	Grant income received to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) residents. This has been used to support existing staffing costs undertaking these tasks which have been incurred in other areas of the Council.
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable - CEV	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	133,839	133,839		133,839	Transfer of unspent CEV grant to reserves
Department Holding Account	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	180,000	180,000		180,000	See Appendix 5
Phoenix Leisure Centre	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	27,500	27,500		27,500	See Appendix 5
Destination Team	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	35,000	35,000		35,000	See Appendix 5
ICT - Corporate Supplies & Services	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	20,000	20,000		20,000	See Appendix 5
Councillors Pride Fund	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	29,556	29,556		29,556	See Appendix 5
Births Deaths & Marriages	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	33,744	33,744		33,744	See Appendix 5
Food & Other Essentials Grant	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	26,616	26,616		26,616	Transfer of unspent balance of Food & Other Essentials Grant to Reserves
Community Champions Grant	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	8,770	8,770		8,770	Transfer of unspent balance of Community Champions Grant to Reserves
Variations under £50,000		58,011,290	57,914,770	(96,520)	(2)	(96,518)	
Total Communities, Customer & Commercial Services		3,134,257	9,454,946	6,320,689	(2)	6,320,691	
Corporate Communications							
Corporate Communications	Supplies & Services	35,130	131,646	96,516		96,516	Postage and printing costs associated with providing letters to residents around COVID 19
Graphics Design Team	Income	(111,325)	(46)	111,279		111,279	Change to internal charging mechanism
Variations under £50,000		97,035	79,159	(17,876)		(17,876)	
Total Corporate Communications		20,840	210,759	189,919	0	189,919	
Finance & Human Resources							
Payroll	Income	(850,010)	(903,690)	(53,680)		(53,680)	Additional income received from contracts with Schools
Bank Charges	Supplies & Services	63,340	7,087	(56,253)		(56,253)	Underspend arising on bank charges due to reduced number of transactions in the year mainly as a result of sites being closed
Treasury		12,353,069	6,660,861	(5,692,208)		(5,692,208)	Benefit arising from current low interest rates and strategy to use temporary borrowing at lower than budgeted interest rates.

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000

Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
					Capital Charges	Other	
		£	£	£	£	£	
Team B - Revenues	Income	(924,640)	(787,107)	137,533		137,533	Loss of Court Fees income due to cases not being taken to Court during the first part of 2020/21 due to COVID
Employment Services	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	40,000	40,000		40,000	See Appendix 5
People Services	Supplies & Services - Contributions to reserves	0	60,000	60,000		60,000	See Appendix 5
Variations under £50,000		3,882,605	3,640,258	(242,347)		(242,347)	
Total Finance & Human Resources		14,524,364	8,717,409	(5,806,955)	0	(5,806,955)	
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services							
Public Realm	Employees	389,480	337,934	(51,546)		(51,546)	Vacant post for part of the year
Waste Collection (Veolia)	Various	5,356,530	5,449,030	92,500		92,500	Additional collection costs of as a result of additional vehicle and staffing costs from COVID19 together with a shortfall on bulk collection costs and shortfall on new build admin fees
Waste Transport, Treatment and Disposal Payments	Various	5,125,605	5,287,090	161,485		161,485	Increased tonnage levels for residual waste which has been offset by other contractual savings.
Drain Clearing	Third Party Payments	169,070	266,961	97,891		97,891	Increased contractor costs
Highways & Engineering	Various	(31,418)	(140,469)	(109,051)		(109,051)	Net over recovery on fees
Transport Policy	Employees	187,015	107,162	(79,853)		(79,853)	Underspend projected on staffing as a result of 2 vacant posts for part of the year.
NRSWA – New Roads & Streetworks Act	Various	(408,490)	(577,226)	(168,736)		(168,736)	Income received over and above income target for NRSWA
Traffic Management	Employees	328,730	259,388	(69,342)		(69,342)	Underspend on projected staffing as a result of 2 vacant posts
Highways & Transportation Strategic Policy	Employees	68,970	0	(68,970)		(68,970)	Vacant post all year
Concessionary Travel	Supplies & Services	1,839,410	1,697,706	(141,704)		(141,704)	Inflationary increase included within the budget is higher than the actual increase paid to Bus Operators resulting in an underspend.
Off Street Car Parking	Various	56,990	292,762	235,772		235,772	Loss of income from Ironbridge car parks due to suspension of parking charges during lockdown periods during the year. Also, additional premises costs including NNDR, surface water drainage and repairs & maintenance and shortfalls against income targets.
Environmental Maintenance	Capital Financing Costs	21,110	202,278	181,168	181,274	(106)	Revaluations
Depot	Capital Financing Costs	0	629,591	629,591		0	Revaluations
Off Street Car Parking	Capital Financing Costs	36,000	252,286	216,286	222,286	(6,000)	Revaluations
Trading Standards	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	40,000	40,000		40,000	See Appendix 5
Members Pride Fund	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	108,000	108,000		108,000	See Appendix 5
Asset Management Plan	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	63,955	63,955		63,955	See Appendix 5
Civil Parking Enforcement	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	87,842	87,842		87,842	See Appendix 5
Footway Lighting	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	150,718	150,718		150,718	Costs committed for street lighting scheme which commenced in 2020/21 and will be completed in 2021/22.
Surge Funding	Supplies & Services - Contribution to Reserves	0	37,039	37,039		37,039	Balance of COVID grants allocated for 2020/21
Variations under £50,000		17,625,339	17,226,751	(398,588)	1,054	(399,643)	
Total Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services		30,764,341	31,778,798	1,014,457	1,034,206	(19,749)	
Corporate Items							
Asset Rentals / Depreciation		(14,664,145)	(12,859,132)	1,805,013	1,805,059	(46)	
Pension		(200,000)	(279,440)	(79,440)		(79,440)	Discount negotiated for prepayment
Contributions to/from Reserves		(1,437,750)	(1,437,750)	0		0	Budgeted use of reserves in 2020/21
Year end Transfers			13,396,000	13,396,000		13,396,000	See Appendix 5

2020/21 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000							
Description		Budget	Outturn	Variation	Analysis of Variation		Comments
					Capital Charges	Other	
		£	£	£	£	£	
Other Council Wide Items		(3,578,268)	(8,632,977)	(5,054,710)		(5,054,710)	Includes the unused element of the budgeted contingency
Covid Funding		0	(20,330,012)	(20,330,012)		(20,330,012)	
Purchase Rebates	Income	(202,500)	(279,031)	(76,531)		(76,531)	WME Dividend received - higher than budget
Staff Miscellaneous	Employees	988,390	897,210	(91,180)		(91,180)	Shropshire County Pension Fund - Compensation payments lower than budgeted
Variations under £50,000		3,444,840	3,489,568	44,728		44,728	
Total Corporate Items		(15,649,433)	(26,035,564)	(10,386,132)	1,805,059	(12,191,190)	
Total		128,974,880	129,124,579	149,699	0	149,699	
Funding		(128,974,880)	(129,163,288)	(188,408)	0	(188,408)	
Total		(0)	(38,709)	(38,709)	0	(38,709)	

2020/21 Revenue Virements for Approval

Virements To:	£	Virements From:	£
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support			
CIC Placements	92,541	Staffing - salaries	- 267,575
Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support	139,194	Children with Disabilities	- 284,043
Health Funding	323,761	Children in Care Adoption Allowances	- 150,819
Staffing - Agency Costs	556,440	Joint Adoption Service	- 40,582
Transfer to Reserves	400,000		
Capital Charges	74		
	1,512,010		- 743,020
Education & Skills			
Post 16 Transport	84,542	Work Ready, Life Ready	- 84,456
Arthog	767,948		
Job Box	362,060		
Skills Service Delivery	68,407		
Transfers to Reserves	523,250		
Capital Charges	592,084		
	2,398,291		- 84,456
Adult Social Care			
Purchasing - all types of Long term care	6,903,342	Purchasing	- 1,557,101
My Options-Adults & Children's services	1,045,064	Client contributions	- 552,368
Purchasing-short term reablement care(through BCF)	5,045,336	NHS Contributions -Joint Funding contributions	- 860,747

Virements To:	£	Virements From:	£
Use of agency staff to cover vacancies	1078345	NHS Contributions -Transforming Care Partnership(TCP)	- 280,004
Operational Teams - transfer to reserves	225,000	NHS Contributions Winter Pressures/risk share BCF/Covid beds	- 4,569,958
ASC transfer to reserves	500,000	NHS contribution other Covid	- 459,261
Transfers to Reserves	20,000	Fleet Transport	- 230,651
		Operational Team vacancies	- 752,077
		Capital Charges	- 13,125
	14,817,087		- 9,275,292

Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning

Procurement of PPE	552,911	Commissioning SLA's	- 145,606
		Stop Smoking Service	- 186,067
Supporting People	208,770	Sexual Health Services	- 94,486
Public Health Grant	624,902	NHS Health Checks	- 64,250
Test & Trace Contribution to Reserves	842,910	Test & Trace Grant Spend	- 842,910
COMF Contribution to Reserves	3,982,256	COMF Spend	- 3,982,256
	6,211,749		- 5,315,575

Housing, Employment & Infrastructure

Homelessness - Prevention, Bed and Breakfast gross costs	664,158	Homelessness - Prevention, Bed and Breakfast Income	- 616,213
Transfer to Reserves	116,000	Inward Investment & Business Support - Employees	- 100,093
	780,158		- 716,306

Policy & Governance

CSE Enquiry - employees	64,280	CSE contribution from contingency	- 1,000,000
CSE Enquiry - supplies and services	2,373,069	CSE contribution from reserves	- 690,000

Virements To:	£	Virements From:	£
Electoral Registration - supplies and services	76,581	Insurance - contribution to reserves	- 250,000
Transfer to reserves	40,000		
Capital Charges	68		
	2,553,997		- 1,940,000

Prosperity & Investment

Regeneration & Investment - PIP and Service Charges	694,052	Regeneration & Investment - Management Account Employees	- 194,769
Regeneration & Investment - Carparks	357,760	Development Management - Income	- 242,999
BIT - premises related	194,000	Building Control - employees	- 80,304
BIT- property costs	167,030	Building Control - supplies and services	- 64,307
BIT - management employees	101,535	Capital Charges	- 3,418,363
BIT - supplies and services	79,805		
BIT - income	71,784		
Rights of Way - contribution to Reserves	68,709		
Transfer to Reserves	147,000		
	1,881,674		- 4,000,743

Communities, Customer & Commercial Services

CCC- Contribution from reserves	84,280	Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team - supplies and services	- 66,715
Cooperative Council - Income	75,000	Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team - income	- 278,813
ICT Corporate - Income	192,221	Cemeteries Income	- 76,681
ICT Schools - supplies and services	61,763	Cleaning - Primary Schools - Supplies and Services	- 156,154
ICT Corporate - supplies and services	63,522	Clinically Extremely Vulnerable grant income	- 167,953
Photocopying & Print Holding Account Income	89,718		

Virements To:	£	Virements From:	£
ICT Schools Trading	88,683		
Housing Benefit Subsidy - income	310,839		
Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Team - Employees	95,525		
Discretionary Awards and Welfare Benefits - contribution to re	292,496		
Births, Deaths and Marriages	132,548		
Oakengates Theatre	398,862		
Oakengates Theatre - Bar	95,392		
Leisure Income	3,776,745		
Education Catering Income	692,980		
Commercial Catering Income	217,925		
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable - contribution to reserves	133,839		
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable - spend	34,114		
Transfers to Reserves	325,800	Capital Charges	- 2
	7,162,252		- 746,318
Corporate Communications			
Corporate Communications - supplies and services	96,516		
Graphic Design Team - Income	111,279		
	207,795		0
Finance & HR			
Team B - Revenues - Income	137,533	Payroll - Income	- 53,680
Transfer to Reserves	100,000	Bank Charges - supplies and services	- 56,253
		Treasury	- 5,692,208

Virements To:	£	Virements From:	£
	237,533		- 5,802,141
Neighbourhood & Enforcement			
Waste Collection	92500.43	Public Realm - Employees	- 51,546
Waste Transport, Treatment and Disposal	161,485	Highways & Engineering	- 109,051
Drain Cleaning - third party payments	97,891	Transport Policy - Employees	- 79,853
Offstreet Parking	235,772	New Roads & Streetwork Act - income	- 168,736
		Traffic Management - employees	- 69,342
		Highways & Transportation Strategic Policy - employees	- 68,970
		Concessionary Travel - supplies and services	- 141,704
Transfers to Reserves	450,515		
Capital Charges	1,034,206		
	2,072,369		- 689,202
Corporate			
Year End Transfers	13,396,000	Pension Lump Sum	- 79,440
Capital Charges	1,805,058	Other Council Wide Items	- 5,054,710
		Purchase Rebates - income	- 76,531
		Staff Misc - Employees	- 91,180
		Grant Funding	- 20,330,012
		Corporate Funding	- 91,050
	15,201,058		- 25,722,922
	55,035,974		- 55,035,974

Capital Approvals - by Service Area

Virements

Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	20/21 £	21/22 £	22/23 £	23/24 £	Later Yrs £
ICT Investment Programme	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Prudential	(45,375.00)				
Towns Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	45,375.00				
Broadband	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Capital Receipts	(13,000.00)				
Towns Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipts	13,000.00				
Get Building Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	(1,132,692.86)	1,132,692.86			
Newport Innovation & Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	1,132,692.86	(1,132,692.86)			
Get Building Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential		201,514.27			
Get Building Fund	Prosperity & Investment	External		931,178.59			
Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential		(201,514.27)			
Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External		(931,178.59)			
Asset Management Plan-General Works & Surveys	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(2,903.43)				
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Prudential	2,903.43				
Total			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Slippage

Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	20/21 £	21/22 £	22/23 £	23/24 £	Later Yrs £
Children's & Adults ICT Systems review	Adult Social Care	Prudential	(58,688.04)	58,688.04			
Integrated Community Alarms	Adult Social Care	Prudential	(50,693.71)	50,693.71			
Social Care Capital Grant	Adult Social Care	Grant	(8,830.52)	8,830.52			
ICT Investment Programme	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(407,292.56)	407,292.56			
Customer Services System Development	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(160,270.74)	160,270.74			
Legacy Fund	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Revenue	(13,285.34)	13,285.34			
Legacy Fund	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Prudential	(140,681.19)	140,681.19			
Parks For People -Phase 2	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(77,997.76)	77,997.76			
Parks For People -Phase 2	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Grant	(6,242.22)	6,242.22			
Leisure Capital Schemes	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(8,461.38)	8,461.38			
3G Pitch	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(12,160.38)	12,160.38			
Climate Change	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Prudential	(134,450.00)	134,450.00			
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Grant	814,881.57	(814,881.57)			
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	External	(34,954.15)	34,954.15			
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Capital Receipts	14,200.40	(14,200.40)			
Housing & Technology support for People with Learning Disabilities	Health and Wellbeing	Grant	(66,368.70)	66,368.70			
Pride in Your High Street	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Revenue	(36,773.87)	36,773.87			
Pride in Your High Street	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Prudential	(85,285.28)	85,285.28			
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Prudential	(16,328.27)	16,328.27			
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Capital Receipts	(150,499.84)	150,499.84			
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	External	(427,388.54)	427,388.54			
Superfast Broadband Programme	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Capital Receipt	(94,338.98)	94,338.98			
Ironbridge Gorge Stability	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(1,372.93)	1,372.93			
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(49,114.85)	49,114.85			

Environmental Improvements	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(460,157.08)	460,157.08				
Newport Innovation & Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	(344,000.00)	344,000.00				
Newport Innovation & Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(201,514.27)	201,514.27				
Newport Innovation & Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	s106	(881,018.04)	881,018.04				
Service & Financial Approved Schemes	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(172,956.90)	172,956.90				
A442 Challenge Project	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	(252,634.08)	252,634.08				
Pothole Action Fund	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(284,429.12)	284,429.12				
LED Lighting	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(179,507.10)	179,507.10				
Highways / Footpaths	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(310,283.68)	310,283.68				
Highways & Bridges Capital Maintenance	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	(424,973.98)	424,973.98				
Telford Growth Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential	93,382.99	(93,382.99)				
Telford Growth Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	(93,382.99)	93,382.99				
Active Travel	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	(165,114.14)	165,114.14				
Legal Fees	Policy & Governance	Prudential	(60,192.97)	60,192.97				
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	320,934.12	(320,934.12)				
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipts	(430,285.43)	430,285.43				
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Revenue	(54,772.29)	54,772.29				
Accommodation	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(28,299.96)	28,299.96				
Asset Management Plan-General Works & Surveys	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	(34,629.00)	34,629.00				
Asset Management Plan-General Works & Surveys	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(98,479.60)	98,479.60				
St Georges Regeneration	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(7,311.56)	7,311.56				
Town Centre Compound	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	(72,264.55)	72,264.55				
Get Building Fund	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	(238,000.00)	238,000.00				
Orleton Park recreation	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	218,004.01	(218,004.01)				
Stronger Communities	Prosperity & Investment	Revenue	400,000.00	(400,000.00)				
Stronger Communities	Prosperity & Investment	External	23,071.01	(23,071.01)				
Site Preparation	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipts	77,433.16	(77,433.16)				
Housing Company - Housing	Prosperity & Investment	Prudential	1,295,917.89	(1,295,917.89)				
Land Deal Board Schemes	Prosperity & Investment	External	(189,436.00)	189,436.00				
HCA Land Deal	Prosperity & Investment	External	(677,005.45)	677,005.45				
HCA Liability Sites	Prosperity & Investment	External	(149,587.72)	149,587.72				
Efficiency Schemes capitalisation	Corporate Items	Capital Receipt	(2,222,221.18)	2,222,221.18				
Managing the funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Capital Receipts	(1,135,572.13)	1,135,572.13				
Managing the funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Prudential	1,135,572.13	(1,135,572.13)				
Total			(6,816,111.19)	6,816,111.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

New Allocations

Scheme	Service Area	Funding Source	20/21 £	21/22 £	22/23 £	23/24 £	Later Yrs £
Legacy Fund	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Revenue	(41,500.00)				
Telford Town Park	Communities, Customer and Commercial Services	Prudential	(597.49)				
Leisure Capital Schemes	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	Prudential	(1,315.21)				
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	External	39,248.00				
All Other School Schemes	Education & Skills	Grant	0.01				
Pride in Your High Street	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Revenue	(5,150.00)				

Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	S106	44,635.01					
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Grant		566,800.00				
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	Capital Receipts	48,463.16					
Housing	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure	External	22,931.24					
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant		946,000.00				
Pot Hole Action Fund	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant		1,916,000.00				
Highways & Bridges Capital Maintenance	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant		2,395,000.00				
Highways & Bridges Capital Maintenance	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Prudential		1,000,000.00				
Flooding Repair & Renew Grants	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	12,473.65					
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	34,000.00					
Service & Financial Approved Schemes	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	7,000.00					
LED Lighting	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	47,000.00					
Environmental Improvements	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	7,200.00					
Integrated Transport	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	115,077.36					
Highways & Bridges Capital Maintenance	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	1,867.66					
Safer Routes to Schools	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	205,280.39					
Safer Routes to Schools	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Revenue	(49,611.05)					
Newport Innovation & Enterprise Package	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	External	(150,000.00)					
Active Travel	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	Grant	(45,900.00)					
Decarbonisation Schemes	Prosperity & Investment	Grant		1,373,731.00				
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Revenue	264,094.94					
Property Investment Portfolio	Prosperity & Investment	Capital Receipts	161,687.56					
Asset Management Plan-General Works & Surveys	Prosperity & Investment	Grant	32,631.41					
Rights of Way	Prosperity & Investment	Revenue	76,708.99					
Managing the funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Capital Receipts	496,716.62					
Managing the funding of the Capital Programme	Corporate Items	Prudential	(496,716.62)					
Total			826,225.63	8,197,531.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TRANSFERS TO RESERVES - YEAR END 2020/21

No	Description	Amount Requested £
1	Covid recovery and regeneration	1,250,000
2	Community Action Teams - funding for 3 years 21/22 - 23/24	1,655,000
3	Parks Funding - Pride in Your Park	1,000,000
4	Cultural, Tourism and public event initiatives and activities	1,000,000
5	Budget Strategy Reserve - to support the medium term Service & Financial planning strategy	1,258,000
6	ICT equipment and Accommodation Strategy	750,000
7	Initiatives to tackle Youth Unemployment	510,000
8	Adult Social Care - additional investment needed for BCF pressures in 21/22	500,000
9	CSE Inquiry	400,000
10	Rights of Way - £100k p.a. for 3 years 21/22 - 23/24	300,000
11	Family Safeguarding Model - resources to support family safeguarding model to deliver ongoing savings.	250,000
12	Provision for costs associated with extinguishing Fire at Overdale	250,000
13	Integrated commissioning - to fund joint posts with partners to deliver ongoing savings	200,000
14	Leisure concessions - funding for 3 years; under 18 free swimming, junior pitch discounts; concessions for armed forces	180,000
15	Resources to support Communities and Engagement Team	156,000
16	ASC Development Reserve	150,000
17	Children's' Services Development Reserve	150,000
18	Marketing activities to rebuild income levels and corporate comms	137,000
19	Deprivation of Liberty Standards increased number of doctors assessments	75,000
20	Integrating Communities	50,000
21	Additional costs arising from holding covid secure elections May 2021	40,000
22	Corporate Travel Plan	50,000
23	Ward member newsletters	30,000
24	Local Nature Reserve Sites - £2k for each of 12 sites	24,000
25	Prospectus to support inward investment and external funding bid submissions	20,000
26	Organisational Development training costs	10,000
27	Footway Lighting - committed for street lighting scheme which commenced in 2020/21 and will be completed in 2021/22.	150,718
28	PIP - allowance for voids	147,000
29	Members Pride Budget -to support commitments in 2021/22.	108,000
30	Core Finance, HR, Revenues & Payroll systems - costs to cover future system upgrades and developments	100,000
31	Civil Parking Enforcement - funding received from Parish/Town Councils to support Civil Parking Enforcement Team. Committed in future years.	87,842

No	Description	Amount Requested £
32	G100 - Asset Management Plan - required to support commitments in 2021/22.	63,955
33	Public Protection - already committed to cover contractor costs to fulfil Pollution Prevention and Control Permits.	40,000
34	Funding to support housing strategy activities	72,000
35	Culture (Destination) - Funding for visitor survey, customer/ambassador skills training, platform for sharing training materials	35,000
36	Customer Service & Welfare (Registrars) - temporary additional funding.	33,744
37	Community Services - residual balance in Councillors Pride Fund which will be spent in 21/22.	29,556
38	Operations (Leisure) - temporary additional funding.	27,500
39	My Options - required to support the next steps in the changes to the service; linked to ALD transformation.	20,000
40	ICT - funding to cover WAN contract savings not able to be delivered in 2020/21 due to COVID delaying the installation of lines.	20,000
41	Arthog Wales - essential works committed - orders placed but delayed until 2021/22 due to Covid restrictions.	10,000
42	Arthog Wales - income from sale of minibuses, committed towards purchase of replacements.	3,250
Total		11,343,565

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET: 10 JUNE 2021

TREES AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT POLICY AND ASH DIE BACK MANAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR CAROLYN HEALY - CABINET MEMBER FOR VISITOR, ECONOMY, HISTORIC & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The borough of Telford and Wrekin has significantly more trees than many other towns and cities; it is estimated that the Council is responsible for around 15 million trees, which gives an average Ward canopy cover of approximately 22% and a borough wide cover of 15%. The UK Government has an aspiration to increase tree cover in England from 17% to 19% of land area by 2050; Telford & Wrekin Council is well placed to exceed this target.
- 1.2 The Council's 'Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason' ethos has been at the heart of the Council's tree management over the past three years. The Tree and Woodland Management policies were originally approved by Cabinet in 2016; as a result of emerging disease affecting the tree stock and the councils climate change commitments, these policies have now been refreshed as set out in (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The Council recently launched the 'Trees4TW' scheme' where 8,600 trees were provided to local residents, schools and landowners to plant in their garden and land as part of the borough's fight against climate change. The council will continue to support the planting of more trees to tackle climate change while mitigating, where possible, against the loss of trees through Ash die back, other disease or storm damage. Furthermore, there is opportunity to enhance the tree stock/canopy cover as part of the emerging local plan refresh.
- 1.4 In bringing these policy enhancements forward canopy cover across the borough remains above the UK average. Additional tree planting through climate change commitments and developer enhancements (including those bought forward through the local plan refresh) provide the backdrop to invest into increasing the Borough's canopy cover.

- 1.5 The Council currently spends £487,000 a year managing Council owned trees; this paper provides Cabinet with an update on the Tree and Woodland Management policy in managing the 15 million trees across the borough, while highlighting the challenges of Ash Dieback and proposed mitigation to manage this disease through a borough wide condition survey. In summary, amendments to the policy include:
- Changes to support the Council’s focus on responding to climate change;
 - Approach to managing Ash Dieback under ‘dangerous trees’ and;
 - ‘Liveability’ policies which cover the management and the maintenance of trees in residential areas

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Cabinet approves the amendments to the Tree and Woodland Management Policy as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Cabinet notes progress to date and endorses the approach to the management of trees and woodlands within the Council’s ownership.
- 2.3. Cabinet, delegates approval to the Director of Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration, to secure £150,000 for financial year 2021/22 only to undertake condition surveys and priority works in the management of Ash dieback.
- 2.4. Cabinet, delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment to seek funding opportunities for Ash Dieback since withdrawal of funding by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) following in March 2020.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	The proposals contribute to the following priorities: -All neighbourhoods are a great place to live -Our natural environment is protected and the Council has a leading role in addressing the Climate Emergency

	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The Policy provides guidelines and actions which will provide clear communication for residents and manage expectations. It will also ensure Duty of Care to safeguard the safety of residents.
TARGET COMPLETION /DELIVERY DATE	<p>Ash Dieback may well be an ongoing programme of work for a number of years; this will be understood in more detail following further, more targeted, investigation as set out in this report.</p> <p>The Tree and Woodland Management Policy has been in effect since 2016, minor amendments will be implemented with immediate effect.</p>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The Grounds and Cleansing contract with idverde includes the tree and woodland service which costs £486k per year. This is funded from Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services budgets. There are also two Tree & Woodland Officers within Neighbourhood Services. These resources fulfil the majority of the policies contained within the Tree & Woodland Management Policy.</p> <p>Managing Ash Dieback will incur significant additional costs over an estimated 15 years to tackle and manage the issue. Prior to the Covid pandemic there was the opportunity for Councils to apply for funding from DEFRA to support the management of Ash Dieback. However this funding was withdrawn following the first lockdown in 2020, just as the Council was preparing to submit an application for the DEFRA grant.</p> <p>As a starting point for 2021/22, we would need to invest £150k as outlined in this report to provide a new dedicated tree team and surveyor. There will also be additional costs of traffic management which will be kept to a minimum through co-ordinating the work with the work of the Highways Team. It is intended that these initial costs to understand the impacts will be met through approved Pride in Our Community programme budgets. It should be noted that at present no other funding beyond financial year 21/22 has been identified to cover the costs of Ash Dieback or any future costs that may be identified as a result of the development of the Management</p>

		<p>Plan. Any additional funding requirements will need to be considered when developing future service and financial planning strategies if not covered by Government.</p> <p>MLB & KC 08.03.21.</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>As a significant landowner, the Council owns and manages many trees and woodlands in the borough and has certain legal responsibilities to manage these.</p> <p>The Council also has a number of statutory powers and responsibilities in relation to trees which include the powers to protect trees and to respond to manage trees which present a danger. The Council as local planning authority also has responsibility to make and amend Tree preservation Orders (TPO's). The local planning authority powers relating to TPO's are not an executive function i.e. they are not exercised by Cabinet. However, Cabinet can encourage the exercise of these powers.</p> <p>The recommended policy document is the Council's response to its powers, duties and responsibilities in the context of our particular borough circumstances, including management of the Ash dieback problem.</p> <p>In addition, the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050 when compared with the 1990 baseline. At a local level, Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to include in their local plans, policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and this will be a consideration when the Council's Local Plan is reviewed.</p> <p>Legal advice will be provided to officers, as required, to ensure that these responsibilities, powers and proposals are exercised and implemented lawfully.</p> <p>IR – 14.02.20</p>

<p>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Ash Dieback will pose a significant risk to tree safety which the Council is required to manage under health and safety legislation.</p> <p>In some areas the removal of trees will change the look of the landscape so the programme will be aligned to the Council's communications plan to develop awareness of the ash die back problem which is UK wide.</p> <p>The Council will work with partners to manage Ash Dieback where possible.</p> <p>In terms of replanting there are funding streams available. However, there are opportunities to be gained from natural regeneration. Therefore, the strategy for this will be regeneration and review of sites for replanting taking a pragmatic approach to each site.</p> <p>A part of the management of trees within the borough, there is potential to produce timber and chippings to sell for use in biomass boilers. This will include an opportunity for an invest to save in a wood yard for Ash Dieback. The main gain from this would be the avoidance of additional disposal costs. Where it is possible, wood which is not diseased will be chipped and spread around at the felling site, but diseased wood will be chipped or brought as large pieces to the wood yard for onward sale for biomass.</p> <p>There is the opportunity to increase the amount of CO₂ the borough's trees and woodland absorb through actions defined within the Council's Climate Change Action Plan and Developer contributions through planning policy.</p>
<p>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Borough wide impact.</p> <p>There are 15 million council owned trees in the Borough which have an impact on every ward. Of these around 35% are ash trees. By far the greatest majority of the Council's trees and woodland are located within the Telford urban area and although the rural hinterland makes up two-thirds of the borough, the Council has very few rural trees to manage in comparison.</p>

		<p>A communications plan will be developed and delivered so that the issue can be understood by residents. This will include direct communication with residents where work is scheduled to be undertaken in close proximity to their living environment.</p>
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4. PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 4.1. Telford & Wrekin Council is currently estimated to own an estimated 15 million trees. Most of these trees were planted during a 10 year period in the 1960's/70's as part of the new town development.
- 4.2. The updated approach provides a methodology to deal with a range of tree and woodland management issues across council owned assets. The updated management policy will support the ambition to become an Urban Forest while supporting the Council's focus on responding to climate change to ensure the trees and woodland provide a positive impact to reduce our carbon footprint through carbon sequestration.
- 4.3. Together with greenspaces, trees are acknowledged by the community as indicators of a quality environment; they improve air quality and create places where people can exercise to support their physical and mental well-being. The Council recognise this and have worked hard with communities to protect green spaces, which are valued by local communities, from development under a Green Guarantee for sites within the Council's ownership. Such sites are managed for biodiversity, leisure and recreation. As part of our climate change commitments, the Council will continue to designate more sites which will, in-turn, protect even more trees.
- 4.4. The Pride in Our Community programme has enabled tree work that would not routinely be carried out, such as removal of overhanging branches, pollarding and felling of some trees in response to concerns raised by residents. This has allowed reactive maintenance to take place in an efficient managed way. Such work has been carried out by the dedicated overhang tree team secured through our Grounds and Cleansing contractor; this operation will continue where resources permit and through our partnership working with town and parish councils.
- 4.5. In managing the tree assets, the Council has a proactive and reactive approach to tree management as set out in the Tree and Woodland Policy. This policy sets out the Council's operational approach to tree and woodland management and also focuses on dangerous and diseased trees. As part of the grounds and cleansing contract there are three teams of tree operatives and a dedicated tree surveyor.

These dedicated teams respond to safety issues including risk of damage to property.

- 4.6. The dedicated tree surveyor undertakes detailed surveys throughout the year in order to understand the condition of our tree assets. This information is being utilised to develop maintenance programmes alongside responses to concerns raised by communities and the impacts of storm damage.
- 4.7. In accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, careful consideration is given to work that is undertaken through the bird nesting season. Where trees pose a risk to highway, property or pedestrian safety, work will take place if required and prior to doing so a nesting bird survey is undertaken with the results informing the approach taken thereafter.

Ash Dieback

- 4.8. Ash Dieback is a highly destructive fungus that is sweeping across the UK and is likely to result in a loss of all ash trees in the UK over the next 15-20 years. Like many areas across the country, ash dieback is a major threat in the Borough and it is estimated that around 35% (c5 million) of the tree population is ash, rising to around 42% in some areas.
- 4.9. The disease was first reported in the UK in 2012, and the first case in the borough of Telford and Wrekin was reported in 2013. As ash is naturally a brittle tree, there is a danger from falling branches as the tree begins to weaken from the disease. As a result, there is the possibility, subject to risk assessment and severity of disease, that there will be a need to fell many ash trees where they are in proximity to roads, paths, and property.
- 4.10. In 2018, Telford & Wrekin Council commissioned a tree survey to log the locations of all trees on Council-owned land. While still on-going, this survey captures details of their height and spread, overall health and proximity to buildings. A risk rating is then applied to establish the extent of the safety concerns which is largely based on the tree's proximity to the public highway, areas of public use or nearby buildings.
- 4.11. The Council's tree team have continually monitored the health of known trees in poor condition and have progressed with surveying and monitoring through our grounds and cleansing contractor since 2019. In managing the risk, work has been undertaken where there is highest concern or an opportunity to undertake the work in co-ordination with other partners such as highways.
- 4.12. Up until March 2020, funding was available from Defra for Councils to manage ash dieback. Unfortunately, this funding was withdrawn by Defra during the Covid lockdown without replacement funding being provided. In response, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment wrote to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to request urgent support for managing Ash Dieback. Unfortunately, the response

provided limited detail on available funding, other than the 'Treescaping Fund' that launched in April 2021 for which a bid is being prepared. This fund will help build back greener from the Covid-19 pandemic and will target landscapes that have been neglected in the past, ecologically damaged or affected by tree diseases such as ash dieback.

- 4.13. Further letters have also been sent to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, Local Government (MHCLG) and the Local Government Association (LGA), and APSE requesting investigation into financial support for managing Ash Dieback.
- 4.14. As a result, engagement with APSE is now underway and APSE recently published a survey to all councils on the 4th May 2021 to establish the impact of ash dieback on other councils and if they have, or they intend to, seek financial support from government.
- 4.15. However, in order to proactively manage Ash Dieback in the borough in the absence of government support, the Council will utilise £150,000 of its own funds (through Pride in our Community) to provide a new dedicated tree team and surveyor. This team will be funded for one year in order to survey ash trees and undertake priority safety works; data obtained from this will be used to support the development of a detailed Ash Dieback Management Programme that will set out plans for the future. At this stage, it is envisaged that this will outline:
- Natural regeneration of areas where ash trees are removed to re-establish canopy cover;
 - Replanting to re-establish canopy cover with the 'right tree in the right place';
 - Opportunity for partnership working through established groups including (but not limited to) Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Small Woods and Shropshire Wildlife Trust;
 - Engagement with private land owners for managing ash trees in proximity to Council owned land/assets;
 - Bulk timber disposal.
- 4.16. While the scale of the disease is pending the outcome of the survey work being carried out through 2021/22, it is recognised that there will be a need for additional funds to effectively manage this risk while providing mitigation for the potential loss of up to 5 million trees. The Council will continue to explore alternative funding streams available such as the Defra Treescaping Fund, developer contributions as part of environmental enhancements and as part of the local plan refresh.

5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Not applicable

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Cabinet 21 April 2016. The Tree and Woodland Framework

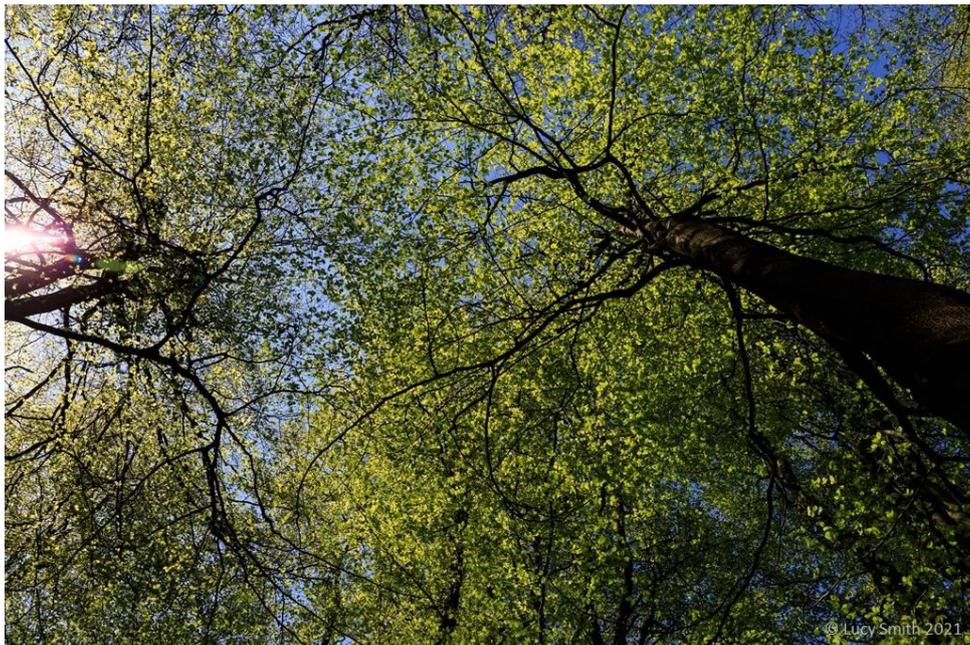
Report Prepared by Debbie Germany, Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Waste and Neighbourhood Services

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Appendix 1

Tree and Woodland Management Policy 2021

Telford & Wrekin Council



Telford and Wrekin Council
Housing, Communities & Customer Services
Neighbourhood and Enforcement
Addenbrooke House
Ironmasters Way
Telford & Wrekin Council
TF3 4NT

Protect
Care and Invest
to create a
better borough



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Executive Summary

Telford & Wrekin Borough has significantly more trees than many other towns and cities. It is estimated that the Council is responsible for around 15 million trees. Most of these trees and whips were planted in the New Town during a 10 year period in the 1960/70s and many close to dwellings.

The Trees and Woodland Policy has been updated to reflect changes made since the first document 2016 – 2021 and which was approved in March 2016. This updated policy document (**Appendix 1**) takes account of four significant changes that have occurred since the 2016 document.

1. The rapid spread of Ash Dieback and the high number of trees requiring management intervention.
2. The Council's resolution to declare a climate emergency and to become carbon neutral by 2030.
3. The Council's new 4 year plan, "Care, Protect and Invest" launched in 2019.

The policy supports on-going work to manage Ash Dieback.

1 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The document sets out the Council's policies for operational tree and woodland management in line with health and safety, national legislation, national Best Practice and relevant Council strategies and objectives, including the direct link to planning policy and climate change.
- 1.2 The policy will foster and support the policy of the "Right Tree in the Right Place for the Right Reason" <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/urban-tree-manual> to ensure the tree population thrives and provides sustainable, functional climate benefits.
- 1.3 The overarching aims of this policy document is:
 - To set guidelines to ensure trees and woodland are maintained as an attractive, safe, healthy, community resource for future generations.
 - To set out policy and standards to deliver a consistent approach, enabling the Council and key stakeholders to care and manage the trees and woodland resource in a timely and efficient way.
 - To ensure that clear information is available for residents.
 - To detail how the Council will manage the trees and woodland stock across its land holdings to address the challenges of climate change and pests and diseases.

2 Trees and Woodlands in the Borough

- 2.1 One of the key landscape design principles when Telford as designated a New Town was to create a "Forest City". This saw the planting of millions of trees, and created woodland and tree cover in excess of 384 hectares.
- 2.2 Much of the massed structural planting undertaken by Telford Development Corporation (TDC) has reached up to 50 years of age. This is the phase at which a tree grows most rapidly and consequently the borough's trees and plantations are becoming ever more obvious to the public.
- 2.3 It was envisaged that many of the trees in this initial planting, "the nursery crop", would be removed during the first 20 to 30 years to allow the slower growing native tree mix to flourish and develop a lasting woodland across the borough; many of the nursery crop trees have not been removed as originally intended. This continues to hinder the slower growing native trees.
- 2.4 Climate change is significantly affecting the tree stock across the borough. The lack of long cold winters has enabled pests and diseases to become prevalent e.g. Oak Processionary Moth, Chalara (Ash Dieback) and

Phytophthora, brought in from abroad, to become established and are attacking a wide range of the UK's native tree stock, which have no natural defence. The end result of such pests and diseases leads to the weakening of the tree, and in a significant proportion, they die.

2.5 Of particular concern, is the rapid spread of Ash Dieback, the incurable disease was introduced via contaminated nursery stock about 7 years ago. The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback and creates the danger of falling branches as the trees weaken as they begin to die. For this reason many ash trees will need to be removed to ensure public safety.

2.6 By far the greatest majority of the Council's trees and woodland are located within the Telford urban area and although the rural hinterland makes up two-thirds of the borough, the Council has very few rural trees to manage in comparison.

2.7 It is widely recognised that trees and woodland make a wide-ranging and positive contribution to the quality of modern life. The diverse benefits that the woodlands can bring to the borough include:

- Environmental benefits including carbon sequestration, enhancing biodiversity, reducing risk of flood by slowing down storm water run-off, providing summer shade and winter shelter and improving air quality.
- Health benefits by providing green spaces to exercise and meet socially for recreational activities, improving mental health, and for use as outdoor classrooms for create a positive environment for child development.
- Economic benefit by providing a timber resource to sell on to local markets eg for renewable energy, and it is also recognised that a tree rich environment can add value to house prices.

3 Summary of policies

3.1 Trees growing within the borough are vital and important, yet at the same time can be seen as highly emotive, both in terms of perceived nuisance and of the benefit they provide. As many of the trees and woodlands in the area are under the ownership of the Council, it is essential for the Council to work towards creating places where tree species can thrive and deliver their full range of benefits without causing harmful nuisance. The Council needs to ensure the quality of the tree and woodland assets to enjoy the benefits now, but also help to pass on these benefits to future generations; recognising the importance of maintaining safe green spaces and woodlands alongside enhancing biodiversity and combating climate change. To achieve this, the policies presented in Appendix 1 are set out in the following themes:

- a) Maintenance, management and duty of care. This includes how the Council will:
- Manage trees to safeguard health and safety;
 - Manage dangerous trees which have been damaged in times of high winds and storms which are high risk to people, property and highways;
 - Manage trees which have been effected by increasing pests and diseases. Of particular concern is the rapid spread of Ash Dieback which causes leaf loss and crown dieback and creates danger of falling branches as the trees weaken as they begin to die. The end result being that many ash trees will need to be removed to ensure public safety;
 - Manage our woodlands sustainably including thinning and replanting
- b) Urban liveability. This includes how the Council will:
- Respond to customer enquiries in relation to Council owned trees. The policies take into account liveability factor associated with “right tree, right place and right reason”
- c) Addressing Climate Change. This will include how the Council will:
- Ensure new planting schemes are designed in sustainable manner
 - Recover felled timber for biomass fuel and other sustainable uses
 - Monitor felling and planting of trees to ensure continuous improvement in carbon sequestration.
 - Communicating the positive benefits of trees to the environment
- d) Tree protection. This will include how the Council will
- Ensure the “right tree, right place, right reason” principle is adopted to ensure there are no future maintenance and management issues
 - Ensure the council maintains appropriate canopy cover
 - Protect ‘valued’ trees.

4 Local Policy & Legislation context

4.1 It is important to be aware of the strategic context in which care and management of Trees and Woodlands operates. Maintenance of the Council’s trees and woodland contributes to, or is affected by a number of relevant strategies, polices and good practice documents.

4.2 These links are being made and this will inform the development of both Council strategy and operational policy.

Appendix 1 Tree Management Policies – A Full list of policies is available on the councils website; this Appendix only includes those to be amended or are new.

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Tree maintenance, Management & Duty of Care (TM)	
Amended	The Council will not prune, fell or cut the roots of a Council owned tree to prevent roots entering a drain that is already broken or damaged.
Amended	The Council will undertake measures to make safe an unacceptable trip hazard in street, road or highway caused by the growth of a Council owned tree in conjunction with highway resurfacing works.
Amended to cover all dangerous trees at any time include Ash dieback	Policy: To follow the Council’s tree safety policy and guidance in order to ensure the elimination of high risk trees, which includes trees damaged in times of high winds and storms, and diseased trees (e.g. from Ash Dieback and other pests) to ensure the Borough’s trees and woodlands are well managed and safe.
Urban Liveability (TL)	
Amended	Policy: Tree pruning, height reduction or removal of trees in direct response to any natural or seasonal phenomena will not be undertaken. Consideration will be given to the “liveability” associated with the tree to ensure “right tree, right place, right reason”.
Amended	The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to improve natural light in a property or to mitigate the growth of algae or garden plants due to the affects of shading. Unless the garden is small and in constant shade where we will consider appropriate actions that could be taken.
Amended to improved efficiency to solar panels	Tree pruning, height reduction or removal of trees directly attributable to efficiency of solar panels may be undertaken. Where a tree(s) can be pruned in the best interests of the tree (excluding height reductions) and this would result in the improvement of the efficiency of solar panels, the council may consider pruning requests and prioritise in line with the outstanding reactive and routine work.

Amended	Policy: Removal of any apparently healthy tree, or tree branches which are subject to a complaint, will be investigated and assessed for suitability and retained where appropriate. Work may be undertaken to improve the “liveability” associated with the tree.
Amended To include liveability aspect	Pruning or felling will not normally be undertaken on a tree in Council ownership to alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches unless this forms part of woodland or shelter belt thinning operations or forms part of a recognised council ‘Urban Tree Programme’ and is appropriate for the health and form of the tree. Where the tree has been assessed as posing a “liveability” issue the council may prune back overhanging branches where this is possible or affordable.
Amended	If a tree in Council ownership is touching your property (dwelling house, garage etc) we will take action to remove the nuisance by pruning the overhanging branches to a minimum distance of 2.5 metres where possible.
Addressing Climate Change	
New	The Council will implement a 50:50 mix of native and non-native trees as part of replanting schemes to ensure the sustainability of trees through climate change and pests and disease.
New	The Council will recover felled timber and woodchip products where possible and sell for biomass fuels and other sustainable uses.
New	The Council will measure canopy cover in its ownership to enable carbon impact to be monitored and will also maintain records of trees felled and trees planted.
New	The Council will communicate the benefits of trees and their role in reducing air pollution, flooding, biodiversity and CO2 production.

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 10 JUNE 2021

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - TELFORD & WREKIN HOMES

REPORT OF DIRECTOR: PROSPERITY AND INVESTMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBERS – CLLR DAVID WRIGHT & CLLR LEE CARTER

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPSALS

1.1 In November 2020, an update to the Business Case for the Housing Investment Programme was presented to and approved by Cabinet. This Business Case established a pipeline of schemes delivering up to 320 new and refurbished homes. This pipeline included the acquisition of circa 100 existing homes for a mixture of private and affordable rent as opposed to the delivery of homes on a build to rent basis. This element of the programme represents a capital investment of £13m.

1.2 This paper provides an update on progress in relation to this element of the programme and in particular:

- Identifies the first tranche of properties for investment.
- Presents branding for consideration and approval
- Sets out proposals for increasing the portfolio of Telford & Wrekin Homes.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet note progress made to date in relation to Telford & Wrekin Homes and the acquisition of the first tranche of properties.

2.2 That Cabinet approve the branding proposals for Telford & Wrekin Homes.

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	The impact of the proposals will be borough wide and has the potential to benefit a range of people.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Phased acquisition and refurbishment from March 2021.	
FINANCIAL / VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	Refer to Section 5.0. DR 21/04/21
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Refer to Section 6.0. EH 26.5.21

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Refer to Section 7.0
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.0 INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Housing Investment Programme (HIP) is a strategic programme, delivering a portfolio of properties for private and affordable rent, and in so doing seeking to;
- Respond to the borough’s housing need for quality rental homes and places to live and supporting the Council’s ambitious growth agenda and major investment into the Borough;
 - Raise the standard of rental provision in the Borough, both in terms of the quality of the rental homes and the quality of the landlord service;
 - Generate a long term income stream for the Council that can contribute towards the protection of frontline services otherwise affected by budgetary constraints;
 - Stimulate local economic growth through job creation during both the construction and operational phases of the Programme; and
 - Regenerate brownfield and stalled sites.

Nuplace Ltd is the Council’s chosen delivery vehicle for the programme.

- 4.2 In November 2020, Full Council approved an update to the Business Case for the Housing Investment Programme representing a further £48m investment, with the potential to deliver an additional 320 homes.
- 4.3 A significant part of this investment, representing a total of £13m, was ring-fenced for the acquisition and refurbishment of circa 100 houses across the Borough including a range of property types and sizes, with this acquisition to take place in a phased way.

Acquired properties are to be refurbished and rented out by Nuplace under a new sub brand – Telford & Wrekin Homes, with this element intended to provide a further product within the private rented sector in Telford & Wrekin, which continues to raise the bar in terms of property and tenancy management but which compliments the new build housing already provided by NuPlace.

- 4.4 The objectives of this element of the programme are:
1. To invest in and protect our existing housing stock through high quality renovations which help to address issues of poor housing in communities, ensuring that we are making the best use of our existing homes, in accordance with a key objective of the Council’s recently adopted Housing Strategy,
 2. To further spread the good work of the Housing Investment Programme and Nuplace in raising standards in the private rented sector across the Borough through demonstrating high quality property and tenancy management on a broader geographic scale, and
 3. To provide a “home for life” for our tenants with a focus on providing housing options for a range of priority client groups, including for example care leavers and people providing low level care, key workers, young people and veterans. This links directly to the Council’s Housing Strategy which seeks to ensure that all people have access to safe and appropriate housing which enables them to live independently and maximise their potential. As such this housing will be linked to allocation policies for these key groups and be available on private rent and affordable basis as appropriate.

4.5 Objective 1: Investing in Our Existing Housing Stock

The borough's homes are a major asset. While new housing is important, 80% of the homes that we will have in 20 years' time are here now. In accordance with the objectives of our Housing Strategy, we need to make sure that **the homes we already have** are as good as the best of the new ones that are being built today. The Telford & Wrekin Homes initiative provides a real opportunity to directly contribute towards this objective through the acquisition and refurbishment of existing housing stock from a range of sources. Over the past few months, the Housing Investment Programme team have been reviewing a range of possible options for property acquisition.

We are aware that some of our larger Housing Association partners have a programme of disposals across the Borough with properties being sold to support investment into new affordable housing stock. The ability of Telford & Wrekin Homes to acquire some of these properties direct from HA partners presents a unique opportunity to effectively embed the high quality private rental standards that we have established on our new build sites into areas throughout the Borough. In this way we can help to ensure this housing stock is retained, maintained and put to good use to help the community and meet housing need.

To kick-start this programme we have been in dialogue with Wrekin Housing Group (WHG), the Borough's largest HA. From their current list of forthcoming disposals we have identified 12, two, three and four bed properties at locations throughout the Borough that we are in the process of acquiring.



Refurbishment works to the properties, including the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms, redecoration and landscaping alongside condition related works to address asbestos, electrics, damp and structural damage have been identified which will ensure improved living standards, health and safety compliance and reduced repairs and maintenance liability in the medium to long term. In addition works are intended to be in keeping with Nuplace's high property standards. These homes should not feel like the "poor relation" to our new build offer. It also makes practical and financial sense to undertake works whilst the property is vacant and before letting begins in earnest.

Refurbishment works have been tendered through the Council's Dynamic Purchasing System, which is accessed by a range of Borough based contractors, providing

opportunity to maximise local spend and economic benefit. Tenders were received on 1 May, and a preferred contractor has been identified.

We are in continuous dialogue with WHG and have established a streamlined process of referral and review of all properties identified for disposal to enable this opportunity to be capitalised on to ensure a pipeline of properties is maintained. Alongside this, we have registered our interest in acquisition with other HA partners although initial indications are that these may be limited due to the lower numbers of stock they hold within the Borough and the fact that their properties are likely to be newer compared to those in WHG's ownership.

Objective 2: To Further Spread the Good Work of Nuplace

When Nuplace was established in 2015, a key driver was to improve private property and tenancy management standards across the Borough, providing a benchmark for exemplary performance. With consistently strong lettings for our new build properties and voids currently running at 1.69%, well below our business case assumption of 4.39%, we have been confident that we are delivering positive outcomes in this regard.

This was further reinforced by a tenant survey conducted in December 2020 which sought views of our tenants in relation to their Nuplace experience. The survey was completed by 33% of our tenants with key findings summarised below:

- 97% of respondents would recommend Nuplace to friends and family
- 97% of tenants would consider moving to another Nuplace home
- 65% of people consider their Nuplace home to be their forever home



These results are extremely positive and demonstrate the well-respected presence that Nuplace have established in the local private rental market. In this context, the introduction of Telford & Wrekin Homes provides an important diversification, allowing the positive work of Nuplace to be spread borough wide, through the acquisition and refurbishment of properties across a wider geographic area.

In order to build on the successful brand of Nuplace, a sub brand has been developed which seeks to embody the following key messages:

- Confidence in the quality of the property and tenancy management services, despite these properties not being new build and being available at lower rents.
- Security provided by Nuplace's wholly owned status meaning that like a Nuplace home, a Telford & Wrekin Home is a home for life – this was identified by 8% of tenants as being the key reason for renting with Nuplace.
- Clarity that these properties are still owned and managed by Nuplace, the Council's wholly owned housing company, but are not "Council Housing". It will be important to communicate this effectively as there still remains some confusion over the status and tenure of housing on our new build sites which is likely to be compounded when acquiring ex Housing Association stock.
- Confirmation that tenants are part of the wider Nuplace community. Our tenants value this with development specific Facebook pages, tenant competitions etc being a popular part of being a Nuplace tenant.

The new Telford & Wrekin Homes logo is shown below. The logo uses the same type face and colours as Nuplace to provide brand continuity and build on the strong brand

identity that Nuplace has developed over the last 5 years, but with its own distinct name. A communications strategy has been developed which will provide the framework for the launch of the Telford & Wrekin Homes brand following Cabinet approval, as well as the marketing of the first tranche of refurbished properties.

It is proposed that Telford & Wrekin Homes are advertised, let and managed in the same way as any other Nuplace property. A new dedicated page will be set up on the Nuplace website to coincide with the launch of the first tranche of properties to provide an overview of Telford & Wrekin Homes as well as the properties available for rent.



Objective 3: To Provide Housing Options for a Range of Priority Client Groups

The provision of housing for priority groups links directly to Objective 3 of the Council's recently adopted Housing Strategy which seeks to ensure that all people have access to safe and appropriate housing which enables them to live independently and maximise their potential.

Whilst a proportion of properties acquired by Telford & Wrekin Homes will be let at private rent levels in order to support the overall viability of the programme, it is proposed that a proportion are let at Local Housing Allowance Rates. Of the tenants who responded to our resident's survey, 47.4% said they choose to rent because they can't afford a mortgage or were saving towards a deposit. We know that the ability to save a deposit is a significant barrier to being able to get onto the property ladder, particularly for younger people and first time buyers. By enabling more people to access good quality but lower cost private rental accommodation we can support people's move towards becoming owner occupiers.



It is also our intent that a proportion of our properties are linked to an allocation policy for priority groups including key workers, veterans, young people, carers and care leavers. It is this group of people who may not be eligible for housing benefit and whose circumstances are such that they slip through the net in relation to the allocation policies of our Housing Association partners but are nonetheless in housing need. Telford & Wrekin Homes is well placed to support these people, allowing Council side property acquisition and ownership to be focussed on those higher need groups, where the Council's recently acquired Registered Provider status and ability to access exempt rents will mean that accommodation and care can be provided simultaneously.

5.0 FINANCE

The acquisition and refurbishment of second hand housing stock will require an amendment to the viability parameters which Nuplace apply to the construction of new homes held within the existing portfolio, and consideration of the optimal approach for acquisition. The amended hurdle rates will ensure that the second hand housing stock will provide additionality to the existing portfolio whilst taking into account the nature of the stock. The hurdle rates will be approved in consultation with the Housing Investment Programme Board which includes the Council's s151 Officer, as part of the satisfaction of a series of conditions for the Business Case to acquire and refurbish these properties.

The Council invests capital into the Company through either debt or equity finance and demands a commercial return on both. The rate of return on debt finance is determined taking into account the external market conditions which exist at the time the loan is entered into, and the level of collateralisation in the Company. Full Council, 26th November 2020, approved the extension to the Nuplace Loan Facilities Agreement the rate and terms to be delegated for approval to the Council's s151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Council Finance and Governance.

A viability model has been prepared for the first tranche of properties based on the following assumptions:

- Acquisition values have been based on valuations undertaken by Tempertons, jointly appointed by TWC and WHG. Stamp duty is applicable to the full amount by virtue of the purchases being treated as a linked transaction.
- Acquisition and refurbishment by TWC in the first instance, and then disposal to Nuplace
- Refurbishment works have been scoped to address a range of health, safety, and repair and maintenance issues and support the appreciation of the asset in the medium to long term.
- A contingency of 7% on the refurbishment costs. This is considered appropriate given the condition of some of the properties and the potential for further works to be required once works commence on site.
- Rent to be no greater than Local Housing Allowance rates for a proportion of the properties. Unlike with new build homes where the affordable element is determined through the planning process, we have looked to ensure here that a proportion of the refurbished properties will be affordable to householders claiming LHA.

Based on assumed purchase price and refurbishment costs for the first 12 properties, the project represents a capital investment of up to £1.8m.

6.0 LEGAL

- 6.1 The Council has the power to acquire, refurbish and dispose of properties as detailed in this report and legal advice has been and continues to be provided regarding these aspects.
- 6.2 In addition the Council must adhere to Subsidy Control requirements (previously referred to as State Aid) when considering providing any financial support (whether directly or indirectly). Again, legal advice is being provided to ensure that all elements of the project are compliant with the requirements of the new Subsidy Control regime.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The establishment of Telford & Wrekin Homes represents a departure from the build to rent model which has been tested over the last 5 years. Whilst much of the learning from this 5 year period can be applied to this new element of the programme, there are a number of business case assumptions which will need to be tested in order to ensure viability and enable the business case to be refined. A phased approach to implementation will help manage and mitigate this risk.

8.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Housing Investment Programme Cabinet Report	25 April 2013
Housing & Property Investment Programme Cabinet Report	24 July 2014
Housing Investment Programme Full Council Report	11 September 2014
Housing Investment Cabinet Report	8 January 2015
HIP, Southwater Development Options Cabinet Report	19 March 2015
Housing Investment Programme Update	25 March 2016
Housing Investment Programme Update	29 June 2017
Housing Investment Programme	12 July 2018
Housing Investment Programme	2 January 2020
Local Growth Fund - Stronger Communities	18 June 2020
Housing Investment Programme	5 November 2020

Report prepared by Kate Callis, Service Delivery Manager - Housing Investment Programme

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET 10 June 2021

TITLE Telford & Wrekin Council Digital Strategy

REPORT OF Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services

LEAD CABINET MEMBER Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety & Customer Services

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a new Digital Strategy (see Appendix A) from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

1.2. Our customers, who are made up of residents and stakeholders in the Borough, are at the heart of everything we do, and we want to make sure that we maximise the potential of digital technology in how we communicate and interact with our residents, customers and partner organisations through providing the right digital environment within communities.

1.3. Our vision is to create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all and encouraging more take-up of information and services online.

1.4. The strategy is set into 4 themes:-

- Digital Customers
- Digital Communities
- Digital Place
- Digital Workforce

1.5. Within the above themes are the main aims of the strategy:-

- Delivering a consistent and reliable customer experience across all sections of the organisation, no matter which contact or communication channel our customers choose to use.
- Ensuring the option to do business online exists for every service or enquiry type in the Council and those digital services should be easy to use and reliable so they become the customers preferred method for communicating with us.
- Creating and supporting a digitally skilled and confident community, who are able to access services and opportunities online, including jobs of the future.
- Giving people the right digital access so they can do more for themselves, encouraging inclusion, promoting accessibility and helping people live independently for longer.

- Supporting growth of the digital/tech sector and increasing digital skills and the use of technology to improve productivity and growth in businesses, borough wide.
- Realising the potential of ‘Gigabit Telford’ to drive investment and productivity, strengthen and bring resilience to the skill base and raise aspiration and achievement across all our communities.
- Progressing plans for a ‘digital street’ which would see a range of smart infrastructure solutions deployed to reduce costs and proactively manage assets for a better customer experience.
- Providing the council, partners, and customers with secure, reliable, resilient ICT infrastructure whilst reducing our own carbon footprint.
- Enabling our workforce to have the skills and abilities to deliver our priorities and to have the opportunity to further develop and providing our employees with technology, equipment and services that enable us to work efficiently and to collaborate with partners.

1.6. The strategy highlights the initial actions planned, to deliver our aims through to the end of 2023/24. This will be reviewed annually, with progress being reported to members.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Cabinet approves the new Digital Strategy attached at Appendix A.

2.2 That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services (and any officer authorised in writing by this Director) in consultation with the Cabinet member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations.

3. **SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	The proposed Digital Strategy supports all Council priorities, and in particular a community- focussed, innovative Council providing efficient, effective and quality services. Key outcome: To create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all and encouraging more take-up of information and services online.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	All of the borough’s customers and stakeholders will be impacted by the Digital Strategy
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The Digital Strategy will be launched in June 2021 with corresponding actions being completed by the end of 2023/24.	

FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The Digital Strategy is supported by capital investment totalling £1.991million between 2020/21 and 2023//24 (MB 29.04.21)
LEGAL ISSUES	No	There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report. However, legal advice will be provided as required in relation to the implementation of initiatives and projects arising out of the strategy. (IR 29.04.21)
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	The risks and opportunities relating to the Digital Strategy are outlined within this report.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A - Telford & Wrekin Council Digital Strategy

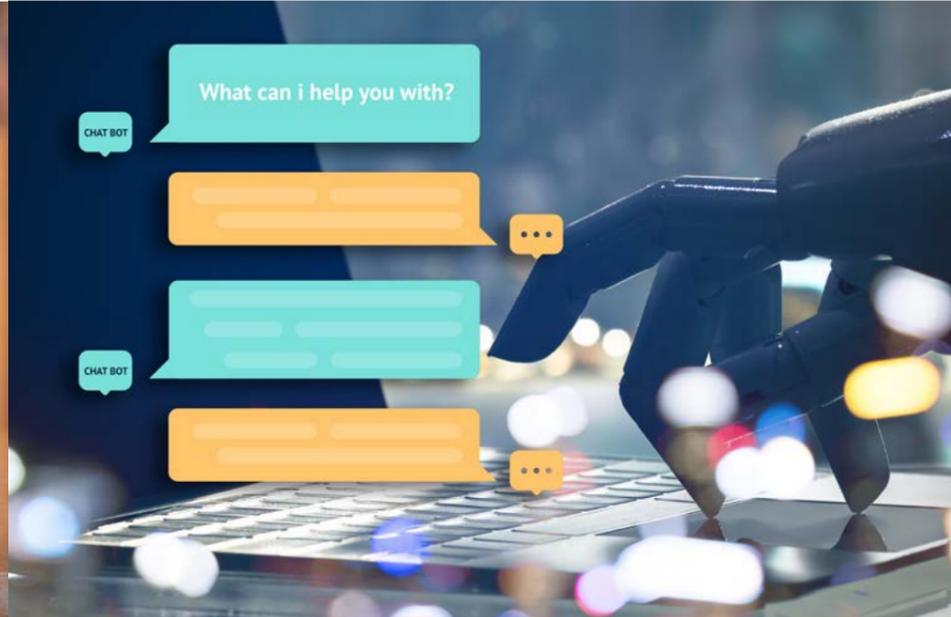
**Report prepared by Kirsty King, Commercial Services Manager: ICT
Telephone: 01952 383480**

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Telford & Wrekin Council Digital Strategy



Improving our Customer Experience
Our journey to excellence by 2023



Foreword

We have made real progress this last year due to COVID-19 to further transform the digital delivery of council services, to help bridge the digital divide within our community and through supporting our local businesses and High Streets.

Our customers, who are made up of residents and stakeholders in the Borough, are at the heart of everything we do, and we want to make sure that we maximise the potential of digital technology in how we communicate and engage with our residents, customers and partner organisations through providing the right digital environment within communities.

We have learnt that the way our customers want to do business with us has changed and there is a preference to do more online, providing convenience and a faster way to interact.

We also recognise that digital can be challenging and we will make sure that those who don't have the access or the skills are not left behind.

We will continue to adopt and invest in modern cloud technology (e.g. computer system resources available over the internet) solutions to improve efficiency and productivity. This will support the council to secure data and reduce its own carbon footprint, providing our employees with technology equipment and services that enable us to work efficiently and to collaborate with partners.

Post-COVID recovery could see long term changes to working patterns, increasing the reliance on digital connectivity.

We have signed the [Local Digital Declaration](#) along with hundreds of other local authorities; a shared ambition for the future of local public services.

The Digital Strategy is supported by capital investment totalling £2 million between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

This Digital Strategy describes what we want to achieve to realise this vision and how we will deliver it through 4 digital themes.

Digital Customers. Digital Communities. Digital Place. Digital Workforce.



Cllr Richard Overton Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services



1. Digital Customers

In January 2021 we launched our Customer Strategy “Improving our Customer Experience – our Journey to excellence by 2025”. This strategy sets out our clear, ambitious vision for delivering a consistent and reliable customer experience across all sections of the organisation, no matter which contact or communication channel our customers choose to use.

We will ensure the option to do business online exists for every service or enquiry type in the Council and those digital services should be easy to use and reliable so they become the customer’s preferred method for communicating with us.

By making it easy and convenient for those customers who can engage with the council digitally to do so, it allows us to focus more resource on providing better services to support those customers who need to contact us using traditional contact methods.

2. Digital Communities

We will maximise the potential of digital technology in how we communicate and engage with our customers and partner organisations through providing the right digital environment within communities. Giving people the right digital access and skills so they can do more for themselves by encouraging and supporting digital inclusion, promoting accessibility and supporting new skills, thereby helping people live independently for longer.

3. Digital Place

We will support our high streets, SMEs and major employers across sectors to embrace new technology, diversify products and to connect the supply chain and grow. A key part of our business recovery and reform strategy is to ensure Telford can compete for new investment, which is essential to connecting communities to opportunity. We will work to enable the infrastructure in the borough to realise the potential of ‘Gigabit Telford’ to drive investment and growth, strengthen and bring

resilience to the skill base and raise aspiration and achievement across all our communities.

4. Digital Workforce

In recent years, modern technology has accelerated rapid change throughout all areas of our lives and now more than ever, it is critical that Telford & Wrekin Council’s workforce is provided with reliable, modern, flexible and secure ICT services.

Our workforce will have the skills and abilities to deliver our priorities and will have the opportunity to further develop. We will continue to adopt and invest in modern cloud technology solutions to improve efficiency and productivity throughout the council and to support the council to secure data and reduce its own carbon footprint.



My Telford



100+ services online

60,776 MyTelford accounts created



5,406,223 website visits



76,435 Online forms/enquires



Telford online



162,962 Online transactions

77,036 Online payments



Funded & delivered...

Laptops for Learning = 726 devices

Kindle Kindness = 262 devices



Chat Bot on telford.gov.uk 24/7 365 days a year

825

Apply for free school meals per month

STRONG FOLLOWING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

33k Facebook 23k Twitter

Online Report



104,758 residents signed up to GovDelivery



98.5% superfast broadband coverage

Online Booking

REGULAR E-NEWS UPDATES TO

80k subscribers (36-39% open rate)



Web Chat available on the home page

LIBRARIES

Books, ebooks & magazines Scan Station

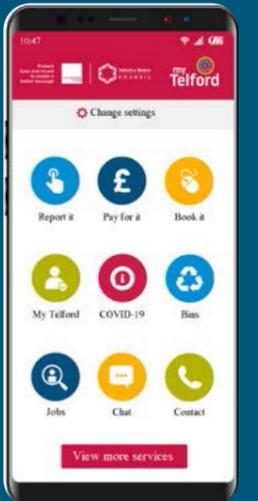
Apply Online



My Telford App

Top Online Services

- TLC App
- Leisure App
- Schools App



Vision

Our vision is to create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all, encouraging more take-up of information and services online.

The key aims of the Digital Strategy:

- Delivering a consistent and reliable customer experience across all sections of the organisation, no matter which contact or communication channel our customers choose to use.
- Ensuring the option to do business online exists for every service or enquiry type in the council and those digital services should be easy to use and reliable so they become the customer's preferred method for communicating with us.
- Creating and supporting a digitally skilled and confident community, who are able to access services and opportunities online, including jobs of the future.
- Giving people the right digital access so they can do more for themselves, encouraging inclusion, promoting accessibility and helping people live independently for longer.
- Supporting growth of the digital/tech sector and increasing digital skills and the use of technology to improve productivity and growth in businesses borough wide.
- Realising the potential of 'Gigabit Telford' to drive investment and productivity, strengthen and bring resilience to the skill base and raise aspiration and achievement across all our communities.
- Progressing plans for a 'digital street' which would see a range of smart infrastructure solutions deployed to reduce costs and proactively manage assets for a better customer experience.
- Providing the council, partners and customers with secure, reliable, resilient ICT infrastructure whilst reducing our own carbon footprint.
- Enabling our workforce to have the skills and abilities to deliver our priorities and to have the opportunity to further develop. Providing our employees with technology, equipment and services that enable us to work efficiently and to collaborate with partners.



Create a better borough through digital innovation

1 Digital Customers



1. Digital Customers

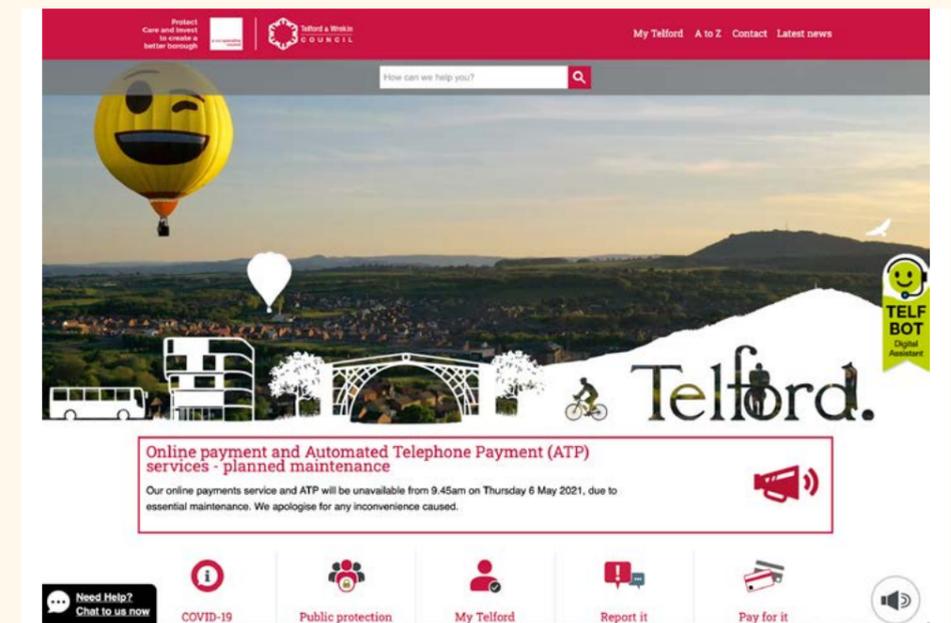
Our Journey so far:

- We currently provide over 100 services online and have recently launched our live Web Chat service on our home page.
- 35.7% of adult residents in Telford have a My Telford online account with over 130,000 transactions undertaken online in 2020/21 and over 5.4 million visits to our website per year.
- 95% reduction in customers needing a face to face appointment with a Customer Service Advisor in our main FirstPoint at Southwater One.
- Completed a comprehensive mapping of all of our online digital services available across the council to promote their usage to customers.
We have identified gaps in provision where new online services need to be developed.
- Developing an online My Telford app for mobile devices with improved location mapping and full user account access to the most used online services (currently in customer testing).
- Automated call handling for many common enquiry types through use of detailed pre-recorded message options and intelligent voice recognition in corporate contact centre.
- Supporting customers to gain access to the skills and technology that will help them use online services, through making use of new technologies such as web-chat and artificial intelligence to respond to online enquiries as quickly and easily as possible.

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- Involved customers in the design of services so that we better understand their needs and preferences to inform improvements and to shape services in the future. This is being done by undertaking a programme of customer insight reviews and development of methods for capturing quick customer satisfaction feedback at the point of interaction.
- We have started to involve customers in the design of services from the very start, so that we better understand their needs and preferences. Before we launch new services we will ask a sample of our residents to assist us with user testing and ensure we build in time to consider and act on the feedback we receive in the final design. This has been recently tried with the new Chatbot service which led to really useful customer feedback that was built into the service before it went live.
- We have also used our Mystery Customer programme to engage with our residents on their experience of accessing our services digitally, such as asking them to undertake reviews of website content and ease of use.
- We will ensure that the customers we engage with when developing and testing our digital services represent a wide demographic of users, including users with specific accessibility requirements and varying degrees of IT literacy.
- We recognise the importance of digital channels for communicating with its residents. Through a recent restructure, a new digital multidisciplinary communications team has been formed, demonstrating the council's commitment to investing and developing the digital offer.
- The new digital communications team brings together film making, animation, design, digital marketing and social media skills. The council wants to ensure that we take a digital first approach to our communications.

- We have grown our social media channels over the past 10 years and now have a combined following of just under 70k across all channels. The organisation also has an email database of just under 80k, covering a range of services that deliver regular, direct updates to a growing audience. The team actively encourages residents and visitors to converse and engage with the council's online channels.
- We have introduced a weekly e-newsletter from the council leader, delivered targeted communication campaigns to increase take-up of services and redesigned the council's website homepage. Completed reviews of the majority of web-pages in line with new accessibility requirements and created a new web-page with accessibility information for all our facilities.
- We have invited, listened to and acted on feedback from customers through a number of various channels, these include:
 - Completed 36 customer insight reviews, a mix of in-depth reviews, snapshot reviews (first impression assessments of visiting key council buildings) and web-page reviews.
 - Engaged with a range of local groups about our services, including the Young People's Forum, the Interfaith council, Carers Forum and Making it Real Board.
 - Asked customers to act as user testers to help develop new services, for example the new chat-bot and the virtual house.



What will we do next?

2021

- Encourage the Chatbot service to be our customer choice of initial point of contact for online enquires and increase the number of questions the Chatbot can answer.
- Review channel options for each customer type to consider whether some should be moved to online only access. e.g. Business, Landlords, or Town and Parish Councils.
- Make further improvements to our apps, such as My Telford and creating a new Leisure app to complement the existing online Leisure services.
- Provide a single consistent brand for all online services from any device and platform.

Improve the communication regarding completed jobs, by providing customers with a photograph of the completed works (e.g. a filled pothole) or details of the work carried out and enable customers to reopen a completed job if they are not satisfied with the work completed.



- The new digital communications team are keen to continue to explore new channels in order to communicate with new audiences and those who might not traditionally engage with the council, for example, working with the Youth Council and Young People's Forum to develop a Tik Tok profile.
- Ongoing investment into both training for communications staff and for equipment to ensure that we are best placed to create the best digital content we possibly can.
- We will ensure that the customers we engage with when developing and testing our digital services represent a wide demographic of users, including users with specific accessibility requirements and varying degrees of IT literacy.
- Review our corporate website and standalone websites to explore consolidation opportunities and ensure they meet accessibility standards, this will also include a review of the platform of the corporate web site to offer a more personal user experience.



2022

- Continue the development of our online customer portal to enable it to become the single gateway into all council online services. We will work with partners and communities to provide the technology and the skills to help people move to using online services.
- Further utilise social media to share information with our customers and embed it as a channel for receiving communication and feedback from our customers. Taking a digital first approach with the focus on converting more residents to opt into digital communications so that they can receive key information online instead of through the post.
- Develop a single sign-on process for customers so that more third-party online portals can be accessed through the My Telford account.
- Continue to explore and deploy the opportunities of AI in the provision of council services. Embrace voice assistant technology through services such as Alexa and Google Assist with integration into MyTelford services.



2023

- Review of the website platform in order to provide a more personalised customer experience and review the content management platform.
- Establish a studio location in the town centre as a base for filming and equipment, for use by the in-house digital communication team.
- Develop a Telford & Wrekin TV channel which will promote local content and engage with borough residents for broadcast across our emerging channels.



2. Digital Communities



2. Digital Communities

Our Journey so far:

- **Live Well Telford** <https://livewell.telford.gov.uk> one stop website has been developed in partnership with professionals and residents, including an online directory for information and advice as well as community based services with a focus on health, social care and wellbeing. This enables and supports people in the local community to live independently and make life choices that will improve their health and wellbeing. The service has over 4,500 hits each month accessing over 1,600 services listed.
- Created the **Independent Living Centre (ILC) Technology showcase** 'try before you buy' partnership with the voluntary sector, health and social care partners and people with lived experience of care and support needs, working together to help residents to help themselves to live more independently using technology enabled care.
- Introduced regular Virtual and Physical Hubs offering 'drop in' and appointment services for information and advice to aid independent living supported by video consultation and digital platforms. Also, regular Virtual Multi-Disciplinary Teams meetings with partners and professionals.
- Implementation of an app to aid Mental Health professionals and booking Doctors (in partnership with CCG)
- Assistive Technology considered first when support planning with people with care and support needs.
- **My Options Connect Service** - programme of virtual weekly support activities for people with Learning Disabilities. Over 40 people are engaged in activities and over 10 sessions are being delivered every week. In addition My Options Stepping into Work

delivers a virtual programme of work based support to adults with learning disabilities over 6 sessions a week. We have provided iPads to enable people to engage in activities including religious ceremonies, therapeutic, physical activity, music, arts and culture. The iPads also enabled people to keep in contact with their families whilst visits to residential care homes were suspended.

- **Kindle Kindness provided 260 devices, giving residents in care homes and hospital patients tablet devices to enable contact with loved ones to reduce loneliness and isolation**, funded through a £20,000 fundraising campaign.
- Our digital library service includes eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and provides 24/7 content for these devices and for all residents with a library card.
- Use of a **digital app as part of the LGA Social Care Digital Innovation Pilot to aid independent living and to prepare for work, for people with Learning Disabilities**, working with AutoNoMe and CC2i.
- Online referral into Family Connect safeguarding for professional partners to streamline and speed up the referral process
- Care Providers portal introduced, linking to our adult social care case and financial management system to reconcile and pay for care delivered.
- ActiVage, this project across Shropshire and Telford, is led by Samsung to support health and care needs of vulnerable people using everyday technology e.g. smart watches, phones and sensors.
- **Laptops for Learning provided through Members, Parish Councils and public donations bought 726 laptops to enable children to take part in online learning at home.**

- Learn Telford, providing a weekly Job Junction from Wellington Library for advice around employability skills, careers or learning advice, enabling use of the IT equipment in a supported environment.
- Continuing to work towards our ambition of encouraging schools and colleges more on their current use of digital and developing their own digital policies, recognising that the development of digital skills needs to start an early age and schools and colleges play a fundamental part.

What will we do next?

2021

- Implementation of eBrokerage to broker services online to meet individual's support plan requirements.
- Introduction of a **Virtual House, which is ground breaking for Adult Social Care. The development of a virtual tour of a house with tech enabled care options which are accessible online via Live Well Telford and via the Independent Living Centre.** <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=qHk7tNdXbcB>.
- **Integrated Health and Social Care Record, partnership working to support the transformation of service delivery across the Local Health Economy through innovative use of digital technology, providing health and social care professionals with access to the information they need to deliver safe and efficient 'seamless' care**, whilst empowering people to control elements of their care.
- Pilot new options for customers without devices or access to the Internet through virtual hubs and devices on prescription.

- Learn Telford to support those who require access to IT support and advice on CV construction, interview skills, and labour market information as we enter into COVID Recovery.
- We will support the digitally excluded who are unable to take advantage of new online services by upgrading our free to access PC's within our Libraries and providing one to one support across the communities.

2022

- eBrokerage future user interface to be enhanced to allow people (both self-funders and those with a direct payment) to broker their own services.
- Further online self-service development across adult social care enabling access to information and advice, self-assessments, care accounts and financial assessments.
- Implementation of social care portals linked to case management system via Live Well Telford.
- Working with home care providers to implement Technology Enabled Care monitoring to complement physical visits.

3 Digital Place

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3. Digital Place

Our Journey so far:

- We have launched Tech Telford, this is a support initiative for business that will showcase innovative digital and advanced tech businesses in the borough and will promote knowledge sharing between businesses and across sectors. Currently we are engaged with 150 local businesses. This is a joint initiative between Telford and Wrekin Council and University of Wolverhampton and is supported by Digital Champions in the private sector. This initiative will not only create high value jobs for the benefit of our local communities, it will also reinforce Telford's position as one of the Midlands' most successful new investment destinations. The recent pandemic has not only shown the challenges that businesses face, but also the opportunities that exist for innovation through the application of new tech and digital platforms.
- Continued with our Pride In Our High Street programme of digital transformation in the local centres, ensuring small high street businesses are equipped with the resources and have the training needed to be effective in the digital trading arena.
- We provide free Wi-Fi for public use in many council and community buildings.

- Telford has a history of innovation in digital technology and was one of the first towns in England to have a cable network. Building on this strength, and recent investment of £5.6m for Superfast Telford, the town has 98.5% superfast broadband coverage and take up from this project has now reached 76% on the cabinets upgraded and 49% for direct fibre to the home. We are currently undertaking a review and will be tendering to increase fibre connectivity throughout the Borough with relevant contracts and opportunities.
- The Business Support Service went online and virtual from March 2020:
 - processed 9,339 telephone/email enquiries from businesses, 2,338 of these occurring during the COVID peak last year.
 - 1,114 additional enquiries were processed and received through the website form with 398 Small Business Recovery Grant applications for business across the Marches through the ERDF Growth Hub Project managed by TWC all processed online.
 - 39 virtual events have been delivered, generating a total of 652 Eventbrite registrations which resulted in 447 participants attending, an average of 12 businesses per event.
 - Coronavirus business hub microsite was launched <https://coronavirus.enterprise-telford.co.uk> to ensure the very latest information was available to businesses 24/7.

- Currently reviewing the Local Plan which will include a refresh of the 'communications' policies that cover fibre. The plan currently requires developers to install the infrastructure including ducting to ensure that homes can be connected on occupation either via Open Reach or Virgin depending on the proximity of either network.
- Our all age employment support programme, Job Box moved its services to an online offer with a refreshed website, new graphics to be attractive to all ages and an online form that gets the information advisors need from customers and enables customers to book their own online Teams appointment www.telfordjobbox.co.uk. This new approach has seen 1,452 residents engage with the programme, 73% of those engaged were unemployed and required job search support and CV help. At the height of the pandemic Job Box website saw an increase in unique users by 46%. A range of videos are now available on the Job Box website offering self-help on topics such as writing a CV and preparing for interview.
- Job Box supported National Apprenticeship Week with a large and varied online campaign. A week of events was put on including Facebook live every morning sharing what else was available that day and videos and discussion sessions. Links were made to a range of online activities by other partners. 27 organisations supported the event and created a total of 47 different resources for the week, 28 timetabled sessions delivered throughout the week with online posts reaching 24,938.
- National Careers week was also celebrated with a week of Facebook live sessions, joined by 18 guests from local businesses, colleges and organisations to share details about the different careers opportunities available. This included digital content that can be watched at times that suit when people need it. These videos have reached over 9,500 people.



What will we do next?

2021

- Continue to promote Tech Telford to encourage engagement across the borough with those businesses in the digital/tech sector and those that will benefit from becoming more digital or using tech to improve productivity and growth. Key to this are the funded projects and programmes in particular SOLVD (SOLVD - University of Wolverhampton (wlv.ac.uk) which supports SMEs in the adoption of digital technologies to improve productivity and profit, but also central government initiatives recently announced like [Made Smarter](#) UK Digital Manufacturing advice & innovation.
- Create a Supply Chain app to raise the profile of the Council as a leader in supporting digital solutions for business creating a strong platform from which to build business connections and partnerships.
- Continue to deliver **Pride In Our High Street ensuring small high street businesses are equipped with the resources and have the training needed to be effective in the digital trading arena.** Following the launch of My TLC app we will support high street businesses to maximise the benefit by providing training and online support including webinars and 1-2-1 follow up if needed. Potential for a new digital hardware grant as part of further PIOHS funding for investment in tech to support business productivity e.g. Point Of Sale Systems.
- The Business Support Service will continue to run a virtual service and when the timing is right integrate with the physical hub. The delivery model will be developed to incorporate more online engagement in those areas that it worked well with including events and 1-2-1 support but also acknowledging the benefit of having an online information portal for businesses to access 24/7.

This will complement the Marches Business Support website that is due to be launched having been refreshed and updated to reflect the needs of businesses now.

- Job Box will continue to use digital media for our services as a blended approach in the future based on what we have learnt during COVID continuing to build up self-help digital videos and content.
- Refreshed My TLC app, this app will support high street regeneration by encouraging the 'loyal to local' message. Backed up by a dedicated website, businesses can upload and manage their own content and users can select their favourite shopping area to benefit from targeted offers.

2022

- Through our Towns Fund £25m proposal submission we are seeking to bring forward a Destination Growth Fund, this will be a grant open to applications from strategic businesses in the arts, culture and leisure sectors in Telford. It is a capital fund that will pay for investment in buildings or digital assets that will help these businesses expand and diversify through the use of digital technology.
- The Local Plan will strengthen the policies to ensure that developers are working with a network provider as part of the development so connection to a premises can be achieved as soon as possible after first occupation.

2023

- Develop the Skills and Enterprise Hub which will be a key feature of the Station Quarter development in Telford Town Centre. Led

by a partnership between Telford College and University of Wolverhampton it will focus on Maths and Digital skills and will be designed around the needs of employer partners, playing a key role in levelling up and raising aspirations of disadvantaged students and will engage young people in research opportunities.

- Our borough is perfectly sized with the right mix of urban and rural areas to bring forward plans for a **'digital street' which would see a range of smart infrastructure solutions deployed** such as sensors to detect flooding, measure of grit in roadside bins and public waste bin fill levels in addition to traffic flow, footfall counters and smart street lighting. Areas could include district centres and destination sites such as Ironbridge, the Silkin Way cycle route along with others. Alongside this, planned expansion of the Council's current Intelligent Transport Systems will drive the need for additional digital connectivity, with plans to expand the number of Real-time Bus Information Displays, Information Totems and Variable Message Signage on key road routes amongst plans being considered.
- We have plans in place and investor interest in **delivering full fibre infrastructure capable of supporting 5G to realise the potential of 'Gigabit Telford'** to drive investment, productivity, strengthen and bring resilience to the skill base and raise aspiration and achievement across all our communities. We will seek to realise opportunities to access funding and work with businesses to encourage adoption or development of 5G.
- In addition, we continue to work with Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and neighbouring local authorities to ensure that Telford & Wrekin is able to maximise the benefits from national investment in digital connectivity via initiatives such as the UK Gigabit programme, the Shared Rural Network (SRN) and the Gigabit Voucher scheme. As a

result of this engagement Telford & Wrekin has been announced as one of the early areas expected to benefit from the UK Gigabit programme (phase 1b.)



4. Digital Workforce



4. Digital Workforce

Our Journey So Far

- Invested in modern virtualisation and cloud infrastructure to provide a reliable ICT service to employees and to enable anywhere-access to critical council business applications and services.
- Cyber Security has been at the forefront of our service delivery and design.
- Through the 'Desktop Refresh' project, provided laptops, Windows 10 and refresher training to employees to enable widespread remote working.
- **Introduced Office 365 throughout the council and schools to enable and support efficient, collaborative and remote working.**
- **Page 85** Transitioned telephony to soft phone and virtual applications to enable the contact centre and the workforce to access telephone services remotely wherever they are working.
- **Deployed Microsoft Teams throughout the council** – desktop, web and mobile app – to enable colleagues and external partners to call, meet, chat and collaborate using modern technology.
- Recognised technology as the enabler of business continuity in response to the changes brought about by Covid-19.
- Data is a key asset of this organisation and we are committed to turning this data into meaningful business intelligence to inform decision making. The council's commitment to evidence based decision making has seen the improvement to many data dashboards and the introduction of new reporting to provide intelligence to decision makers. We are in the process of modelling our data for reporting purposes so we collect data

once and use it many times, whilst also looking to automate reporting to create efficiencies and expanding the data available. We have invested in Power BI to better visualise our data, so decision makers can get an insight into the data and drill down into detail more easily, this is used extensively in some areas such as Public Health and we are beginning work to embed it across the council. This has helped us better understand service performance and get insight into the needs of our communities. Our response to Covid has been an example of the benefits of this investment in business intelligence, with detailed Power BI dashboards updated daily to ensure the council and partners have access to the most up to date intelligence, understand the latest situation, make focused and targeted decisions and communicate clearly with the public.

- Adopted Microsoft Teams and live streaming by Democratic Services to enable council and committee business and meetings to continue as planned.
- Continued development of bespoke applications and services to enable employees to simply access and submit information, e.g. the phonebook, ICT Self Service now achieving 75% of calls logged.
- Introduced bespoke ICT training opportunities to support employees to be highly capable and motivated by providing access to regular, up-to-date and high-quality information, training and self-service learning content.
- Delivering online training, consultations, and briefings through Microsoft Teams has meant we have been able to effectively deliver a number of key statutory services virtually throughout the pandemic. A huge benefit of working virtually has been the ability to get multiagency partners together both for systemic work and on an individual basis.



What will we do next?

2021

- **Continue to provide an excellent digital service through consistent access to systems and information**, continually improve services and always implement best practices and procedures for our employees.
- Major ICT projects to be delivered include new Data Centre technology, new 3rd generation security firewall and upgrade to the IP Telephony System.
- **Embed the Digital Strategy throughout the council** by ensuring our workforce are aware of it and encouraging the adoption of its principles and standards.
- Develop a culture of 'Digital First'; establish a staff engagement group representative of the workforce that will work with the ICT team to innovate services delivered.
- Develop ICT-focused learning and development opportunities and promote these to employees, Microsoft Teams training will be offered first.
- We are investing further in business intelligence to drive evidence based decision making across the whole organisation, building further on a robust understanding of service performance and of

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our communities and neighbourhoods. This will include services across the council making maximum use of their data in order to understand trends and see changes quickly, enabling us to make earlier interventions based on evidence. We will also use business intelligence to improve our understanding of the communities and neighbourhoods we serve, so that views and needs can shape the services that both the council and partners deliver. These projects will include linking data across systems, services and organisations to understand the demand on public sector services and will see outcomes including improved efficiency of services.

- Continue to maintain, further develop and improve internal communication systems such as the intranet and our internal Facebook group.
- Promote home working, remote meeting and 'getting the most from technology' guidance and best practices; work with other areas of the council to ensure consistency through technology such as Govroam.
- Continue to work closely with Information Governance to ensure digital data is processed appropriately and securely.
- Support adults and children's social care services and education and skills to further adopt modern and remote methods of working where appropriate, e.g. virtual meetings, app adoption, online referrals, integrated care records, speech-to-text case management, portals and the use of technology to reduce travel.
- Promote and embed the use of all Office 365 applications including Bookings, Delve, Forms, Lists, MyAnalytics, Planner, Power apps, Power Automate, Power BI, Stream, Sway and To Do.
- Support frontline workers and staff without devices to access required communications, information and systems

- Support new employees by providing an introductory 1:1 appointment to hand over ICT equipment.
- Use technology to reduce complexities, simplify processes and improve the accessibility of services provided to employees.
- Continue to adopt technology solutions in place of traditional functions, e.g. paperless council, continued soft phone transition, greater Microsoft Teams & SharePoint adoption for communication and collaboration and to promote modern methods of securing and sharing data, e.g. encrypted email, SharePoint sharing and where appropriate, automate administrative tasks and processes throughout the council to achieve greater efficiency, accuracy and output.
- Review our technical support service to better serve the requirements of a remote workforce; provide ICT support and advice via a highly customer focused, approachable and proactive team of skilled professionals.

2022

- Review or reduce the requirement for printing council-wide in line with the current print contract.
- Reduce our reliance on legacy hardware and infrastructure and continue to adopt and invest in modern virtualisation and cloud infrastructure, services and applications to improve services provided and to reduce the council's own carbon footprint.



How will we know if we've succeeded?

We will monitor and report on our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) three times a year. Our KPIs include:

- Number of online transactions (all services).
- % of online contacts/% telephone contacts in main Contact Centres.
- Customer satisfaction with key customer contact channels and council Website.
- Number of TWC services/enquiry types available online.
- Number of people following TWC on social media.
- Number people signed up for gov delivery updates and % open rate of gov delivery emails.
- % usage of available public access sessions in libraries.
- Number of Telford Online sessions.
- Number of businesses supported to use tech to drive productivity/growth.
- % service availability council services.
- Employee satisfaction with ICT.
- Cybersecurity protection.

We will evidence changes and improvements that have been made to digital services directly as a result of feedback from our customers and residents. We will also publish online any improvements we have made as a direct result of customer feedback.

Last updated April 2021



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