



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Full Council

Thursday 19 January 2023

6.00 pm

Telford Theatre, Limes Walk, Oakengates, Telford, TF2 6EP

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<b>Democratic Services:</b>	Jayne Clarke / Stacey Worthington	01952 383205 / 384382
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**Committee Members:** Councillors S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, L D Carter, E J Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, V A Fletcher, I T W Fletcher, J Gough, E J Greenaway, C Healy, V J Holt, M B Hosken, T L B Janke, A S Jhawar, J Jones, R T Kiernan, G C W Latham-Reynolds, J E Lavery, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, L A Murray, T J Nelson, G L Offland, R A Overton, I Preece, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, Lord Sahota, P J Scott, J M Seymour, C F Smith, M J Smith, B J Thompson, W L Tomlinson, K T Tomlinson, C R Turley, P Watling, B Wennington, D R W White and D Wright

### Agenda

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- |     |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 1.0 | Prayers and Reflections  |  |
| 2.0 | Apologies for Absence    |  |
| 3.0 | Declarations of Interest |  |

#### **4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**7 - 16**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Council.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **5.0 Leader's Report & Announcements**

The Leader of the Council may give an oral report on matters of significance to the Borough, comment upon the Cabinet decisions or make any announcements.

#### **6.0 Mayor's Announcements**

**17 - 20**

To note the Mayoral Engagements undertaken since the previous Council meeting.

### **QUESTIONS**

#### **7.0 Public Questions**

To receive any questions from the public which have been submitted under Council Procedure Rules 7.11 and 7.12. The session will last no more than 15 minutes with a maximum of 2 minutes allowed for each question and answer. Questions can be asked of the Leader and Cabinet Members.

**a) The following question to Councillor Shaun Davies, Leader has been submitted by John Box:**

Cabinet committed to Local Nature Reserves at Lightmoor, Randlay Valley and Rough Park in February 2018 and The Cockshutt in March 2021. These proposed LNRs are still to be legally designated. What date can be committed to unequivocally and absolutely for the legal designation of each of these four LNRs?

**b) The following question to Councillor Richard Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Housing, Enforcement and Transport has been submitted by Thomas Hoof:**

In 2022 Telford sadly lost two lives on the A518 between Donnington & Newport, and since there have been more accidents and many near misses.

What measures are being taken to improve the safety of the A518 between Donnington & Newport?

#### **8.0 Councillor Questions On Notice**

To answer questions received under Council Procedure Rule 6.2.

**NB** In accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6.2.9 there will be a maximum of 30 minutes allowed for questions and answers. Any question not answered within the 30 minute time limit will receive a written reply within 5 working days.

## **DECISION-MAKING**

### **9.0 Cabinet Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting of the Council 21 - 28**

To receive the report on the Cabinet Decisions made since publication of the last Council Meeting Agenda.

### **10.0 Setting of Council Tax Base 2023/24 29 - 36**

To receive the report on the setting of the Council Tax Base.

### **11.0 Recommendations from Cabinet**

#### **11.1 Cabinet - 5 January 2023 - 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report 37 - 42**

To receive the Financial Monitoring Report with the latest financial monitoring position for the year.

## **DEBATE**

### **12.0 Motions on Notice**

#### **12.1 Councillor R A Overton will propose the following Motion:-**

“Our residents and business continually tell us about the lack of reliable and affordable bus services across Telford and Wrekin. This impacts rural, urban and employment areas of our Borough and our residents access to public service including education, cultural and leisure services.

The privatisation of bus transport by the Conservative government in the 1980s is a failed experiment based upon Conservative ideology rather than social need, which places profit before people. The Government has tried to reignite bus travel through promotion of the 2021 National Bus Strategy but this continues to fail many areas like Telford & Wrekin. Prohibitions placed on the Council by the Government prevents the Council from effectively managing our own bus services.

Operators continue to withdraw services with those that remain often overcrowded, late, or worse, cancelled at peak times; this impacts on residents who rely on such services to attend work, school and vital medical appointments.

As a Council on the side of residents and businesses, we are committed to providing well-connected and affordable bus network. Not only does this contribute to reducing carbon emissions, pollution and congestion, but for many affordable buses are crucial as the ongoing cost-of-living crisis continues.

The council does all it can despite having £140m of cuts each year since 2010 to support bus travel in the Borough and support efforts to help residents during the national cost of living crisis we have launched new subsidised services to employment, retail, educational and medical locations across our Borough. But with the continued cuts to council services by the Conservative government the ambition of Telford and Wrekin to have a decent bus services is being held back by the government lack of ambition and action.

This Council calls on the Government to give local control, planning and regulation of the local bus network where operators are only able to provide services under contract to the local authority, and to do so without any current preconditions such as having an elected Mayor and that the government see public transport as a key contributor to economic growth.

Council agrees to write to the current Secretary of state for Transport and local Members of Parliament and support our calls to improve local bus services here in Telford and Wrekin.”

The Motion will be seconded by Councillor L D Carter.

## **12.2 Councillor P R Watling will propose the following Motion :-**

“This Council calls on the Government to urgently review the way in which it funds the provision of Housing Benefit ensure that Councils are fully reimbursed for this benefit which we administer on their behalf.

It has been acknowledged by the Government that the current system for the funding of additional housing costs associated with supported accommodation is in urgent need of reform. The current system means that councils are not fully subsidised for the Housing Benefit it pays to some of these types of accommodation, where often the rent can be significantly higher than that charged in mainstream accommodation. Numerous Government reviews over more than a decade have concluded that the whole scheme needs urgent overhaul, yet to date there has been no definitive action. Over the last decade we have seen the number of units of supported accommodation rise significantly, and the average housing costs increase exponentially. For 2022/23 we forecast that these schemes will directly cost the council and the local taxpayer over £900,000. This sector of housing is only set to expand further in the future, and the financial impact on councils is untenable in the current economic climate.

Therefore, this council resolves that we:

Call on the Government to reconsider the current aspect of Housing Benefit linked to Supported Housing to ensure that Local Authorities are fully reimbursed for the housing cost payments that they are obliged to make.”

The Motion will be seconded by Councillor A D McClements.

### **12.3 Councillor C Healy will propose the following Motion :-**

“Once again the Ironbridge Gorge community is facing the prospect of the River Severn flooding and entering properties. Whilst many other area of our Borough will again be affected by other forms of flooding. Not only does this increased frequency of flooding have a huge emotional and financial impact on residents and businesses, there is also a significant cost to the council. Whilst the Environment Agency own the flood barriers and decide when to deploy them, a condition of having this protection is that this council contributes to the costs of the deployment and leads on support for the unprotected properties in the Gorge. Across Telford and Wrekin it is the council who continues to support at times of flooding by delivering sand bags and clearing away damaged items following flood events. The increased frequency of flooding events is adding a further pressure on already stretched council resources.

Since 2010 this Conservative government has deployed sticking plasters to the issues of flooding in The Gorge and across Telford and Wrekin, without a real plan to help residents, business and the council

This council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment to call on the government to act as follows –

- provide more funding to deal with the increased frequency of flooding;
- fund improved flood defences for Ironbridge that would be cheaper to put in place and have less impact of residents and businesses;
- urgently implement actions in the upper reaches of the Severn to slow the flow of water and reduce flood peaks:
- provide funding to support areas across Telford and Wrekin who suffer from repeated flooding issues.”

The motion will be seconded by Councillor S Davies.