



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 13 February 2025

10.00 am

Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Democratic Services:	Jayne Clarke / Paige Starkey	01952 383205 / 380110
-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------

Media Enquiries:	Corporate Communications	01952 382406
-------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------

Lead Officer:	David Sidaway - Chief Executive	01952 380130
----------------------	--	---------------------

Cabinet Members:

Councillor L D Carter	Leader of the Council
Councillor R A Overton	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement
Councillor Z Hannington	Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services
Councillor C Healy	Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
Councillor A D McClements	Cabinet Member: Leisure, Tourism, Culture & the Arts
Councillor R Mehta	Cabinet Member: Inclusion, Engagement, Equalities & Civic Pride
Councillor K Middleton	Cabinet Member: Public Health & Healthier Communities
Councillor O Vickers	Cabinet Member: The Economy

Councillor S A W Reynolds Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education,
Employment & Skills

Councillor P Watling Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems

Invitees

Councillor T J Nelson Conservative

Councillor W L Tomlinson Liberal Democrat

	Agenda	Page
1.0	Apologies for Absence	
2.0	Declarations of Interest	
3.0	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 January 2025.	5 - 14
4.0	Leader's Announcements To receive a verbal update from the Leader of the Council.	
5.0	2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services To receive an update on the Council's financial monitoring position.	15 - 34
6.0	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 To receive the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28.	To Follow
7.0	Adult Social Care's Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment Outcome Cllr Paul Watling - Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems To receive an update on the outcomes following the recent CQC assessment of Adult Social Care.	35 - 142

- 8.0 Children and Young People's Strategy 143 - 172**
Cllr Kelly Middleton - Cabinet Member: Public Health & Healthier Communities, Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills
- To approve the Telford & Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy.
- 9.0 Publication version of Local Plan 173 - 188**
Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
- To consider the Local Plan.
- 10.0 Telford & Wrekin Skills Strategy 189 - 214**
- To adopt the Telford & Wrekin Skills Strategy.

If you are reading these papers on an electronic device you have saved the Council £15.22 and saved 6.1kg of CO₂, based on average agenda printing costs for the 2022/23 municipal year.

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday 6 January 2025 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

PUBLISHED ON MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2025

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: THURSDAY 30 JANUARY 2025)

Present: Councillors L D Carter (Chair), R A Overton (Vice-Chair), Z Hannington, C Healy, A D McClements, K Middleton, S A W Reynolds, P Watling and O Vickers.

Also Present: Cllr T J Nelson (Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats Group Leader)

Apologies: Councillor R Mehta

CAB-35 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-36 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB-37 Leader's Announcements

The Leader wished Members a Happy New Year and thanked officers who had worked over the Christmas period to continue to provide frontline services to residents such as clearing of fallen trees, road closures and the deployment of flood barriers as a result of bad weather.

CAB-38 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report

The Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services presented the report of the Interim Director: Finance, People & IDT.

Since the last update presented to Cabinet in December 2024, the national picture had remained the same with many Councils continuing to face extreme challenges in 2024/25 with unprecedented pressures driven by high costs and high demand for services particularly Adult Social Care, Children's Safeguarding and School Transport.

The report set out the latest financial monitoring position for the year relating to the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection. It provided the latest projections in relation to the projected outturn which was expected

to be over budget by £4.832m at year end, however noted a reduction of £0.429m since the last report.

During 2023/24 Telford & Wrekin's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was overspent and a deficit of £1.82m was carried forward to 2024/25. The deficit had been a result of budget pressures relating to High Needs provision and these pressures had continued in 2024/25. The current financial monitoring position set out that the deficit was currently projected to significantly increase in 2024/25, from £1.82m at the start of the year to approximately £6m at the end of the current financial year.

In 2020, the Government introduced a statutory override that meant that all local authorities' DSG deficits were separated from a Council's wider accounts. This override is currently in place until 2025/26 and the Council were currently awaiting an announcement from government on its policy position beyond 2025/26.

The income collection rates for council tax, business rates and sales ledger had remained the same since the last report presented to Cabinet.

The Council had continued its excellent track record of strong financial management and budget holders would continue their work to manage budgets as effectively as possible to address in-year financial pressures.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and was pleased to see improvements on the Council's current financial position since the last report presented to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Conservative Group recognised the work of the Council's Finance Team and expressed his thanks for the briefings that had been conducted.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL that:-

- a) the 2024/25 revenue budget position, which shows that, after applying budget contingencies, the Council is projecting to be within budget at year end, and this is without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves be noted;**
- b) the position in relation to capital spend; and recommends that Full Council approve the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix C and all associated changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including Treasury and Prudential Indicators; 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report; and**
- c) the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.**

CAB-39 Telford & Wrekin 2025/26 Schools Funding Formula

The Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills presented the report of the Director: Education & Skills.

A review of the local funding formula for mainstream schools in line with revisions from the Department for Education (DfE) took place annually in consultation with schools and the Schools Forum and applied to both academies and maintained schools as set out in the report.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) were allocated to local authorities by the DfE in four blocks which included Schools, High Needs, Early Years and Central School Services. In order to help with addressing high needs pressures, local authorities could transfer up to 0.5% of the schools block budget to high needs, which equated to £0.9m in 2025/26 for Telford and Wrekin. As the DfE classifies this as a transfer between DSG blocks, rather than a funding formula issue, this is a decision for the Schools Forum, rather than the Cabinet.

Funding for the School Block was calculated by multiplying the number of pupils at the preceding October census. The allocation for the 2025/26 year was set at £178m which was approximately £5m more than 2024/25.

The High Needs Block was calculated using a combination of historic allocations and the national funding formula. The allocation for 2025/26 was set at £39.6m which saw an increase of 8% compared to the allocation set for 2024/25. The Early Years Block was calculated by taking the average number of pupils in the two relevant January censuses and multiplying by a unit of funding. The allocation for 2025/26 was estimated as £26m despite challenges due to the extension of school funding provision.

The Central School Services Block was calculated through a mixture of historic expenditure levels and the number of pupils. The grant was introduced in 2018/19 to replace the abolished Education Services Grant. The allocation for 2025/26 was set at £1.2m.

Since 2020/21 the DfE had required local authorities to apply a national minimum funding per pupil amount to all schools. For 2025/26 this was set at £4,955 for primary schools and £6,465 for secondary schools. This funding would consequently boost the funding of schools with less deprived intakes, as these schools received relatively little from funding factors linked to deprivation and low prior attainment.

A further national minimum funding guarantee was to be expected, assuring a minimum increase per pupil compared to the previous year. For 2025/26, national regulations meant this must be set between -0.5% and 0%. The Council had proposed to adopt the highest possible level of 0%.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and noted that the way in which the funding is calculated ensures that children and young people receive the maximum funding allowed and schools receive funding in a timely manner.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the increase in funding for children and young people in higher needs but noted the 2.23% increase in

the school block was still below national inflation rates and highlighted the pressures it could impose on schools when balancing their budgets.

The Leader of the Conservative Group highlighted the challenges schools may face if required to find financial efficiencies and expressed concerns in relation to turnover of teaching staff. He asked Cabinet to clarify if the funding guarantee would be set at 0% or 0.5% and if delegated powers could be recovered if required in the future.

The Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills confirmed that the Council would be setting the minimum funding guarantee at 0% in line with national regulations.

The Director: Policy & Governance confirmed that delegated powers were not permanent and Cabinet would retain the power to make the decision if circumstances changed in the absence of the Director to whom powers had been delegated to.

RESOLVED – that:

- a) the 2025/26 funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools, consulted on with the Schools Forum be approved; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director for Education & Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills and the Schools Forum, to approve the Telford & Wrekin funding formula for mainstream schools.

CAB-40 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29

The Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy which gave an update on the key uncertainties, financial pressures and increase in demand for the provision of social care services.

A consultation would take place between 7 January 2025 and 5 February 2025 with key stakeholders, voluntary and community sectors, Town and Parish Councils, businesses and cross-party Business & Finance Scrutiny committee. Views would also be sought from local residents through the Council's website.

Following the consultation, a report containing the budget and finalised levels of Council Tax would be brought back to the Cabinet meeting being held on 13 February 2025 which would contain recommendations to be considered at Full Council on 27 February 2025 and would ensure that the Council's medium-term financial position remained sustainable and robust.

Since the approval of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy on 29 February 2024, which covered a four year period to 2027/28, there had been significant changes to the national economy. Locally, Councils had seen an

increase in demand for key services and higher costs, particularly in relation to adult social care.

Due to these factors, the Government published a policy statement in November 2024 which set out the proposals for the 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement and confirmed a real term increase of 3.2% and a new recovery grant worth £600m to be distributed to areas with greater need and demand for services. The settlement also included a £250m Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.

The report highlighted that the Council had managed to maintain financial stability and set a balanced budget for 14 consecutive years and had continued to offer the lowest level of council tax in the Midlands and of any unitary authority in the country despite the requirement for a general increase. In 2024/25, the Council achieved a net budget revenue of £157m, with £88m generated from council tax and £57m generated from business rates.

A total of £181.7m savings had been delivered by the Council since 2009 as a result of reduced government funding, despite an increase in costs and demand for services such as Adult Social Care. Due to the current high levels of financial pressure arising from increased demand in services, a general council tax increase for 2025/26 across all council tax bands of 2.99% equivalent to £0.69p per week for an average Band B property would be proposed as well as a 2% increase for the adult social care precept. All funding raised through the council tax increase would be invested in the provision of social care services.

Cabinet Members highlighted the increase in demand in both adult and children's services and asked residents to take part in the consultation. Members highlighted how the Council had continued to deliver high quality homes, create new jobs, provide transport networks, protect and enhance green spaces and invest in improving local schools, demonstrating ambition for the Borough and the local community.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group supported the report and was pleased to see a 7% increase in government grants. He expressed concerns surrounding the proposed increase to council tax and additional pressures many families would face as a result. He asked the Cabinet to confirm what contingency plans had been considered for next year's budget.

The Leader of the Conservative Group thanked officers for the detailed report however requested that information pertaining to government grants be set out more clearly. He asked that responses received as part of the consultation process be considered before the report returns to Cabinet and Full Council for debate.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council's contingency plans remained the same as those set out in previous budget reports and thanked officers for their hard work and due diligence.

RESOLVED – that:

- a) the contents of this report be noted with the main aims being:
- For the 14th Year running, to maintain the financial stability of Telford & Wrekin Council and set a balanced budget;
 - To continue to have the lowest level of Council Tax in the Midlands for the services we provide and amongst the lowest Council Tax of any Unitary Authority in the Country, see graphs at Appendices 1 and 2;
 - That the Council continues to invest in its main priorities, a few examples being:
 - £7.7m investment into Social Care to support the most vulnerable in our community
 - £94m on high quality homes and new neighbourhoods
 - £54m for Growth Fund to bring jobs to the borough
 - £30m for highways and transport schemes
 - £26m for Towns Fund projects to revamp local centres
 - £1.7m for protecting and enhancing green spaces
 - £45.2m invested into expanding improving local schools
- b) the proposed revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out in this report for consultation between 7 January 2025 and 5 February 2025 be approved;
- c) a general council tax increase for 2025/26 across all council tax bands equivalent to £0.69 per week for an average Band B property, which will be fully invested in the provision of social care services for the most vulnerable members of our community be approved;
- d) a council tax increase for 2025/26 for the Adult Social Care precept across all council tax bands equivalent to £0.46 per week for an average Band B property, which will be fully invested in the provision of social care services for the most vulnerable members of our community be approved;
- e) the savings delivered of £181.7m since 2009/10 as a result of reduced government funding from 2011 whilst the cost and demand for many Council services have been increasing and in particular for Adult Social Care be noted;
- f) that 75 pence in every £1 the Council spends is now allocated to Social Services be noted;
- g) that a number of the investments made in this report also generate a financial benefit, as well as fulfilling their primary purpose, which is invested in front line services be noted; and
- h) national and international economic pressures which have resulted in an extremely challenging financial outlook for U.K public services with interest rates remaining high be noted.

CAB-41 Long Term Empty Property Strategy Update

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement presented the report of the Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services.

The report provided an update on the actions that the Council had taken since Summer 2021 to bring long term empty properties back into use. Since its implementation, the Strategy had seen 312 long term and problematic empty properties brought back into occupation against its set target of 375 properties by June 2026.

Of the 312 properties brought back into use, there were 3 properties which had been empty for longer than 20 years, 12 properties which had been empty for longer than 10 years, 20 properties which had been empty for longer than 5 years and 60 properties which had been empty longer than 2 years.

Properties which had been empty for less than 6 months were typically part of a natural churn in the residential market linked with changes in ownership, tenancy, refurbishment and probate therefore the Strategy's main focus had been on properties that had been vacant for more than 6 months.

The Strategy had continued to recognise the negative environmental impacts that empty properties had brought to the Borough's streets, such as an increased risk of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour but also that every unoccupied property was a wasted housing opportunity for Telford and Wrekin residents in need of affordable accommodation.

The report set out how the Strategy had positively impacted families in need, including those in temporary accommodation. The Council had acquired a further 81 properties for refurbishment to provide an increase in accommodation for those previously homeless through the Rough Sleepers and Next Steps Accommodation programmes.

Partnership working had remained a key focus of the Strategy to ensure that not only are properties brought back into use, but also that the best outcomes are achieved for the owners of the empty properties, the neighbourhoods affected by them and to maximise opportunities for residents to access affordable homes.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and the significant outcomes of the Strategy to date. Members highlighted the positive results the Strategy had had in providing much needed affordable housing for vulnerable residents in the Borough and the Council's approach to maximising financial benefits through the new homes bonus and council tax recovery.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and commended Officers for their ongoing work to address the long-standing issue of empty properties which had been a national issue for many years.

The Leader of the Conservative Group commented on the importance of property ownership and the responsibilities that come with it and asked how the Council collates data in relation to the number of empty properties currently in the Borough and the total number of empty properties that could be brought back into use.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement confirmed that the Council held up to date records of the number of empty properties in the Borough as these properties would be subject to paying increased council tax rates and advised that Members were able to report empty properties to the Council for investigation.

RESOLVED – that:

- a) the actions undertaken in respect to the delivery of the Long-Term Empty Property Strategy be noted; and**
- b) the Strategy and the approach being taken to address long term empty properties across the Borough be re-affirmed.**

CAB-42 Better Buses in Telford & Wrekin

The Cabinet Member: The Economy presented the report of the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services.

The report outlined the progress the Council had made to improve bus travel and connectivity across Telford and Wrekin and sought approval to procure new bus services from July 2025 to ensure the bus network remains fit for the future.

At its meeting in October 2021, the Cabinet approved the creation of an enhanced partnership and received an update on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) as required by the National Bus Strategy. The Council entered into an enhanced partnership agreement on 1 April 2022 which sought to bring together the Council, bus operators and user groups to focus on increasing patronage, improving services and delivering transformation.

Following extensive consultation with service users, the Council tendered seven new bus routes with the first launched in December 2022, commonly known to residents as the Work Express. These new routes have completed over 400,000 passenger trips with fares capped at £2 for an adult and £1 for a child. The Work Express provided connections for residential areas including Sutton Hill, Woodside and Brookside to employment sites at Hortonwood, Halesfield and Stafford Park and operated from 5am to 11pm seven days a week and with an average of 12,800 passenger trips a month. The other six services improved connectivity in rural areas linking Newport and Wellington as well as urban services linking Lawley and Lightmoor with the Town Centre and Wellington.

In November 2024, the Council received £3.5m grant funding which would be used in the 2025/26 financial year to support new tendered services and infrastructure upgrades such as new bus shelters and the expansion of real time passenger information through the Citymapper app in order to maintain connectivity while seeking opportunity to enhance the existing bus network.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report highlighting the success of the Work Express and how council-led bus services have significantly improved transportation options, especially in rural and underserved areas of the Borough by designing routes based on residents' needs. Members praised the positive impact the new services had had on communities, including better access to work, school and healthcare and commended the council's efforts to ensure public transport had been made more accessible and affordable, reducing reliance on cars and supporting climate change goals.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group was pleased to hear that funding for bus services would remain with the possibility of increase in funding in the near future and commended the Council for recognising how vital the bus network is for the Borough's residents. He asked if the bus service in Shawburch could be considered for improvement following a recent reduction in services offered by Arriva.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report and asked if details of the new services including costs would be reported back to Cabinet when available and if alternative provisions could be made available to residents who may be unable to access the new Citymapper app.

The Cabinet Member: The Economy confirmed that bus timetables would still be made available to residents in bus shelters and that the Citymapper app would be an additional service to enable residents to check their journeys in real-time and plan for late or cancelled buses.

The Leader of the Council advised that further updates on the continued progress of the scheme and introduction of new services would be reported back to future Cabinet meetings.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Friday 10 JANUARY 2025**

Signed _____

Date: Thursday 13 February 2025

This page is intentionally left blank



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

13 February 2025

2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services
Lead Director:	Michelle Brockway - Director: Finance, People and IDT
Service Area:	Finance, People and IDT
Report Author:	Pauline Harris – Finance Manager
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 383701 Email: pauline.harris@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 6 January 2025
Report considered by:	SMT – 14 January 2025 Business Briefing – 23 January 2025 Cabinet – 13 February 2025

1.0 Recommendations for Decision/Noting

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes the 2024/25 revenue budget position, which shows that, after applying budget contingencies, the Council is projecting to be within budget at year end, and this is without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves;
- 1.2 Notes the position in relation to capital spend; and
- 1.3 Notes the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide Cabinet with the latest financial monitoring position for the year relating to: the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2027/28 was approved at Full Council on 29 February 2024, which included the 2024/25 revenue budget and medium term capital programme. Since the MTFS was approved, the economic climate has continued to be challenging with costs pressures being experienced, particularly in relation to the provision of Adult Social Care.
- 3.2 Good financial management is an essential element of good governance and long-term service planning which are critical to ensuring that local service provision is sustainable and the use of resources is maximised in order to meet the needs of our residents.
- 3.3 Financial management is the responsibility of budget holders and is supported by Finance staff using a risk based approach: more focus is given to higher risk areas (high value/more volatile); less frequent financial monitoring is undertaken on budgets deemed to be medium to lower risk. Financial monitoring provides Cabinet and Senior Management Team with a focussed view on the Council's financial performance, to inform and support decision making and to ensure financial sustainability.
- 3.4 This Financial Monitoring Report for 2024/25 provides the latest projections in relation to the projected outturn position i.e. how projected net revenue spend compares to the budget set for the year; progress against the approved 2024/25 capital programme; the key issues to be highlighted; together with a summary of collection information in relation to Council Tax, Business Rates and Sales Ledger income.
- 3.5 The funding outlook for the medium term remains very uncertain and will clearly continue to be challenging, particularly given the Council has already had to deliver £181.7m ongoing budget savings since 2009/10.
- 3.6 There is a statutory duty for local authorities to set a balanced and robust budget each financial year and to take timely action to address financial pressures. It is our aim to continue to deliver quality services whilst ensuring a balanced budget.
- 3.7 The Medium Term Financial Strategy is a separate report on the Cabinet agenda and provides more detail on the medium term position.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1.1 Nationally, Councils continue to face extreme challenges in 2024/25 with unprecedented pressures driven by high costs and high demand for services – particularly Adult Social Care, Children's Safeguarding and School Travel Assistance.

- 4.1.2 While inflation is expected to reduce in the medium term, current indicators show that the economy will be slower to recover than was expected when the Council's budget was set. In December 2024 CPI reduced slightly to 2.5% which is above the Bank of England's 2% target. The Bank of England reduced base rate from 5.25% to 5.00% in August with a further cut to 4.75% in November where it remains, but is still higher than was anticipated when the Council's budget was set.
- 4.1.3 Given these factors, monitoring for 2024/25 indicates a number of variations from the approved budget, notably relating to Adult Social Care where in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents, additional investment is required.
- 4.1.4 Before application of remaining contingencies included in the revenue budget, the projected outturn position is currently expected to be over budget by £4.713m at year end, which is a reduction of £0.119m since the last report. Making use of the specific earmarked Social Care contingency and the General budget contingency brings the position back to be within budget.
- 4.1.5 The Council has an excellent track record of strong financial management and Cabinet Members and budget holders will continue their work to manage budgets as effectively as possible in the remainder of the year.
- 4.1.6 Projections will continue to be refined in the final part of the year. While extremely challenging our aim is to continue to deliver quality services to the residents of the borough and protect critical front-line services. If the final outturn position is over budget, after applying the budgeted contingencies, this would be covered from a number of reserves which may include the Council's Budget Strategy Reserve.
- 4.1.7 A summary of the current projection for the year end position is:-

	£m
Net Revenue Budget	157.296
Projected Net Revenue Outturn	162.009
Projected Variance	+4.713
Use of One off Contingency (earmarked for Social Care Pressures)	-1.959
Use of General Budget Contingency	-2.754
Projected Year End Variance	0.000

- 4.1.8 There are a number of variations from the approved budget, detailed in Section 5. The key variance is Adult Social Care (ASC), with £6.7m additional investment currently being required relating to the cost of providing care packages across all client groups. This includes the impact of market price increases, more complex needs, higher demand and longer periods of care being required; all of which are being analysed by the Service with the aim of refining projections and managing spend. This is after additional net investment of £5.9m (which is after savings of £7.7m have been reflected) into ASC in 2024/25 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2 Capital

The capital programme totals £93.1m for 2024/25 which includes all approvals since the budget was set. Schemes are in progress and at the time of compiling this report spend is projected to be under budget which indicates that there is likely to be re-phasing into 25/26 at year end.

4.3 Corporate Income Collection

Income collected in relation to Business Rates is within the target set while Sales Ledger and Council Tax are slightly outside the target set. Ultimately, all debt will be pursued and will continue to be collected after the end of the financial year with all appropriate recovery avenues being pursued.

5.0 Additional Information

5.1 The overall 2024/25 monitoring position against the budget is summarised in the table below:

Service Area	Budget £m	Variation 6.1.25 Cabinet £m	Movement £m	Total Current Variation £m
Finance, People & IDT	16.704	(1.750)	0.000	(1.750)
Policy & Governance	1.539	(0.043)	0.000	(0.043)
Adult Social Care	68.982	6.761	(0.081)	6.680
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	5.182	(0.229)	0.000	(0.229)
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	49.578	0.568	(0.003)	0.565
Education & Skills	12.825	0.681	0.043	0.724
Health & Wellbeing	0.354	0.031	0.000	0.031
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	33.307	0.064	0.014	0.078
Prosperity & Investment	(6.566)	1.202	0.000	1.202
Council Wide	(24.609)	(2.453)	(0.092)	(2.545)
Total	157.296	4.832	(0.119)	4.713

5.2.1 Projected variances over £0.250m are highlighted below, all other variances over £50k are detailed in Appendix B.

Service Area	Variance £m
<u>Finance, People & IDT</u> Treasury – impact of capital spend re-profiling and positive cash flow positions during the year. This benefit is offsetting the income pressure in the Property Investment Portfolio and Housing shown below.	-1.700
<u>Adult Social Care</u> Longer Term Care Purchasing – projected expenditure relating to block and spot contracts. Additional investment is required due to the continued increase in the costs of care. The service continues to work on delivering care which maximises prevention and independence where possible. External consultants have also been commissioned to review the service and work undertaken to date indicates areas where savings may be possible in future. Health Funding contributions – all ages and care types; shortfall against income target partly due to successful management of care expenditure. My Options – Adults & Children’s Services – pressure from cost of agency staff. Autism, Learning Disability & Mental Health Purchasing Care – in house purchasing; pressure from increased costs. Prevention & Independence – Older People & Disability – mainly due to staffing vacancies due to recruitment challenges Income – client contributions	+5.871 +1.000 +0.432 +0.470 -0.333 -0.370
<u>Housing, Commercial & Customer Services</u> Customer Relationships & Welfare Services – Use of One off Reserve Funding Strategic Housing, Income – income shortfall which will be delivered when Housing Schemes become operational (Red Lion development due 2025/26). Note, borrowing costs are also reduced which is reflected in the Treasury benefit reported under Finance.	-0.466 +0.270
<u>Children’s Safeguarding & Family Support</u>	

Service Area	Variance £m
Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions:	
Health Funding – anticipated health contributions in relation to health needs are lower than budgeted, impacted by reduced overall placement costs.	+0.762
Operational Expenditure – pressure mainly arising from aids and adaptations and funding of the Autism Hub.	+0.253
Income – additional grant income received	-0.676
Service Wide	
Staffing expenditure – pressure partly offset by additional income and vacancies elsewhere across the service	+0.251
<u>Prosperity & Investment</u>	
Regeneration & Investment, Property Portfolio Income – capital investment re-phased into future years with corresponding impact on budgeted income. Note, this is offset by a reduction in borrowing costs which is reflected in the Treasury benefit reported under Finance.	+0.822
<u>Council Wide</u> – including WME dividend which is projected to be higher than budgeted; additional retained rates inflation; returned business rates levy surplus; and other corporate underspends.	-2.545

5.2.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Dedicated Schools Grant sits within Education & Skills and is monitored separately to the Council's General Fund position shown in Section 5.1. Excluding funds passed to academies and colleges, Dedicated Schools Grant totals £133.4m in 2024/25. DSG deficits are currently required to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts.

During 2023/24 Telford & Wrekin's DSG was overspent and a deficit of £1.82m was carried forward to 2024/25. The deficit was due to budget pressures relating to High Needs provision and these pressures have continued in 2024/25. The current position is that the deficit is currently projected to significantly increase in 2024/25, from £1.82m at the start of the year to approximately £6m at the end of the financial year.

A cost improvement plan is in place and meetings are regularly held to monitor and address budget pressures. The Council has a positive relationship with schools and

other providers which assists the Council to manage the budget as effectively as possible and ensure we meet our responsibilities to young people.

High needs pressure is a national issue with most upper tier Council's having a DSG deficit. At the end of 2022/23, the national total DSG deficit was £1.168bn (which included 100 authorities with deficits). A recent survey from the Association of Local Authority Treasurers has revealed that the deficit currently exceeds £3bn across English Councils and is projected to rise to £8bn in 2026/27.

In 2020, the Government introduced a statutory override that meant that all local authorities' DSG deficits were separated from a Council's wider accounts. This means there is no current expectation that a council's general fund should be used to offset any DSG deficit. This override is currently in place until 2025/26. The Government intends to set out plans for reforming the SEND system in further detail in 2025 and this will inform any decision to remove the statutory override.

The position is being closely monitored and updates will be included when more information is known.

5.3 CONTINGENCIES, RESERVES & BALANCES

- 5.3.1 The 2024/25 budget includes a general revenue contingency of £3.950m which is set aside to meet any unforeseen expenditure or income shortfalls during the year and a one-off contingency of £1.959m set aside specifically for Social Care pressures.

The current projected position would require use of all of the one-off contingency earmarked for Social Care and would leave a balance of £1.196m in the general contingency (see table in 4.1.7).

- 5.3.2 There is also a contingency amount held centrally for contractual and pay inflation. Any remaining balance will be applied to support the overall position at year end.
- 5.3.3 The Budget Strategy Reserve remains at £21.7m.

5.4 CAPITAL

5.4.1 2024/25 Capital Programme

The 2024/25 capital programme totals £93.1m. The financial position is shown in the table below and shows projected spend at £91.6m which indicates that will be some re-phasing into 2025/26 required at year end.

Service Area	Approved Budget	Spend	% Spend	Year End
	£m	£m		£m
Prosperity & Investment	51.25	34.40	67.12%	51.12
Policy & Governance	0.07	0.01	14.29%	0.05
Education & Skills	15.53	8.90	57.31%	15.19
Adult Social Care	0.03	0.00	0.00%	0.03
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	12.86	6.38	49.61%	12.78
Housing, Commercial and Customer Services	6.47	3.64	56.26%	5.47
Finance, People and IDT	5.93	4.00	67.45%	5.93
Corporate Items	1.01	0.34	33.66%	1.01
Total	93.15	57.67	61.9%	91.58

5.4.2 The 2024/25 capital programme relies on £4.6m of net capital receipts as part of its funding. Capital receipts included in the medium term budget strategy are kept under continual review and any changes will be reflected in future budget projections but are currently projected to be on target.

5.4.3 Changes to the capital programme are shown in Appendix C for approval.

6.0 CORPORATE INCOME MONITORING

6.1 The Council's budget includes significant income streams which are regularly monitored to ensure they are on track to achieve targets that have been set and so that remedial action can be taken at a very early stage. The three main areas are Council Tax, NNDR (business rates) and Sales Ledger. Current monitoring 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.

6.2 In summary, NNDR collection is within the target set while sales ledger collection and council tax are slightly outside target.

INCOME COLLECTION – DECEMBER 2024			
	Actual	Target	Performance
Council Tax Collection	79.74%	80.17%	0.43% behind target
NNDR Collection	82.38%	81.89%	0.49% ahead of target
Sales Ledger Outstanding Debt	6.63%	5.25%	1.38% behind target

Council Tax (£119.3m)

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 2023/24	97.31%
Year End Target for 2024/25	97.31%

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

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
80.17%	79.74%	80.47%

Collection rates are slightly behind target. There are more accounts paying by 12 monthly instalments than this time last year which should have a positive impact on collection rates by year end

6.3 NNDR-Business Rates (£82.2m)

The % of business rates for 2024/25 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 2023/24	97.37%
Year End Target for 2024/25	98.00%

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
81.89%	82.38%	81.26%

Collection rates are slightly ahead of target, and ahead of performance last year.

6.4 Sales Ledger (£105m)

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 2024/25 are as follows:

Age of debt	Annual Target %	December 2024	
		£m	%
Total	5.25	6.961	6.63

Sales ledger performance is outside of target; individual balances are being pursued via legal action.

7.0 Alternative Options

- 7.1 Budget holders will investigate a number of options to seek to deliver required service outcomes from within budgeted resources. Options to deliver savings and additional income have been explored.

8.0 Key Risks

- 8.1 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 and further inflationary pressures, the risk of changes in legislative or accounting requirements impacting on budgets etc. The Council has comprehensive risk management arrangements in place, which are reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Team.

9.0 Council Priorities

- 9.1 Delivery of all Council priorities depends on the effective use of available resources. Regular financial monitoring in the financial management reports helps to highlight variations from plan so that action can be taken to effectively manage the Council's budget.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The financial impacts are detailed throughout the report.

11.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and ensure that the Council takes action if overall net overspends /shortfalls emerge.

- 11.2 Legal services will provide ongoing advice in relation to specific proposals relating to the making of savings, including on any requirement to undertake consultation as such proposals are brought forward for consideration.

12.0 Ward Implications

- 12.1 There are no impacts on specific wards

13.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 13.1 There are no Health, Social and Economic Implications directly arising from this report.

14.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 14.1 There are no Equality & Diversity implications directly arising from this report. Proportionate impact assessments are carried out and a range of consultation mechanisms are used where appropriate.

15.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 15.1 There are no Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report.

16.0 Background Papers

1	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28	Council 29/02/2024
2	2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet 10/07/2024
		Council 18/07/2024
3	2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet 07/11/2024
		Council 12/11/2024
4	2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet 05/12/2024
		Council 23/01/2025
5	2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report	Cabinet 06/01/2025
		Council 23/01/2025

17.0 Appendices

Appendix A	Summary of 2024/25 Projected Variations
Appendix B	2024/25 Revenue Variations over £50,000

18.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	08/01/2025	08/01/2025	MLB
Finance	08/01/2025	08/01/2025	PH
Legal	08/01/2025	15/01/2025	RP

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX A

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations

Service Area	Budget	Variation 6 Jan 2025 Cabinet	Movement	Total Current Variation
	£	£	£	£
Finance, People & IDT	16,703,658	(1,749,590)	0	(1,749,590)
Policy & Governance	1,539,233	(42,638)	0	(42,638)
Adult Social Care	68,982,481	6,761,253	(80,905)	6,680,348
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	5,181,656	(229,561)	0	(229,561)
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	49,577,503	568,534	(3,129)	565,405
Education & Skills	12,825,101	680,957	43,530	724,487
Health & Wellbeing	354,369	31,804	0	31,804
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	33,306,642	63,320	13,715	77,035
Prosperity & Investment	(6,566,441)	1,201,443	0	1,201,443
Council Wide	(24,608,362)	(2,453,315)	(92,000)	(2,545,315)
Total	157,295,840	4,832,206	(118,789)	4,713,417
	0			0

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Finance, People & IDT				
Treasury		14,444,469	(1,700,000)	Impact of re-profiling capital spend and positive cash flow position during the year.
Learning & Development	Staffing	415,416	(60,447)	Vacancies
Revenues	Supplies & Services	217,710	66,013	Legal/operational expenditure
	Variations under £50k	1,626,063	(55,156)	
Total Finance, People & IDT		16,703,658	(1,749,590)	
Policy & Governance				
	Variations under £50k	1,539,233	(42,638)	
Total Policy & Governance		1,539,233	(42,638)	
Adult Social Care				
All long term care purchasing-Spot & block for all ages and short-term intermediate care	Spot & block purchasing	91,356,952	5,870,684	The long term care projection remains a significant pressure but has been reduced by £1m based on most recent information. There has previously been an upward revision to forecast expenditure arising from an acceleration in the costs of care over recent months, but in period 8 there was a flattening of the projection based on the information for new and ended care cases on the Controcc system. The trajectory of growth in the first half of 2024/25 has been half that in the equivalent period in 2023/24, and remains on a trajectory of lower growth in year, reflecting controlled spending and the delivery of validated savings by the service. The impact of changes in care expenditure is a change to the income projected usually in the opposite direction. This is seen in the Joint Funding contributions reported below, where the successful containment of expenditure over 23/24 referred above is resulting in a reduced level of projected NHS contributions. The management team continue to work on delivering care which maximises prevention and independence wherever possible, which is helping to mitigate this budget pressure, which would otherwise be much higher. Newton Europe, external consultants, have also been commissioned to review the service and their work to date has indicated areas where costs could be avoided in the future. The forecast position will be kept under review as the year progresses, as demand for the service has historically been volatile, particularly during the Winter period.

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Health funding contributions-all ages and care types	Joint Funding	(7,986,218)	1,000,000	Latest forecast income from the NHS from latest identified projections of care for clients with some health needs. Latest monitoring information suggests a shortfall against the expected income in the budget partly because of the successful management of care expenditure referred above
Prevention & independence - Older People & Disability	Staffing & Operational expenditure	3,237,039	(333,277)	Mainly from vacancies due to recruitment challenges.
Autism, Learning Disability & mental health	Staffing & Operational expenditure	1,894,469	59,303	Overspend due to agency worker costs
	My Options-Adults & Children's services	975,501	432,159	Pressure from previous savings, and costs of agency staff to cover services.
	In House purchasing (from My Options)	6,943,213	470,565	Increase in costs to reflect additional clients mainly in day services
	Staffing & Operational expenditure	1,444,976	93,968	Overspend due to agency workers over and above the number of vacancies
Income	Client Contributions	(13,599,430)	(370,000)	Based on current expectations of in year income.
	Agency - contribution from reserves	0	(159,513)	Contribution from ASC reserves to cover additional agency resource taken on to support the service particularly in the first quarter of 24/25, costs of which are included in staffing lines above.
	Use of One Offs		(199,000)	
	Variations under £50k	(15,284,021)	(184,541)	Expenditure for Newton support is included here with an equivalent income source to cover the expenditure.
Total Adult Social Care		68,982,481	6,680,348	
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services				
Strategic Housing	Income	(324,000)	270,000	Income target shortfall; will be delivered when Housing Schemes become operational; Red Lion development due in 2025/26. There is a benefit in relation to lower borrowing costs which is included in the Treasury benefit reported under Finance.
	Variances under £50k	1,305,555	(176,428)	
Telford Theatre	Various	331,640	137,165	Projected costs in relation to the closure. This over spend is being mitigated by a £151k underspend within the BIT team as a result of premises cost savings.
Telford Ice Rink	Income	(870,113)	(122,987)	Projected over achievement of income.
Wellington Leisure Centre	Various	0	0	
Customer Relationships & Welfare Services	Use of one of reserve funding	0	(466,241)	Use of Reserve.
Community Services	Solar Farm - Income	(989,810)	114,213	Projected shortfall in PPA and FIT income; 10.45% reduction for April to Sept to the previous year.
	Variations under £50k	4,597,154	14,717	
Libraries	Variations under £50k - Libraries	1,131,230	0	

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Total Housing, Commercial & Customer Services		5,181,656	(229,561)	
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support				
Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions	CIC Placements, Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support	31,227,170	(204,997)	Additional budget, allocated in the context of 2023/24 outturn and the budget model, currently exceeds projected costs of placements. The work with Impower and ongoing work on prevention, early intervention and review of placement costs is having a positive impact on the cost of placements. The Council's new provision for supported accommodation, Octavia Court, which opened over the summer, is also having a positive impact on placement costs.
	Health funding	(6,997,900)	762,385	The budget was realigned in accordance with the placements model, but health funding is currently projected in the context of identified income in the first part of the year and the reduction in overall placement costs.
	Children with Disabilities	2,058,540	145,853	Expenditure in this area has increased significantly in recent years, as the level of need in the CYP population has increased. The realigned budget is now more realistic for this area, but there continues to be a high demand for support for children with disabilities.
	Operational expenditure	2,584,980	253,062	Section 17 costs (for children in need), CWD - aids and adaptations and funding of the Autism Hub are the main elements contributing to pressure in this area.
	Income	(2,587,834)	(675,577)	Additional income received from government grants.
Child Protection & Family Support, Parenting Assessment & Contact Teams	Operational expenditure	455,235	150,088	Increase in No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) expenditure and Hotel/B&B costs
Family Safeguarding	Operational expenditure	2,817,301	149,912	The main drivers of the forecast overspend are legal expenses and assessments, both of which are linked to placement cost pressures in recent years.
Service Wide	Staffing expenditure	19,291,780	250,812	A budget saving of £300,000 arising from the ending of a short-term investment in staffing plus overall vacancy factor saving of £299,000. Partly offset by savings from vacancies across service and additional funding included in line below
Variations under £50k		(91,596)	(299,573)	Includes additional income to mitigate staffing pressures - see above
Total		48,757,676	531,966	
Independent Review	Variations under £50,000	819,826	33,439	
Total Children's Safeguarding & Family Support		49,577,503	565,405	
Education & Skills				

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget £	Total Variation £	Comments
Traded Advisory Services		73,588	121,537	Grant income which was available to support services in this area in 2023/24 (e.g. Ukraine grant) is no longer available in 2024/25 creating budgetary pressure. Services are being reviewed in this context.
Specialist Services		587,565	212,279	Significant additional expenditure has been incurred in Educational Psychology due to the use of agency staff to process statutory assessments.
Premature retirement costs		1,171,024	167,369	Savings targets have been applied to this area, which covers the costs of teachers who prematurely retired, with the local authority picking up premature retirement costs. This policy ceased some years ago, but annual costs continue to be incurred through the duration of teachers retirement. Savings targets were applied on the basis of demography, but at present this impact is not being seen on costs.
Under £50K		10,992,924	223,302	This variance includes the £142K vacancy factor for Education & Skills
Total Education & Skills		12,825,101	724,487	
Health & Wellbeing				
Coroners Court	Contracted services	266,450	67,800	Pressure on budget from services being delivered by the Coroner and associated services. Demand for Post Mortems and body conveyancing is increasing costs
	Variations under £50k - GF Services	88,641	(35,996)	
Public Health services	All services	13,876,511	174,286	Pressure within Public Health funded contracts mainly NHS pay award
Public Health Grant	Underspend/(Overspend) to/(from) Reserve	(722)	50,953	Ring-fenced Public Health grant transferred to Public Health reserve
Public Health Grant	Grant	(13,876,511)	(225,239)	Additional award in 2024/25
Total Health & Wellbeing		354,369	31,804	
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services				
Enforcement	Income - Car Parking	(54,220)	143,204	Shortfall against budgeted income from car parking
	Income - FPN	(46,980)	58,327	Shortfall against budgeted income
	Variations under £50k	858,893	(18,675)	

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	Variations under £50k	5,441,256	80,095	
Highways, Engineering & Project Delivery	Supplies & Services - Street Lighting	1,979,350	183,673	Increased Maintenance Costs
	Supplies & Services - Street Lighting		13,471	Increased Energy Usage
	Supplies & Services - Street Lighting		27,697	Increased Energy Costs - Difference between 6% average rate and actual rates
	Supplies & Services - Street Lighting		53,959	Energy Green levy introduced in 24/25
	Reserves - Street Lighting		(215,148)	Use of Reserves
	Reserves - Street Lighting		(63,652)	Use of one-off reserves
	Supplies & Services - Flood Barriers		104,393	Unbudgeted costs incurred for responding to flooding including supporting deployment of Ironbridge flood barriers
	Variations under £50k	8,865,426	(125,297)	
Strategic Transport & Highway Network Management	Supplies & Services - Concessionary Travel	1,675,700	(52,902)	Reduction in operating costs
	Variations under £50k	73,932	(68,351)	
Safer & Stronger Communities	Variations under £50k	(2,217,235)	0	
Waste & Neighbourhood Services	Waste Treatment	6,456,430	(63,947)	Reduction in Waste Tonnages and associated Treatment processing costs
	Variations under £50k	10,274,090	20,188	
Total Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services		33,306,642	77,035	
Prosperity & Investment				
Building Innovation Telford	Premises - Addenbrooke House	-	160,000	Running costs and NNDR of Addenbrooke House up to transfer of property.
	Premises - Lakewood Court	-	247,000	Property improvement costs.
	Premises - The Place	422,630	(151,558)	One off underspends.
	Premises - Oakengates Leisure		(203,121)	One off NNDR rebates and reduced in year NNDR.
	Variations under £50k	(3,678,080)	(171,537)	One off use of Grant, S106 and reserve to support in year pressures.
Development Management	Income - Planning applications & Building Control	(2,625,900)	200,000	Estimated based upon a downturn in year to date trends compared to 23/24. This will be monitored monthly and can fluctuate up or down, net of one off salary underspends from vacancy management.
Regeneration & Investment	PIP Income	(10,467,570)	822,620	Delay in Growth Fund capital schemes impacting on phasing of income. There is a benefit in relation to the associated lower borrowing costs which is included in the Treasury benefit reported under Finance.
	Income - Earthworks savings target	(200,000)	200,000	Alternative for site identified that will deliver improved outputs.

2024/25 Revenue Budget Variations over £50,000				
Description		Budget	Total Variation	Comments
		£	£	
Strategic Planning	Net - Southwater MSCP & Hall Court	(221,090)	34,252	Shortfall on income, although a much improved position than 23/24.
	Premises costs	-	100,000	Orchard Business Park additional revenue costs associated with utility works.
	Variations under £50k	1,107,320	(131,053)	
	Variations under £50k	9,096,249	94,840	
Total Prosperity & Investment		(6,566,441)	1,201,443	
Corporate				
S31 Grant	Business Rates Retention Scheme Top Up		(69,000)	Additional top up inflation 24.25
WME Dividend		(590,000)	(226,315)	Dividend received from WME higher than budgeted
Council Wide		(24,018,362)	(2,250,000)	Various corporate underspends including pensions, estimated business rates levy surplus and provision for savings shortfalls net of potential costs.
Total Corporate		(24,608,362)	(2,545,315)	
Total		157,295,840	4,713,417	

This page is intentionally left blank



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment of Telford and Wrekin Council's ability to meet its Adult Social Care duties under Part 1 of the Care Act (2014)

Thursday 13 February 2025

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Paul Watling - Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems	
Lead Director:	Simon Froud - Director: Adult Social Care	
Service Area:	Adult Social Care	
Report Author:	Sarah Downes, Assurance & Integration Programme Manager	
	Clare Hall-Salter – Service Delivery Manager, Assurance, Transformation and Financial Management	
Officer Contact Details:	Tel:	Email:
	01952 380599	sarah.downes@telford.gov.uk,
	01952 382016	clare.hall-salter@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision	
Forward Plan:	Not applicable	
Report considered by:	SMT 14 January 2025	
	Business Briefing 23 January 2025	
	Cabinet 13 February 2025	

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has assessed Telford & Wrekin Council's Adult Social Care Services as 'Good', recognising that the services are performing well and meeting their expectations. Their assessment highlighted that:
- "Assessments were conducted professionally, using strength-based approaches and focused on whole-family support to ensure people could live at home for longer."
 - "Innovative approaches to coproduction, engagement, and inclusion, were embedded in local authority processes. These were supported by the strategic board structures and staff culture."
 - "Strong partnership working."
 - "Improved outcomes in supported accommodation, and enabled bespoke solutions for people maintaining independent living, delaying entry to statutory services through the use of assistive technologies."
 - "Strong leadership and a culture of transparency and learning."
 - "The realignment of locality team functions and responsibilities, as well as innovative use of frontline teams were improving waiting lists, and strong partnership working with health partners was improving discharge and readmission outcomes for people."
- 1.2 Approves the Adult Social Care (ASC) Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment Summary Continuous Improvement Plan as presented in Appendix B and supports the implementation of it.
- 1.3 Approves the delegation for the Director of Adult Social Services in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member to implement changes to the plan as required.
- 1.4 Notes that the ASC CQC Assessment Summary Continuous Improvement Plan will be monitored by the Telford and Wrekin Health and Care Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the findings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment of Telford & Wrekin Council's ability to meet its Adult Social Care duties under Part 1 of the Care Act, for people accessing care and support. The report was published on 15 November 2024 and a copy can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To present the ASC CQC Assessment Summary Continuous Improvement Action Plan as detailed in Appendix B.

3.0 CQC Assessment Background

- 3.1 From April 2023, CQC took on new responsibilities under the Health and Care Act 2022 for assessing how local authorities meet their [Part 1 Care Act](#) duties for people accessing care and support.
- 3.2 The assessment uses a subset of 9 quality statements from the new [single assessment framework](#). They are structured specifically around the context, aims and roles of a local authority and focus on 4 themes:

1. How local authorities work with people
 2. How local authorities provide support
 3. How local authorities ensure safety within the system
 4. Leadership
- 3.3 By December 2025, CQC aim to complete initial formal assessments on all 153 local authorities. This includes reviewing published data (e.g. Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and national data collections) to help identify themes and insight on access, commissioning, market shaping, workforce and personalisation. Telford and Wrekin were one of the earliest councils to be assessed and receive a published report. To date 22 reports have been published.
- 3.4 The CQC assessment is an in-depth and rigorous approach, which analyses evidence from multiple sources including:
- **people's experiences** – feedback directly from people using services (e.g. through case tracking and speaking with carers) and feedback from community organisations, groups and local user groups.
 - **feedback from staff and leaders** – interview staff and leaders to gather views and hold drop-in sessions for staff to share their experiences.
 - **feedback from partners** – speak to relevant partners to gather their views and gather views from care providers.
 - **processes** – review effectiveness of the processes, including policies and strategies, audits, performance data and waiting times
 - **outcomes** – focus on the impact of processes on individuals and communities
- 3.5 CQC's Assessment Teams for Local Authorities include an Assessment Manager, CQC Directors, Inspectors, Local Authority Specialist Advisors and Executive Reviewers. The team comprise people directly employed by CQC as well as appropriate people from other Local Authorities undertaking specific roles. Telford & Wrekin Council currently contribute to CQC Assessment Teams of other Local Authorities via officer secondment as a Specialist Advisor.
- 3.6 The outcome of each assessment is in the form of a published report that includes an overall rating for the Local Authority (Inadequate, Requires Improvement, Good or Outstanding).
- 3.7 During this initial baselining phase CQC continues to learn, develop and refine their approach.
- 3.8 For detailed information on the assessment process please view CQC's website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/local-systems/local-authorities>

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The overall findings of the assessment judged the Council's ability to meet its Part 1 Care Act duties for people accessing care and support as '**GOOD**'.
- 4.2 The final report, attached in Appendix A, highlights many positive areas together with some areas for the Council to focus on. The summary action plan, attached at

Appendix B, provides further detail of the actions to be taken to address areas of focus highlighted by CQC. The plan will be monitored by the Telford & Wrekin Council Health and Care Scrutiny Committee. The plan will form part of the wider Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan.

- 4.3 The CQC assessment confirms that the Council is well placed to move forwards. The Council is committed to building on the many positives highlighted in the report and to responding proactively to the areas of focus in order to further improve services for local residents and deliver outstanding future outcomes.

5.0 Telford & Wrekin Council's CQC Assessment

- 5.1 On 19 February 2024, we received notification from CQC of our Local Authority Assessment. At the same time, they requested our full Information Return by 8 March 2024. The information return is the first part of CQC's assessment and includes a series of documents to help CQC start their assessment and plan for their onsite visit. For details of the specific information requested please [click here](#).
- 5.2 The Council were notified on 24 May 2024 that the onsite element of the CQC assessment would take place the week of 22 July 2024. At the same time, the Council was required to provide further documentation, including an anonymised and coded list of 50 people who received care and support. CQC subsequently chose 10 of these people to talk directly to about their experiences.
- 5.3 Prior to their onsite visit CQC requested a meeting with the Adult Social Care Leadership Team. The purpose of this meeting was to enable CQC to understand how the local authority is organised, including pathways and other arrangements. A comprehensive presentation was delivered which covered:
- How the leadership team is organised and lines of accountability (management arrangements)
 - How front-line teams are set up, including how frontline teams support people with specific needs (for example, autistic people, people with a learning disability, mental health need, or sensory need).
 - A person's journey from initial contact with the local authority through to allocation to a team for assessment.
 - The pathway for young people transitioning from children to adult's services.
 - Any Section 75 partnership agreements in place, allowing budgets to be pooled between health and social care.
 - Any commissioned partnership arrangements for the provision of Care Act duties.
 - Arrangements for working with housing.

The presentation, given by the Adult Social Care Leadership Team, was completed on 26 June 2024. Senior representation from the Council's Housing and Public Health Services were also involved. It showcased how the Council delivers its statutory duties, how it works with partners to improve people's outcomes, how it enables people to live well and independently in Telford and Wrekin and included examples of the positive difference the services are making to resident's lives.

Healthy Lifestyles at the Independent Living Centre: Abi's story

Abi self-referred to the Healthy Lifestyle Service after visiting the Independent Living Centre. She had gained weight since lockdown due to unhealthy food choices and was finding food preparation more difficult due to her arthritis, cooking from scratch was difficult. She felt isolated and found walking difficult due to the pain from her arthritis.

After just 6 sessions, Abi managed to make significant changes to her diet and was managing to cook healthy meals with the use of an air fryer. She was managing daily exercise which included walking and seated exercise at the Fit4All sessions. She achieved 16.5 pounds weight loss.



"Thank you. Having somebody supporting me made all the difference and now I have completely changed my eating habits and am losing weight on a regular basis. My thanks go to Rachael as I know I wouldn't have done it without her help"

Technology Enabled Care supporting night time care calls

Adult Social Care uses Oysta technology device to contact carers as and when they need to during the night. A team then responds directly to the callouts, meaning people can receive personalised care without the need for a night sit in service.

This approach has enabled carers to see up to 20-30 people in the night, compared with 2 before this approach. People using the technology has said that "it's a lifeline and don't know what they would do without it".



Information adapted from ITV's report on this approach – see full report and video [here](#)

- 5.4 The onsite assessment in July included 3 days of interviews, speaking with people who used Adult Social Care services, as well as with staff, leaders and partner organisations. This included our Making it Real Board and other experts by their experience, our frontline teams, partners and executive leaders across the Council.
- 5.5 Whilst the on-site experience was intense, people who were spoken to by CQC felt listened to, comfortable and found it an enjoyable experience sharing their views of how the Council is delivering its statutory duties and promoting good practice across Adult Social Care at Telford and Wrekin.

- 5.6 Following a period of factual accuracy negotiations in October, the final report of CQC's assessment of the Council was published on 15 November 2024. A copy of the assessment report can be found on [CQC's website](#) but is also available in Appendix A.
- 5.7 This CQC assessment concluded that the Council's ability to meet its Part 1 Care Act duties for people accessing care and support was 'GOOD'. 'GOOD' means that CQC recognise that Adult Social Care is performing well and meeting their expectations.
- 5.8 This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Council staff and our strong partnerships with families, experts by experience, community stakeholders and partner organisations.

Areas of strength

- 5.9 The report reads positively, with CQC highlighting in particular the following strengths:
- 5.9.1 "Assessments were conducted professionally, using strength-based approaches and focused on whole-family support to ensure people could live at home for longer."
- 5.9.2 "Innovative approaches to coproduction, engagement, and inclusion, were embedded in local authority processes. These were supported by the strategic board structures and staff culture."
- 5.9.3 "Improved outcomes in supported accommodation and enabled bespoke solutions for people maintaining independent living, delaying entry to statutory services through the use of assistive technologies."
- 5.9.4 "The realignment of locality team functions and responsibilities, as well as innovative use of frontline teams were improving waiting lists, and strong partnership working with health partners was improving discharge and readmission outcomes for people." Innovations included:
- "The Family Carer Occupational Therapist Role who undertook assessments and provided support on moving and handling"
 - "The new Hybrid team, made up of unqualified social workers and occupational therapists, was to assess less-complex cases and provide equipment in a timely manner, which had allowed other frontline teams to focus on complex cases, reducing waiting times for both."
 - "Calm Cafés were delivered in partnership between Telford Mind and Telford & Wrekin's mental health social work team. A specific Calm Café had also been set up for Armed Forces Personnel and veterans. People told us the cafés had become very well regarded in the local area and recognised as being a notable example of place-based preventative support, with up to 300 people attending each month."
- 5.9.5 "People could easily access the local authority's care and support services through multiple channels, including online and self-assessment options."

5.9.6 “The local authority ensured people were given help, advice, and information about how to access services, facilities, and other agencies for help with non-eligible care and support needs through clear strategic approaches to partnership working.”

5.9.7 “The local authority’s framework for eligibility for care and support was transparent, clear, and consistently applied. Decisions and outcomes were timely and transparent.”

5.9.8 “People could easily access information and advice on their rights under the Care Act 2014, and ways to meet their care and support needs.”



5.9.9 “The Independent Living Centre was seen as a great resource for all communities... it was a ‘one-stop-shop’ for all support, information and advice around equipment, assessments, adaptations, and assistive technologies, with a ‘Virtual House’ programme available to help people see and understand how technology worked.”

5.9.10 “Inclusive local authority practices, supporting people’s needs and wishes as well as their cultural and ethnic needs. For example, access to culturally appropriate food, bathing facilities, prayer rooms, targeted mental health support, inventive use of direct payments, transgender support, and vaccination outreach programmes (Betty the Bus).”

5.9.11 “Telford and Wrekin had strong partnership working links with health partners, neighbouring authorities, the voluntary and community sector, and regional organisations to ensure strategic and operational plans met national and local objectives.”

5.9.12 “Safety was a priority for everyone, supported by a culture of openness and learning. People’s care journeys were coproduced with people using services, partners, staff, and communities to ensure continuity of care, choice and control, and the least restrictive options were used to promote independence.”

5.9.13 “People’s experiences of hospital discharge and the support received was positive.”

5.9.14 “There were effective systems, processes, and practices to make sure people were protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation through the TWSP (Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership).”

5.9.15 “Safeguarding enquiries were conducted sensitively, keeping the wishes and best interests of the person concerned at the centre.”

5.9.16 “The local authority used information about risk, performance, inequalities, and outcomes, to allocate resources and inform strategic planning. This enabled them to deliver the actions needed to improve care and support outcomes for people and local communities.”

5.9.17 “The work the Making it Real board were doing on improving accessible information standards was having real, positive impacts for people’s lives.”

5.9.18 “Strong, visible leadership from senior managers who had a good understanding of the challenges faced by the local authority due to effective coproduction, engagement and use of data and insight.”

5.9.19 “There was an inclusive and positive culture of continuous learning and improvement.”

5.9.20 “The local authority’s co-productive approach made a genuine difference to Adult Social Care services.”



5.10 These achievements reinforce the Council’s aim to Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough and the delivery of its priorities, particularly for every child, young person and adult to live well in their community. These achievements also reflect our Adult Social Care Vision to work together with people, key partners and communities to enable people to live well and independently in Telford and Wrekin and our approach to prevent, delay and reduce people’s need for formal social care.

Areas for focus

5.11 In addition to the strengths identified, the report identifies some areas for focus and continued work to:

- reduce waiting lists and waiting times for assessments.
- improve take up of Direct Payments.
- improve accessibility of services.
- improve the diversity and representation within experts by experience groups and Boards.
- focus on Safeguarding, Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberties (DoLS)
- improve communication with people in receipt of care and support services, their family and carers.
- develop the care market further
- focus on employment opportunities available for people with care and support needs including with learning disabilities.

- 5.12 These areas were priorities for the service prior to the CQC assessment process, and actions to improve them were already underway. Progress was shared with CQC as part of the Council's self-assessment, information return and on-site visit. Since July, this work has continued at pace, resulting in further improvements.
- 5.13 Appendix B provides a summary on these areas, the actions identified to address them, and the positive direction of travel over the last 6 months.
- 5.14 Whilst some areas of focus were agreed, CQC found that Adult Social Care in Telford and Wrekin is performing well and meeting their expectations – rated 'Good'. As such, no intervention activity from the Department of Health and Social Care is required (this is triggered when any quality statement receives a score of inadequate). The Council, however, is committed to continued improvement of Adult Social Care and will ensure that the continuous improvement plan is fully implemented.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 There are no alternative options.

7.0 Key Risks

- 7.1 The CQC report assesses Telford and Wrekin Council's ability to meet its Part 1 Care Act duties for people accessing care and support as 'GOOD' which provides assurances that the Council's services are performing well and meeting CQC's expectations.
- 7.2 The development and implementation of an action plan will further strengthen the delivery of the Council's duties. Were an action plan not to be developed this would hinder the ability of the council to continue to improve and refine the services it delivers to its residents.

8.0 Council Priorities

- 8.1 The CQC report and subsequent continuous improvement action plan aligns with the council's priorities. Particularly when considering 'Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community' and 'all neighbourhoods are a great place to live'.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are a number of actions summarised within the continuous improvement action plan in Appendix B. It is expected that delivery of the plan will be achieved from within planned medium-term resources. However, where additional funding is identified as required, this will be sought through the Council's existing Governance processes.

10.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 10.1** The CQC assessment framework assesses local authorities against their duties under the Care Act 2014, identified within the Care and Support Statutory Guidance and detailed within The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Care Functions) Regulations 2023. Having completed the assessment period and providing a finalised report s.46a Health and Social Care Act requires publication of the same by the CQC.

11.0 Ward Implications

- 11.1** The continuous improvement action plan will have a borough-wide impact for all adults living within Telford and Wrekin with care and support needs.

12.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 12.1** There are no negative health, social or economic implications arising from the continuous improvement action plan. The CQC report assesses the Council's ability to meet its Part 1 Care Act duties for people accessing care and support as 'GOOD'. The council will continue to, as part of its Care Act duties, promote an individual's wellbeing, provide information and advice and promote the integration of care and support. The continuous improvement action plan provides an opportunity to further improve people's wellbeing and independence and to reduce health and care inequalities.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1** The Council, in particular Adult Social Care, will continue to work in partnership with people with care and support needs, carers and wider family in a respectful, sensitive and transparent way. Recognising that individuals each have their own needs and by working with people in a collaborative way is more likely to lead to improved outcomes for them.
- 13.2** CQC heard from people using services and partners "how innovative approaches to co-production, engagement and inclusion were embedded in local authority processes. These were supported by the strategic board structures and staff cultures."
- 13.3** This is a positive opportunity to build on the excellent feedback about the current approach to equality and diversity.

14.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 14.1** There are no climate change or environmental implications because of the action plan.

15.0 Background Papers

None.

16.0 Appendices

- A CQC Assessment Report of Telford & Wrekin Council
- B Adult Social Care's Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment
Summary Continuous Improvement Action Plan

17.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	02/01/2025	07/01/2025	ON
Finance	02/01/2025	08/01/2025	RP
Director	02/01/2025	09/01/2025	SF

This page is intentionally left blank

Telford and Wrekin Council: local authority assessment

[How we assess local authorities](#)

Assessment published: 15 November 2024

About Telford and Wrekin Council

Demographics

Telford and Wrekin is a place of contrasts: Originally designed as a commuter 'new' town for some of the bigger cities in the Midlands, the town has a mix of urban and rural areas and now sees itself as a 'young' town. The 2021 census shows the rapid expansion of housing in the area has led to an influx of working-age people attracted by the local economy and facilities. In addition, longer-term residents are ageing, with a 51.8% increase in people aged 70 - 74 in the last 10 years and 20.5% of the local population identify as living with a disability. The total population in 2022 was 188,870 people, an 11.4% increase over 10 years, and continues to grow above national rates.

Telford and Wrekin has areas of relative affluence, as well as areas of significant deprivation, with 24.9% of the population living in the 20% most deprived areas nationally. On the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Telford and Wrekin has a score of 6 (with 10 being the highest and most deprived).

Life expectancy in Telford and Wrekin is lower than the national average, with men expected to live 78.0 years (England average 79.3 years) and women expected to live 82.1 years (England average 83.1 years). However, this varies significantly between the most and least deprived areas, with women having an inequality in life expectancy of 6.4 years and men 8.8 years.

Ethnicity data shows 88.19% of the population is White British or White other, with 5.43% Asian and 2.88% Black, Caribbean, or African. However, the non-British population in the area has increased by 10.5% in the last 10 years and is becoming increasingly more diverse.

Telford and Wrekin is part of the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System (ICS) which is the smallest in England. The local authority has a strong borough-based partnership with other key stakeholders, as well as Shropshire local authority which makes up the remainder of the ICS.

Telford and Wrekin has a stable, Labour-led administration, winning a further majority in May 2023.

Financial facts

- The local authority estimated in 2022-2023, its total budget would be **£310,398,000**. Its actual spend for the year was **£326,774,000**, which was **£16,376,000** more than estimated.
- The local authority estimated it would spend **£62,026,000** of its total budget on Adult Social Care in 2022-2023. Its actual spend was **£71,349,000**, which was **£9,323,000** more than estimated.
- In 2022-2023, **22%** of the budget was spent on Adult Social Care.
- The Local Authority has raised the full Adult Social Care precept for 2023-2024, with a value of **2%**. Please note the amount raised through Adult Social Care precept varies from Local Authority to Local Authority.

- Approximately **2,475** people were accessing long-term Adult Social Care support, and approximately **1,360** people were accessing short-term Adult Social Care support in 2022-2023. Local authorities spend money on a range of Adult Social Care services, including supporting individuals. No two care packages are the same and vary significantly in their intensity, duration, and cost.

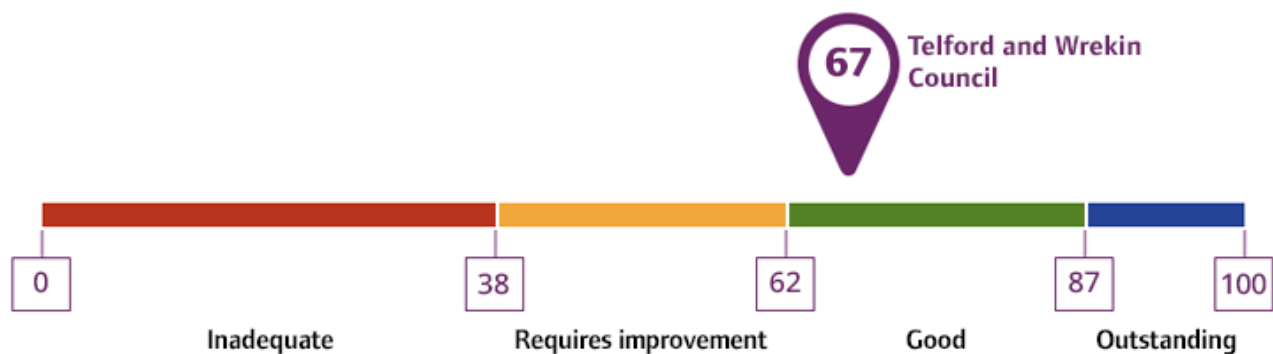
This data is reproduced at the request of the Department of Health and Social Care. It has not been factored into our assessment and is presented for information purposes only.

Overall Summary

Local authority rating and score

Telford and Wrekin Council

Good



Quality statement scores

Assessing needs

Score: 2

Supporting people to lead healthier lives

Score: 2

Equity in experience and outcomes

Score: 3

Care provision, integration and continuity

Score: 3

Partnerships and communities

Score: 3

Safe pathways, systems and transitions

Score: 3

Safeguarding

Score: 2

Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 3

Learning, improvement and innovation

Score: 3

Summary of people's experiences

People's experience of Adult Social Care in Telford and Wrekin were mostly positive.

People told us Care Act 2014 assessments were conducted professionally, using strength-based approaches and focused on whole-family support to ensure people could live at home for longer (through the local authority's 'Home-First' strategy).

Whilst people told us there were some delays in assessments and reviews, these were managed for risk and included signposting to alternative support options to meet non-eligible needs. We heard from unpaid carers who struggled to access respite services and found communication with the local authority a challenge at times due to increased demand for services and staffing levels. However, overall people felt positive about the support for unpaid carers in the area.

People told us senior leaders worked closely with housing, Public Health, and health partners to identify health inequalities. There were several strategic initiatives to prevent, reduce, and delay the need for intensive care and support, both in the community and in structured support services. Frontline teams worked with partners and stakeholders to improve outcomes for people around hospital discharge and reablement, as well as providing adaptations and equipment to promote recovery and independence.

Difficulties in processes around direct payments, and Disability Related Expenses (DRE) meant people found it hard to understand how to maximize their care choices, but positive community links and clear pathways for engagement meant these concerns were raised, listened to, and had started to be acted on by the local authority. However, these changes would take time to embed.

Most people reported positive experiences of transitions between children and adult services, although there were some examples of inconsistent staff approaches to communication and consultation, despite clear processes in place.

People shared examples of the local authority engaging effectively with communities to understand the needs of all groups, and then working co-productively with people with lived experience, staff champions, and the authority's partners and stakeholders to address those needs and concerns. Changes were implemented through both reactive and proactive strategies to ensure people felt safe in their communities, were in control of their lives, and had access to services which met their individual needs.

Summary of strengths, areas for development and next steps

At the time of this assessment the local authority was realigning its 2 locality teams to short term and long-term borough wide teams to address the impact of some of the more significant health inequalities in the area. Rapid increases in demand for Adult Social Care services, combined with local areas of deprivation, had seen senior leaders and established cabinet members working cohesively and collaboratively with partners to pool resources to tackle current and future care and support needs.

We heard from partners and people using services how innovative approaches to coproduction, engagement, and inclusion, were embedded in local authority processes. These were supported by the strategic board structures and staff culture. Co-production is when people are involved as an equal partner in designing the support and services they receive.

Links with housing had recently been strengthened to provide improved outcomes in supported accommodation, and enabled bespoke solutions for people maintaining independent living, delaying entry into statutory services through the use of assistive technologies. In particular, changes in Extra Care and Supported Living Services aimed to meet future demand and offer opportunities for people living outside of the area to return to Telford and Wrekin had begun, with the first of a number of new supported accommodation sites opening early 2024.

The local authority was investing directly in the delivery of housing solutions through their 'Housing Intervention Fund', using their wholly owned housing company and provider services, in addition to working with housing providers, and ensuring where they used Section 106 agreements (S106) to deliver affordable housing, it was meeting need. S106 is a legal agreement between a local planning authority and a developer or landowner. It's a mechanism that ensures a development is acceptable in planning terms and makes a positive contribution to the local area.

National data for Telford and Wrekin showed people receiving Adult Social Care services, including unpaid carers, felt safe, most trends were in line with national averages and improving over time. For example, in the 2023 Adult Social Care survey (ASCS) which measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes which matter most to people, 68.98% of people using services said they felt safe (compared to the England average of 69.69%). Further data provided by the local authority suggested this satisfaction rate had improved in 2024.

Feedback from partner organisations was positive, with particular focus given to good practice in continuous learning, partnership working and shaping the local care market to meet people's needs. However, concerns about consistent approaches to direct payments, deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLs) and accessible information standards meant partners felt there were areas of improvement around safe processes and in equity of experience for people receiving care and support services.

Staff and leaders told us of strong leadership and a culture of transparency and learning. Staff gave us good examples of care provision arrangements and quality assurance processes to keep people safe. Both staff and leaders told us they were proud of the equality and coproduction ethos embedded in the structure of the local authority but felt staff shortages and increased demand for care was impacting on assessment waiting lists. Leaders explained how they were addressing these concerns and provided updated data to show improvements.

Staff identified a lack of understanding of the financial assessment process leading to a lack of clarity around direct payments as barriers to effective assessments. However, staff felt advocacy provision to support people who lacked capacity to make financial decisions was strong. Whilst updated data provided by the local authority for 2023-2024 (yet unpublished) showed improvement in direct payment uptake, figures were still below national averages.

Whilst communication in general was good, and senior leaders were visible, staff told us recent structural changes had yet to fully embed. This, combined with concerns about the difficulties health partners were currently facing, had led to inconsistencies in the approach of frontline teams.

We saw clear processes for engagement and coproduction, with the Making it Real Board representing the voice of people with lived experience across the local authority structure. Recent changes to safeguarding processes throughout frontline teams showed improvements in outcomes for people, and culturally competent staff recruitment plans were in place to address staff shortages.

The realignment of locality team functions and responsibilities, as well as innovative use of frontline teams were improving waiting lists, and strong partnership working with health partners was improving discharge and readmission outcomes for people. Public Health strategies were aligned to support a focus on prevention services, with a particular focus on 'starting well' in life, as well as reduce/delay strategies around obesity, smoking cessation, and healthy lifestyles.

Theme 1: How Telford and Wrekin works with people

This theme includes these quality statements:

- Assessing needs
- Supporting people to live healthier lives
- Equity in experience and outcomes

We may not always review all quality statements during every assessment.

Assessing needs

Score: 2

2 - Evidence shows some shortfalls

What people expect

I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me.

I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and goals.

The local authority commitment

We maximize the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.

Key findings for this quality statement

Assessment, care planning and review arrangements

People told us they could easily access the local authority's care and support services through multiple channels, including online and self-assessment options. The main point of contact was through the Family Connect team who received and triaged referrals, checking details and consent to share information before ensuring people were directed to the most appropriate team.

Most Care Act 2014 assessments were strengths-based, focused on people's right to choice, their abilities, and the support already available to them, and ensured the least restrictive support options to promote independence. However, people gave us examples of inconsistent communication and lack of engagement meaning the social work practice framework was not always embedded in front line staff practice. The Principal Social Worker (PSW) was seen to be visible, approachable and supportive by front line staff interviewed. Whilst the PSW role has been in place at the local authority for many years, the current PSW was relatively new in post and needed time to fully integrate to ensure the post was at its most effective.

The local authority's strategic approaches to identifying needs included 'making every contact count' initiatives to embed a culture of preventing, reducing, and delaying the need for more complex support. For example, use of community-led support and Early Intervention support, as well as links to Public Health teams, to signpost people to advice and information about healthier lifestyles. The Home First strategy meant people could live at home for longer and received support to ensure they remained an active part of their local community. For example, 80% of people supported by Occupational Therapy did not have any other involvement from Adult Social Care during the initial intervention.

Assessments also reflected what people wanted to achieve in receiving support, and how they wished to live their lives. ASCS national data (2023) showed 78.07% of people felt they had control of their daily lives (statistically comparable to the average for England at 77.21%), and 41.18% of people reported they had as much social contact as they desired (again comparable to the average for England of 44.38%). As part of the assessment process the local authority shared data which suggested further improvements in both these areas in the last 12 months.

People's experiences of care and support was positive, with most people telling us care planning ensured their human rights were respected and protected, they were involved throughout the assessment process in making informed decisions, and their protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 were understood and incorporated into care planning and review arrangements. However, some people experienced less favourable arrangements, with examples of poor communication, lack of control over decision making, and inconsistency of approach from individual frontline staff. Where these concerns were raised with the local authority, people felt listened to by the local authority and happy with the outcome of their complaints. Senior leaders told us there had been some team re-alignment to address areas of inconsistency, leading to a positive improvement in communication and strengths-based approaches, evidenced by a reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments received in this area.

Staff and leaders were competent to complete assessments, with clear workforce development processes in place. However, feedback from staff, partners and people receiving support indicated further training around Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) assessments, DoLs assessments, and direct payments (including interpreting the current policy and process) would benefit all parties and improve outcomes for people receiving support. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a legal framework for making decisions on behalf of people who may lack the mental ability to do so for themselves.

For more complex, specialist assessments, a joint approach with partners was taken to ensure people's support was planned and co-ordinated across different agencies and services. Recent changes to staffing structures and roles had improved this process and allowed more transparent approaches to joint assessments. For example, the main role of the new Hybrid team, made up of unqualified social workers and occupational therapists, was to assess less-complex cases and provide equipment in a timely manner, which had allowed other frontline teams to focus on complex cases, reducing waiting times for both.

Timeliness of assessments, care planning and reviews

Assessment and care planning arrangements were not always timely or up to date, with significant waiting lists for assessments. Figures provided by the local authority showed only 25% of Care Act 2014 assessments were completed within the authority's target timescale of 28 days, with the longest wait at the time data was submitted to CQC (March 2024) being 294 days (from the date of submission) and 178 people awaiting an assessment. As of July 2024, this had significantly reduced to a maximum 60 day wait, and 80 people awaiting an assessment. Reasons for the length of waiting times included assessment of more complex support needs, unplanned priority work, and capacity within frontline teams. Further data provided by the local authority following the development of hybrid workers (Adult Practitioner/Occupational Therapy Assistant roles) showed this had recently improved, with the average waiting time reduced to 80 days at the time of writing. These changes, combined with staff recruitment plans were expected to continue improving waiting times for assessments.

Annual reviews of care and support had also benefited from the local authority's recent changes in structure and process, with the number of overdue 12-month reviews reduced from over 500 people in March 2024 to 35 people in July 2024. Again, the introduction of Adult Practitioner/Occupational Therapy Assistants had improved waiting times, with workforce plans in place to ensure caseloads were sustainable in the future.

The local authority had clear processes to reduce any risks to people's wellbeing, while they were waiting for an assessment. Risk assessments, weekly case review meetings, interim support arrangements and partnership working meant urgent needs were met in a timely manner and cases could be escalated if people's needs changed.

In addition to the Hybrid team, frontline community social work and occupational therapy teams were structured to target more complex assessments and reviews. For example, specialist teams focusing on people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and mental health needs. Whilst there was no specific Early Intervention team in the local authority, this function was covered by a number of social work teams, including the Rapid Response team and the Discharge and Reablement team, both of which were jointly funded with health partners.

People's experience of timely assessments and reviews was mixed, with examples of difficulties in communication of progress and outcomes, and partner organisations telling us of long waits for annual reviews of care. The local authority had recently implemented clear processes to address thematic concerns. For example, the further embedding of the 'keeping in touch' process, introduced following feedback from people using services, ensured people were contacted regularly with updates on the progress of their assessments and reviews.

Out-of-borough placements were reviewed and monitored by individual social workers and Care Provider Quality Monitoring Officers, who liaised with provider services, families, and commissioners from other local authorities. Families could request unscheduled reviews if there were concerns or changes in need impacting on placements, and annual reviews took place in a timely manner. At the time of the assessment activity there was no waiting list for out-of-borough reviews.

Assessment and care planning for unpaid carers, child's carers and child carers

The needs of unpaid carers were recognised as distinct from the person with care needs; assessments, support plans and reviews for unpaid carers were undertaken separately and unpaid carers could access their own support services.

The local authority frontline teams completed carers assessments and had seen a 26.7% increase in unpaid carers supported in the last 12 months. However, changes to teams and processes had led to a 98% satisfaction rate in a recent local authority carers survey carried out by the Making it Real Board. For example, a Family Carer Occupational Therapist role within the Occupational Therapy Team undertook assessments and provided support on moving and handling techniques. There was also a new dedicated carers post preparing young people for adulthood. Carer's assessments were undertaken at the point young people were referred into Adult Services. These posts had strong links with the Hybrid Team and helped to inform a new All-Age Carers strategy developed and delivered by the Carers Centre.

Data provided by the local authority showed these changes to processes, as well as fortnightly peer reviews of carers assessments, had also led to improvements in waiting lists, with the longest wait for a carers assessment as of March 2024 standing at 290 days, reducing to 56 days by July 2024. Again, staff and leaders monitored waiting lists, and would put interim support in place, such as up to 25 hours respite care to mitigate risk and alleviate the impact the caring role was having on the unpaid carer.

Unpaid carers told us about difficulties accessing respite and navigating digital information systems, as well as confusion around direct payments. However, overall carers experience in Telford and Wrekin was positive, with national data from the 2024 Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) broadly in line with the average England figures. For example, 39.47% of carers were satisfied with social services, compared to an average 36.83% for England.

When a young carer was identified within the family unit, they were referred into the Carers Centre. Assessments involved multi-agency interactions with schools and health partners to provide wrap around support for the family and young carer. Support for young adult carers aged 18-24 with education, employment and next steps including age-appropriate training sessions and one to one support was also in place.

Help for people to meet their non-eligible care and support needs

The local authority ensured people were given help, advice, and information about how to access services, facilities, and other agencies for help with non-eligible care and support needs through clear strategic approaches to partnership working.

The Health and Wellbeing (HWB) strategy (2023-2027) focused partner collaboration on ensuring people enjoyed “healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives”, adopting a life course approach across 3 areas: Start Well; Live Well; Age Well. The Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership (TWIPP) strategic plan (2022-2025) mirrored the HWB strategy framework, aiming to improve outcomes for all residents and reduce inequalities, regardless of the individual’s care and support needs.

As part of the assessment process, people whose needs did not meet the eligibility criteria for formal support were signposted to information and advice to support their needs and prevent, reduce, or delay the risk of requiring further specialised support. In Telford and Wrekin this information and advice was available online as well as through the local Independent Living Centre. This was a joint venture between the local authority and community partners, including Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service, which was joint led, providing unbiased advice and guidance on how people could stay safe and independent in their own homes, including through the use of equipment and assistive technologies.

In addition to the Independent Living Centre, the local authority promoted community engagement through links with the citizens advice bureau, community hubs, awareness events and workshops, and through the Making it Real Board. We also saw multiple examples of joint health and social care funded clubs and activity groups for people of different ages, needs, cultures, and faiths. For example, the local veterans support group ‘Armed Forces Network’ ran extensive outreach services, with weekly veteran’s cafes, monthly drop-in sessions at community centres, cooking classes, football, and other community interest groups to support mental health needs and tackle social isolation.

Eligibility decisions for care and support

The Care Act 2014 sets a minimum national eligibility criteria threshold for adult care and support needs and carer support needs. All local authorities comply with this national threshold. The local authority's framework for eligibility for care and support was transparent, clear, and consistently applied. Decisions and outcomes were timely and transparent.

Telford and Wrekin did not operate a separate appeals process; however, people with care and support needs, their family and carers were able to appeal using the Adult Social Care complaints process. As part of this process referrals to the Ombudsman was also signposted. This process met the local authority's duties under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the Care Act 2014.

National data from ASCS (2022) showed 60.96% of people did not buy any additional care or support privately or pay more to 'top up' their care and support. This was below the average for England at 64.63% and meant a higher-than-average number of people were paying to meet their care and support needs. Data provided by the local authority showed there were 5 appeals the first quarter of 2024-2025 relating to eligibility decisions for care and support. Of these, 1 was upheld. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) website did not show any eligibility appeals referred to the LGSCO in the previous 12 months.

Occupational Therapy assessments did not apply the eligibility outcomes of the Care Act 2014 for equipment provision. Senior leaders told us if the equipment enabled someone to complete their daily living activities, then it had 'prevented, reduced, or delayed' the need for care, and this mitigated any extra bureaucratic complexities.

Financial assessment and charging policy for care and support

Telford and Wrekin's Adult Social Care Charging policy included a framework to notify people what financial thresholds would mean fully funded care provision, as well as the thresholds requiring self-funded support.

Data provided by the local authority showed there were 2 appeals in the first quarter of 2024-2025 relating to financial assessment decisions for care and support; neither of these were upheld.

The local authority supplied data which showed, on average, financial assessments were completed within their policy target of 35 days. At the time of the data submission there were 263 financial assessments pending decisions. Some of the lengthiest delays not caused by the local authority and were due to waits for information linked to Court of Protection cases (CoP) cases (which were linked to the Community DoLs legal process).

Provision of independent advocacy

The local authority commissioned 2 separate external providers to deliver advocacy services. People and partners had previously expressed concerns about a lack of advocacy knowledge by frontline teams when completing carers assessments, including their responsibility to undertake MCA assessments, and duties under the Care Act 2014. However, the local authority had arranged awareness sessions for staff and carers with the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

At the time of the assessment staff and leaders told us they were confident in the advocacy referral process and timely support was made available to anyone who needed independent support.

Data provided by the local authority showed advocacy service uptake had recently increased from an average 23 referrals per quarter (3 months) in 2022-2023, to 40 people receiving Care Act 2014 advocacy and a further 32 people receiving Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) support at the time of writing.

Supporting people to lead healthier lives

Score: 2

2 - Evidence shows some shortfalls

What people expect

I can get information and advice about my health, care and support and how I can be as well as possible – physically, mentally and emotionally.

I am supported to plan ahead for important changes in my life that I can anticipate.

The local authority commitment

We support people to manage their health and wellbeing so they can maximize their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives and where possible, reduce future needs for care and support.

Key findings for this quality statement

Arrangements to prevent, delay or reduce needs for care and support

Telford and Wrekin's 'Borough Vision 2032' saw the local authority working closely with internal and external partners to collate population data and to engage the local community in identifying health inequalities and future needs. This information was used to plan the availability of a range of services, facilities, and resources to promote independence, and to prevent, delay and reduce the need for more complex care and support.

The local Health and Wellbeing Board and TWIPP, along with Public Health strategies set out a framework of support for people throughout their lives, reinforced by 'all-age' strategies for people with mental health needs, people with learning disabilities, and autistic people. Emerging trends were identified in the local authority's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA 2024) and the local authority collaborated closely with neighbouring authorities and the ICS Population Management team, using a prevalence tool and NHS data to help identify unmet needs.

Public Health services worked closely with Adult Social Care leaders and teams to identify and target national, regional, and local health priorities. For example, the main causes for average life expectancy being below national average were cancer and cardiovascular conditions combined with the impact of deprivation in the area. Public Health worked with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) on primary prevention work linking improvements in cardiovascular conditions and mental health needs with the benefits of smoking cessation.

The local authority used community based 'Live Well' hubs and projects to connect people to community resources and practical help, supported by health champions. Telford and Wrekin had coproduced and implemented a number of strategies, jointly funded with health partners, to provide information, advice and support around a range of universal health needs. For example, obesity, physical activity, sexual health, falls prevention, vaccinations, and blood pressure. These prevention services were targeted towards communities where engagement required further work, for example, immunisation and blood pressure awareness events supported by faith groups within the local Ghanian and Windrush communities, leisure centre links to tackle obesity, and calm cafes to support mental health needs, funded by Public Health grants and the ICB with a grant agreement in place with providers for delivery.

The local authority's 'making every contact count' initiative was used to ensure every opportunity was taken to identify opportunities for health promotion, and to embed preventative strategies in the everyday working of frontline teams. People and partners told us this approach not only supported people to live independently for longer but increased assessment referral rates in communities with protected characteristics. For example, referrals to the armed forces network supporting veterans (a characteristic the local authority had chosen to class as protected under the Equality Act 2010) had increased by 50% following awareness sessions within the community.

Staff and leaders told us early help and prevention functions within all frontline teams helped embed the making every contact count initiative in practice. People spoke highly of the amount of prevention and early intervention services available, how easy these services were to access, and how much they had benefitted from their support. For example, we heard about family relationships improving due to the holistic approaches taken by frontline teams to include whole families in assessments of need and how, by giving people the opportunity to support themselves, services only needed to be provided on a short-term basis. ASCS data (2023) showed 74.83% of people who had received short term support no longer require support (England average 66.26%). Further data provided by the local authority suggested this rate had improved in 2024.

The Making it Real Board had designed a directory of support services, available online and in multiple printed and audio formats. The directory promoted advice, support services, and awareness events such as Disability Awareness month and LGBTQ+ Pride events. These events were used as opportunities to engage with seldom heard groups, with healthy lifestyle advisors, occupational therapists and mental health services on hand to offer advice, and to break down barriers preventing communities accessing support. For example, mental health services had recently been focusing on people from ethnic minority groups, who were less likely to engage with preventative services.

Specific consideration was given to unpaid carers, with the local Carers Centre producing a wellbeing guide, and the newly coproduced All-Age Carers strategy ensuring unpaid carers needs were considered as part of every assessment process. Support offered to unpaid carers included wellbeing checks, up to 25 hours respite per year, planning for emergencies, and employment, education, and training opportunities. SACE data (2024) showed 62.50% of carers found it easy to access information and advice (England average 59.06%).

The local authority had taken steps to identify people with unmet care and support needs, with work currently being undertaken to upskill unpaid carers, and encouraging whole-family smoking cessation, as well as providing bespoke healthy-lifestyle training in a joint prevent and reduce initiative using Public Health grant monies. Future targeted approaches to help prevent, reduce, delay more complex support included supporting older people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autistic populations by promoting healthy lifestyles to tackle obesity, support smoking cessation, and offer drugs and alcohol support. The local authority Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy identified specific housing need to promote people's independence and was developed with all services.

Provision and impact of intermediate care and reablement services

Telford and Wrekin worked with neighbouring authorities, voluntary and community partners, the ICS, and other health partners (including Severn Hospice Telford and Wrekin), to deliver intermediate care and reablement services, and to support people to return to their optimal independence.

The local ICS footprint covered both Telford and Wrekin and neighbouring Shropshire, with 3 hospitals, and 5 community hospitals as well as mental health services run by the Midland's Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. Governance arrangements, through the ICB and the Integrated Partnership Board (ICP), ensured strategic commissioning linked with the health and wellbeing and TWIPP strategic plans to effectively use the Better Care Fund (BCF) to improve hospital discharge, safety and readmission rates, as well as improving access to GP surgeries.

Hospital discharge pathways were supported by the Telford Integrated Community Assessment Team (TICAT), with the jointly funded integrated Discharge and Reablement team, providing enablement intervention and intermediate care for up to 6 weeks after discharge. These teams included nurses, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists who could implement strength-based assessments and support, including equipment, assistive technology, and Family Unpaid Carer Support programmes to improve recovery rates and reduce over-reliance on support. Urgent Community Response teams also provided up to 72 hours admission avoidance support in conjunction with the Rapid Response team and Virtual Wards programme where necessary.

The local authority Hybrid and Community Specialist teams then worked closely with the voluntary and community sector, as well as commissioned care providers, such as the innovative Planned Overnight Care team, to support longer-term needs or signpost people to further support through the Independent Living Centre. Whilst the preference was to support people to remain at home, staff and leaders told us there were suitable step-down arrangements for intermediate care beds commissioned within the independent sector to meet demand. In addition to this, additional intermediate care beds with daily therapy had been commissioned in June 2024 and a pilot programme to use extra care units for enablement was about to commence.

National Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) data, which shows how well care and support services achieve the outcomes which matter most to people, showed in 2023 3.92% of people 65+ received reablement/rehabilitation services after discharge from hospital. This is slightly above the England average of 2.91%. However, only 70.00% of people 65+ were still at home 91 days after discharge from the hospital into reablement/rehab, significantly below the England average of 82.18%. Further data provided by the local authority suggested this rate had improved in 2024.

There was a system reliance on bed-based care, with partners telling us of over-prescription of support upon discharge from hospital leading to reduced opportunities for independence promotion and increase risk of longer-term support needs. This indicated community provision to support people to independence and multi-agency working still needed strengthening. Health partners told us they were working closely with the local authority and the Urgent and Emergency Care and Delivery Board to review avoidable admissions, and figures for the latest reporting year (currently unpublished but provided by the local authority) suggested readmission rates had improved to become more in line with national averages. A Care Transfer Hub, developed through integrated working with the previous Integrated Discharge Team, was being developed with implementation planned for October 2024. The Housing commissioning function within the local authority also delivered bespoke solutions to reduce reliance on bed-based care post hospital discharge.

Health partners told us the local authority were working closely with the ICP to meet increased demand in complex hospital discharges (20% increase in 2022-2023 compared to the previous year) with the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System Urgent Care Transformation programme aiming to increase the percentages of complex discharges home from 50% to 70%.

People's experiences of hospital discharge and the support received was positive, with people telling us of services helping them to remain at home and effective communication and advocacy supporting decisions in the best interest of the person receiving support. Data provided by the local authority showed less than 1% of discharges during the first quarter of 2024-2025 were delayed due to lack of social care service capacity; none of these delays resulted in delays of more than 72 hours.

Access to equipment and home adaptations

The local authority ensured people could access equipment, assistive technologies, and home adaptations to maintain their independence and continue living in their own homes. The provision of equipment was jointly commissioned with a neighbouring local authority and Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB, and allowed for rapid assessment and provision of 'low-level' basic equipment (for example, through the Hybrid Team) as well as provision of more complex home adaptations.

The local authority's Independent Living Centre was a 'one-stop-shop' for all support, information and advice around equipment, assessments, adaptations, and assistive technologies, with a 'Virtual House' programme available to help people see and understand how technology worked. The Virtual House was an online interactive tour showing examples of occupational therapy, assistive technology and sensory aids, equipment and solutions which could be helpful to residents and/or their families to support independence at home.

Increase demand for occupational therapy assessments as well as staffing shortages meant there were significant waiting lists particularly for more complex assessments, with 39.3% of assessments completed within the local authority's target of 28 days. Whilst updated data shared by the local authority showed waiting times for assessments for sensory needs had slightly improved, the number of people waiting for assessments overall had increased by 34.7%. Staff and leaders told us of staff recruitment plans included the increased use of Adult Practitioner/Occupational Therapy Assistants or 'Hybrid' Workers to tackle waiting lists, and risk profiles were closely monitored to prioritise assessments based on need.

People told us the equipment and adaptations they received had been helpful, particularly following discharge from hospital and follow-up reviews and support were available when needed. Most people felt listened to by occupational therapists and assistive technologies helped to maintain their independence, however, people found out of hours commissioned support when equipment broke down was not always timely. The local authority was working with the equipment provider to address these concerns and improve the out of hours service provision.

Staff told us of overly complex processes when applying for Disabled Facilities Grants which delayed processes and often restricted the availability of finances for more intense adaptations such as wet rooms, doorway access or adaptations to kitchens and bedrooms. The local authority told us they had initiated a review of the process across Housing, Adult Social Care, and Children's services.

Provision of accessible information and advice

People told us they could easily access information and advice on their rights under the Care Act 2014, and ways to meet their care and support needs. This included unpaid carers and people who funded or arranged their own care and support. National data showed 63.06% of people who used services (ASCS 2023), found it easy to find information about support (compared to an average of 66.26% for England). Further data provided by the local authority (but not yet published) suggested this had improved for 2024.

Staff and leaders told us the local authority had accessible information standards processes, as well as translation services enabling people to access advice, information, and support in multiple languages, writing and audio formats, large-print and easy-to-read versions.

The Making it Real Board, as well as staff champions within the local authority, were consulted on all new strategies and marketing plans to ensure accessibility. For example, the Making it Real Board had recently been involved in codesigning the 'knowing where to go' document, which was a guide to support services. Members of the board supported the production of the guide in multiple formats, including a video featuring board members themselves.

Staff and leaders told us of multiple locations and opportunities for accessing information and advice. For example, the Family Connect team (the main point of access for all referrals and concerns) could be contacted via telephone, email, and the local authority's website. Other frontline teams and senior leaders made themselves, and information, accessible through community hubs, newsletters, leaflets, and magazines.

However, despite this, people told us of some inconsistencies and poor experiences in communication, feedback, and an over-reliance on families translating for people who did not speak English as their first language. We also heard of people with sensory impairments who had mixed experiences of support from frontline teams, for example with emails and letters sent in normal font sizes despite prior knowledge of the persons' sensory needs.

Direct payments

Staff and leaders told us there was low uptake of direct payments, partially due to staff training, awareness, and resources. Short and Long-Term data returns and ASCOF data for 2023 show only 1.79% of unpaid carers received direct payments (significantly below the national average) and 20.10% of people receiving services used direct payments, significantly below the average of 26.22% in England. Whilst updated data provided by the local authority for 2023-2024 (yet unpublished) showed improvement in direct payment uptake, figures were still below national averages.

The time taken to set up the direct payment once an individual budget had been agreed was dependent on all relevant information (such as bank details) being present and an agreed Personal Assistant with availability to meet the support plan needs identified. The person, or their advocate, were supported through the process by the local authority. Delays were uncommon but could be met through commissioned support to bridge the gap until direct payments began if the person had an assessed eligible need.

People told us there was 'confusion' amongst frontline staff about direct payments processes and advice given was often incorrect. The local authority had responded to these concerns by introducing a new direct payments board, as well as increasing the size of the direct payments team and providing training for all frontline staff. They had also commissioned a voluntary and community organisation to raise awareness of direct payments amongst unpaid carers. Staff told us since the introduction of the direct payments team the support available for frontline staff had improved, including drop-in sessions and fact sheets, but needed time to embed before they could say it was being consistently used. Updated data provided by the local authority showed the number of people using direct payments since the introduction of the new processes had increased by 37.8%.

The new board had also introduced weekly drop-ins, videos, and advice for people thinking of using direct payments. Despite the lack of understanding and poor uptake of direct payments, where they were used, people told us of positive outcomes and improved control of their care and support needs. For example, people had used payments for yoga sessions, fridge freezers and tumble dryers to improve independence, confidence, and health.

Equity in experience and outcomes

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

What people expect

I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and goals.

The local authority commitment

We actively seek out and listen to information about people who are most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes. We tailor the care, support and treatment in response to this.

Key findings for this quality statement

Understanding and reducing barriers to care and support and reducing inequalities

Telford and Wrekin had clear structures and processes in place for engaging with communities and analysing data on local demographics to improve health and reduce health inequalities to understand the care and support needs of the whole population. The local authority worked closely with internal and external partners, including housing, Public Health, Children's services, health partners, the voluntary and community sector, commissioned providers, and people with lived experiences, to understand current and future service demand in the area.

The borough had an ageing population, with 34% of the population over 65 years old, living on average 22-25 years in poor health in their lifetime. 20.5% of people in the area were living with a disability. In the most deprived areas these health inequalities were impacted further by unemployment, sickness, poor housing, and caring responsibilities. The borough was becoming increasingly diverse, with the proportion of people from non-white British backgrounds increasing to 17% in the 2021 census (from 11% in 2011).

The local authority's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy (2022-2026) set out the objectives and approaches to promoting equality, both within the workforce and within the borough, setting clear targets for health, accessibility, engagement, and inclusion. This strategy was informed by data within the JSNA 2024 and strengthened by the joint Health and Wellbeing strategy. The strategy aimed to reduce barriers to support and enabled the local authority to target resources toward those who felt socially excluded. This included people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The local authority had also signed up to the armed forces covenant and recognised veterans as having the same protection as those characteristics identified in the Act.

Staff told us consultation and equality officers collated data from people accessing services through joint working with frontline teams (including equality data gathering through case records), recruitment boards, voluntary and community organisations, consultation forums, feedback via complaints, and safeguarding concerns. Adult Social Care teams were also developing links with the 'safer, stronger communities' department to collect data on hate crimes and domestic violence. For example, partners told us they had been commissioned to work with autistic women who had experienced abuse and other safety issues.

Telford and Wrekin's main focus was on supporting people from ethnic minority group backgrounds and people with protected characteristics. This included service personnel and veterans; Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities; people living with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autistic people; people living with mental health needs; the LGBTQ+ community; looked after children and care leavers; asylum seekers and refugees; unpaid carers; and those affected by drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse.

Staff and leaders told us community engagement opportunities included access to community hubs, the Independent Living Centre, and awareness events (such as disability pride and LGBTQ+ events, where local authority staff set up pop-up tents to offer advice, information, and signposting to support services. In addition to their Calm Cafés programme (which tackled social isolation for people living with mental health needs), Mental Health teams had also recently arranged a number of Black History Month events, focusing on raising awareness of preventative services in communities who were less likely to engage with support at an early stage.

Although some partner organisations gave examples of areas they felt the local authority could improve (for example improving representation of all communities on the Making it Real Board), most people and partners told us the local authority genuinely wanted to improve inequalities for people. Senior leaders were seen to be actively engaged in equality activities, attending awareness events and listening to feedback from people with lived experience. The Making it Real Board had recently invited leaders to discussions about concerns regarding the disability living fund and DRE processes. Workshops had led to coproduced information leaflets, videos, and online signposting to support others in the community.

The local authority had regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) in the way it delivered its Care Act 2014 functions. There were equality objectives, and coproduced, adequately resourced strategies to reduce inequalities. Data gathered was used to improve the experiences and outcomes for people who were more likely to receive poor care.

The local authority further met its Public Sector Equality Duty, with impact assessments completed for all strategic plans, and staff involved in performing Care Act 2014 duties had a good understanding of cultural diversity within the area and how to engage appropriately. As part of the local authority's drive to support culturally competent recruitment and retention of staff, leaders told us they had introduced new equality data-gathering technology and designed an equal opportunities charter, supported by staff champions, which set out their employment equality promise. Staff told us there were regular opportunities for learning, with staff champions and experts by experience (a person who has personal, lived experience of a type of health or care service, or who cares for somebody receiving a service) sharing their knowledge. For example, during disability awareness month a British Sign Language (BSL) charity ran sessions on deaf awareness and how to engage effectively with people.

Inclusion and accessibility arrangements

Overall, the local authority ensured there were appropriate inclusion and accessibility arrangements in place so people could engage with the local authority in ways which worked for them. As with other areas of equality and inclusion, Telford and Wrekin took a coproductive approach to inclusion and accessibility arrangements. The Making it Real Board worked closely with information officers, frontline teams, and marketing and media teams to ensure information, advice and documentation was accessible, relatable, and easy to use. For example, the local authority's new Adult Social Care Portal had people with lived experience of services involved in the planning of web pages and the language-style of information being shared.

People told us the local authority were working to reduce barriers to engagement. For example, a digital inclusion project, delivered with a range of partner organisations, supported people to become familiar with technology, using drop-in sessions to support people to complete online forms, practice their skills and even borrow equipment.

The local authority worked closely with public health and voluntary organisations to engage with seldom heard and emerging communities to raise awareness of health inequalities. For example, the African Caribbean and Community Initiative (ACCI) looked at bridging the gap in services by providing culturally appropriate, community-based support and advice, to provide a safe space for communities to meet, and to build awareness of mental health services in Telford and Wrekin.

Providers told us of examples of the local authority facilitating links between residential and supported living services and local temples and places of worship to support peoples emotional and pastoral needs as well as allowing communication and advice for services looking to provide culturally appropriate activities, food, and celebrations.

National ASCS (2023) data showed Telford and Wrekin were comparable to national averages for people who use services who were satisfied with adult social care, with 58.78% of people stating were satisfied, compared to national average of 61.21%. Further data provided by the local authority suggested this rate had improved in 2024. 39.22% of carers felt they could access support groups and talk to someone in confidence, which was above the regional average of 29.04% and in line with the national average of 32.98% (SACE 2024).

The Independent Living Centre was seen as a great resource for all communities, though some people felt it was not marketed well and had its own accessibility issues for those with mobility issues. People told us they had made senior leaders aware of these accessibility concerns, which were being reviewed as part of the wider borough accessibility agenda.

Staff and leaders told us accessibility arrangements were integral when planning engagement events. Translators, BSL interpreters, public transport, venue locations, hearing loops, and assistance dogs were all factored in. Documents were available in multiple languages, including most recently Ghanian and Chinese translations, and audio and visual/easy to read versions were also available on request.

Accessibility and Inclusion groups, led by staff and community champions met every 4-6 weeks to help plan thematic awareness events, for example a poetry competition for LGBTQ+ pride history month, and webpages had text to speech, translation, and question/answer functions. However, partners told us there was a lack of representation within the Making it Real Board from people with LGBTQ+ backgrounds and people from ethnic backgrounds.

Voluntary and community organisations supporting inclusion and accessibility included Forum 50+ who promoted opportunities for the over 50s to have their voice heard with regards to local services, planning and facilities; Telford and Wrekin interfaith council who provided shared spaces for activities and workshops; and calm cafes, delivered by Telford MIND to tackle social isolation.

Partner organisations told us of an overreliance on families translating for people who did not speak English as their first language during the assessment and review processes. Some partners highlighted areas where the local authority could improve accessibility, such as targeting unpaid carers and seldom heard groups who may struggle to attend awareness events.

Others told us of inclusive local authority practices, supporting people's needs and wishes as well as their cultural and ethnic needs. For example, access to culturally appropriate food, bathing facilities, prayer rooms, targeted mental health support, inventive use of direct payments, transgender support, and vaccination outreach programmes (Betty the Bus).

Theme 2: Providing support

This theme includes these quality statements:

- Care provision, integration and continuity
- Partnerships and communities

We may not always review all quality statements during every assessment.

Care provision, integration and continuity

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

What people expect

I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me.

The local authority commitment

We understand the diverse health and care needs of people and our local communities, so care is joined-up, flexible and supports choice and continuity.

Key findings for this quality statement

Understanding local needs for care and support

Telford and Wrekin took a coproductive approach to data collection and community engagement, using multiple sources of data, including census data, Public Health information, data from the JSNA 2024, drop-in sessions, awareness events, complaints and concerns, and frontline teams. Health, voluntary and community sector, and internal local authority partners worked jointly to plan strategies, shape services, and meet current and future service demand.

Population growth, ageing populations, increased need for specialist service, meant demand for several services areas had begun to outstrip capacity. Partners, staff and leaders told us there were enough services to meet domiciliary and residential support needs but there was a need to increase the number of available placements for supporting more complex dementia and nursing needs, as well as more community-based services to meet the needs of people living with learning disabilities, autistic people, and people with mental health needs.

People told us some ethnic communities found it hard to engage with the local authority. For example, people from the Chinese community who did not speak English told us they often felt isolated and disconnected.

Staff and leaders also told us there were smaller, targeted support needs to address. For example, bariatric support and services for people with neurological conditions such as Motor Neurone, Fibromyalgia, and multiple sclerosis. Data for each area of Telford and Wrekin accessed through a 'Middle Layer Super Output Area' dashboard allowed data to be analysed at community level.

We saw how the JSNA 2024 broke down the data on people's needs into 3 key areas: Start Well (Children's services); Live Well (people of working age); and Age Well (65+). These broad categories were used to 'track' peoples' support needs through their lives and target prevent, reduce, delay services where they would be most effective. For example, Public Health services worked with Children's services to implement healthy-living initiatives to address concerns around childhood obesity where rates were worse than the England average.

Market shaping and commissioning to meet local needs

Telford and Wrekin's market position statement 2021-2025 focused on a 'home-first' strengths-based approach, with the person's skills, family, and community support at the heart of all assessments of need to ensure services met people's needs, improved outcomes and offered value for money. Care and support services were delivered by a range of organisations and providers including the local authority itself, individual personal assistants, independent and community providers, and unpaid carers.

People had access to a diverse range of local support options, with goals set in the market position statement having already been achieved. For example, an increase in domiciliary care services for rural areas, more flexible approaches to night care and an increased uptake in digital solutions. This allowed people more variety of choice when looking for provider services to meet their needs. National ASCS data for 2023 showed 71.26% of people who used services felt they had choice over which service provided their care and support. This was comparable to the average for England of 69.81%.

The current local authority market sustainability plan (2023-2024), as well as the Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy identified how the local authority and its partners expected to improve current service provision and meet future demand. It estimated 70% of residents in care homes (65+) were funded by the local authority, with 30% self-funding their care and support needs in 2023. In domiciliary care services, supporting people in their own home, this split was 35% council funded, 60% part-funded and 5% self-funded. The local authority's aim was to increase the number of people accessing council-funded support in their own home. The 'Homes for All Supplementary Planning Document' which formed part of the local authority's Strategic Development Plan embedded the housing needs identified in the Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy into planning requirements.

The local authority ensured commissioning strategies and market shaping activities aligned with the strategic objectives of partner agencies through ICP and TWIPP Boards, with funding streams and joint strategies agreed both with the ICS, ICB and neighbouring Shropshire local authority. However, there was still a need to pull together the existing commissioning documents into an overarching cohesive commissioning strategy.

People told us there was a lack of respite choice for unpaid carers, however national SACE data for 2024 showed the number of carers accessing support or services allowing them to take a break was in line with the average for England. 13.46% of carers felt respite services allowed them to take a break from caring at short notice or in an emergency. This suggested whilst potentially limited in choice, the provision of respite for unpaid carers was in line with the national average of 12.08%. Senior leaders told us the provision of care for short breaks and unplanned situations for unpaid carers was currently being reviewed, with specific groups of people with lived experience being spoken to. Staff leading the consultation on carers services went out to 50 different community events to gain feedback as well as engaging people on the phone and by letter.

Staff and leaders told us the local authority had a variety of commissioned services, including block-contracts for services where ongoing specialist training and support was required (for example reablement services), and spot-purchase contracts for more bespoke, preventative services. There were Section 75 agreements with health partners for integrated community services, including voluntary and community organisations. Section 75 agreements are between local authorities and NHS bodies which can include arrangements for pooling resources and delegating certain NHS and local authority health-related functions to the other partners.

Partners told us the local authority worked closely with housing, Children's services, health partners and other local authorities to identify future service needs, and commissioning strategies included the provision of suitable, local housing to meet those needs.

Staff and leaders told us the local authority commissioned models of care and support in line with recognised best practice. Telford and Wrekin used a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for care and support services. This DPS aligned to a range of national government policies and initiatives and ensured providers were focussed on a whole family approach. Service provision was commissioned based on outcomes and the range of internal and external providers in the borough and neighbouring local authorities allowed flexibility to deliver services in the way which met people's preferences and allowed for timely, safe transitions between services. For example, partners told us residential beds had recently been decommissioned and replaced with more nursing provision; the local authority worked with providers to upskill staff and ensure the quality-of-service provision was maintained through these changes.

People and partners told us the local authority supported new and innovative approaches to care provision to improve outcomes for people receiving care and support. For example, following a decrease in demand for day care services for older people, commissioners had supported the recruitment of more personal assistants to provide bespoke, individual support in the community. Staff told us how the 'planned overnight care' team had allowed more personalised support at night whilst reducing service costs. The local authority also had its own in-house service provider ('My Options') supporting over 300 people in a full range of services, including a shared lives (adult placements) provision, rated outstanding by CQC.

Ensuring sufficient capacity in local services to meet demand

The local authority ensured there was sufficient care and support available to meet demand, and people could access it when, where and how they needed it. However, out of borough placements, particularly with neighbouring local authorities, were sometimes required for specialist needs. Staff told us there was significant demand for mental health placements locally and out of borough placements were required for people needing support with acquired brain injuries.

Updated data provided by the local authority as part of the assessment showed there were 143 people supported in out of borough placements. The majority of these were in the neighbouring local authority of Shropshire, partially due to the joint provider framework with Shropshire for learning disabilities and mental health provision. Other reasons for these placements including personal choice, specialist placements, forensic risks, and emergency placements where services within Telford and Wrekin were full (local authority capacity trackers regularly reflect residential and nursing homes being 90-95% full).

Data provided by the local authority showed the maximum waiting time for discharge from hospital to a new care home placement was 10 days, with the waiting list for discharge home much lower at 24 hours. Further data shared by the local authority in July 2024 showed in April to June 2024, 16 discharges out of 538, were not completed within 48 hours due to a lack of adult social care service capacity in the residential and nursing care market. The majority of the 16 were completed within 72 hours of the transfer of care being received from the hospital teams. Reasons for these delays included the complexity of the needs of the person; the availability of suitable beds at the point of discharge; and negotiations with providers due to people's complex needs.

At any one time there was an average of 1000 people accessing domiciliary care services, 490 people supported in nursing and residential homes, and a further 150 people in supported living services.

Senior leaders told us one of the main priorities for the local authority was improving supported accommodation in the borough to meet current and future demand for people with learning disabilities, people with mental health needs, and people living with complex needs such as dementia. This included offering opportunities for out-of-borough re-patriation, and improving opportunities for people to remain in the communities they grew up in. Data showed 50 people had moved back into Telford and Wrekin from out of borough placements in the last 3 years.

Partners, staff, and leaders told us the local authority worked closely with Children's services and housing services (including the local authority's own 'wholly owned' company delivering private rented accommodation, Nuplace). The local authority was using this, and the local authority's service provider, to deliver accommodation suited to people's needs.

Strategic plans included an increase in supported accommodation of 446 'units' (self-contained flats) by 2025; this included: 45 units supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people; 32 units supporting people with mental health needs; 275 extra care units for older people (including 14 units supporting people living with dementia and complex health needs, and units supporting bariatric needs); 74 'retirement' units. Of the 446 planned units 106 were already complete and had opened in early 2024. The local authority was further shaping the wider development market directly through their 'Homes for All' Supplementary Planning Document.

Staff told us people with lived experience, frontline occupational therapy teams, and housing teams worked closely to support the design and planning of new supported accommodation to ensure compliance with the needs of the people using services. Senior leaders told us a new commissioning strategy was soon to be consulted upon, taking the provision of supported accommodation in the borough forward from 2025.

Partners told us they had good relationships with commissioners and found them very responsive. They told us they had been looking at developing forensic supported accommodation and felt commissioners had been very receptive to their view of a local resource for this being needed. They told us commissioning teams were very proactive and met them regularly, forecasting transitions for young people coming through from Children's services with specialist needs.

Mental health services had seen joint working initiatives with the voluntary and community sector, with jointly run calm cafes open daily (and into the evenings) cited as “partnership working at its best.” In contrast to older people’s day services, provision for learning disability and autism day services had seen an increase in demand, with requests for services to be open longer, as part of a more wraparound care option to enable parents and unpaid carers to work and access social activities.

People gave us mixed feedback on services supporting unpaid carers, with people stating there was a lack of choice in respite provision and a lack of communication about choice when trying to access replacement care. Other people told us of positive experiences accessing carer support services via the Carers Centre, including culturally competent services for African and Caribbean communities and coproductive opportunities for parent carers of adults with learning disabilities. Carers services also offered training on single-handed moving & handling techniques as well as end of life support.

Data provided by the BCF board (joint health and social care funding arrangements overseen by TWIPP) showed integrated care services were improving outcomes for people around hospital discharge and readmission rates. Data for January 2024 showed improved or sustained rates for avoidable admissions, falls admissions, permanent admissions to care homes and reablement outcomes for 2023-2024. Senior leaders told us an agreement had been reached with the ICB to fund additional Occupational Therapists to improve enablement outcomes and length of stay.

Data also showed a significant increase in domiciliary care use (200% in the last 5 years) with plans to increase the use of Virtual Wards seen as one way to mitigate the impact. Most schemes were performing at, or just below expectation, however, reablement services were commissioned for 27 beds, but were using 100+, with spot purchases needed regularly. Partners told us the local authority worked with providers to ensure staff were trained and competent in providing reablement support, with staff and leaders sharing plans to improve market provision in this area by 2025. Senior leaders told us the local authority had commissioned an additional 13 beds from 1st July 2024 to give additional block capacity, as well as commissioning 2 Extra Care beds as a 'Test of Change' to reduce bed utilisation.

Ensuring quality of local services

Telford and Wrekin had clear arrangements to monitor the quality and impact of the care and support services commissioned for people, and supported improvements where needed. The local authority had designed its own provider quality assurance framework, based on questions drawn from their provider contracts and commissioning processes, as well as acting as an 'improvement partner' for services facing staffing or quality issues.

Quality monitoring was based on risk, with safeguarding concerns, complaints and feedback from partners used to measure safety, as well as proactive and reactive on-site visits, 'desktop' data and joint visits to assess the safe administration of medicines and infection prevention and control practices. Statistics were used in conjunction with evidence to provide a picture of practice and its impact on individuals. Feedback from practitioners and people with experience of care were also used as indicators of quality.

The local authority allocated a Provider Quality Rating (PQR) to providers on the completion of any quality assurance activities. A poor PQR may be recorded because a provider was in breach of their contract agreement, which could on its own lead to contract actions, suspension, or termination of work. The local authority's Suspension Policy & Process provided guidance and documentation to support actions taken. Staff told us 1 nursing home had been subject to a suspension in the last 12 months, with action taken to improve safety, and measures implemented to ensure quality service provision before lifting the suspension.

At the time of writing the local authority commissioned 84 Telford and Wrekin based care and support providers: 41 residential and nursing care services, and 43 home care service (including supported living, extra care, and domiciliary care services) registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). 57% of nursing homes were rated as good by CQC, with 35% rated requires improvement. 65% of residential homes were rated good, with 30% rated as requires improvement or inadequate. In addition, the local authority had commissioning arrangements with 67 out of borough care homes.

Senior leaders told us they met with providers in January 2024 to look at quality assurance themes and trends and to agree improvement actions, including processes for monitoring and feedback. All services rated requires improvement or below by CQC had been reviewed in the last 12 months and had seen a marked improvement in the safety and quality of care. Staff told us they supported providers to improve by meeting with them regularly to work on identified areas of focus, setting up of action plans, providing training and advice, and monitoring progress through repeated on-site assessments of care and support in addition to monthly safeguarding meetings.

For out of borough providers, staff completed desk top reviews and linked in with quality assurance teams within the borough providing support. Concerns were shared with commissioning and brokerage teams to inform spot purchasing and tendering decisions, and the local authority met regularly with care regulators to update shared information and agree actions. Brokerage teams provided advice and information about adult social care services available in the local authority area. The 'broker' found service providers who could meet the person's needs and choices. They provided information about different types of support available and could arrange service provision to meet people's needs.

People told us of coproductive approaches to quality monitoring, this was handled on a one-to-one basis, supported by people with lived experience. Voluntary and community organisations felt there was scope for joint working on engagement projects but the local authority currently did not make use of their experience in this area.

Providers told us the local authority undertook regular quality checks and worked collaboratively to enable improved outcomes for people receiving services. For example, feedback given as part of quality monitoring processes was timely, constructive, and highlighted good practice as well as areas for development. Providers also told us the local authority worked with them to ensure appropriate working conditions and asked providers to share how much they paid staff, including travel time pay between care calls for domiciliary care services.

Ensuring local services are sustainable

Telford and Wrekin's Adult Social Care workforce position statement (January 2024) set out the local authority's responsibilities under the Care Act 2014. As part of the local authority's contracts, tenders and procurement process, commissioners assessed financial and business plans, sustainability of staff recruitment, provider's approach to training, and contingency planning arrangements. This applied to all people who had care funded by the local authority and those who paid for their own care (self-funders).

Telford and Wrekin's market sustainability plan (March 2023) identified current and future market conditions, including risks to support services. For example, the local authority had identified risks to care home provision in the borough relating to the quality of care, undersupply of nursing care, and the fair cost of care, including a projected 30% increase in self-funders requesting support from the local authority.

Staff and leaders told us how the local authority worked with health partners to offer financial assistance for digital technology improvements (with 91% of providers signed up) as well as support with recruitment and health and social care training. Provider business continuity plans were checked by the local authority as part of their quality audit system. Providers told us the local authority paid them fairly and on time.

Although they did not directly ask staff about their working conditions, there were monitoring visits, safeguarding, and complaints processes in place where staff could raise concerns. The local authority had taken a proactive approach to international recruitment concerns and worked closely with providers to reduce risks of modern slavery.

Multiple providers and a mixture of block contracts and spot purchasing meant risks of provider failure impacting the local market were reduced. Use of small, local providers and good working relationships between commissioners and providers allowed for transparent discussions, business support advice and early warnings of potential service disruptions.

People told us of a lack of choice when it came to some types of care provision, with preferred providers often used ahead of people being offered diverse support services. This was especially evident in the support available for unpaid carers and included some rural areas where providers could be difficult to source. The current local authority market sustainability plan (2023-2024) identified this as an area for development and senior leaders told us of plans to address gaps in provision through joint working with other local authorities.

The local authority had a range of long-term and framework arrangements in place which supported strong relationships with providers and supported continuity of care. Contracting arrangements were efficient, provided stability for providers, and allowed them to plan ahead. The local authority was working closely with partners reviewing the commissioning strategy when the current one ended in 2025. At the time of the assessment this was at the design and planning stage, with formal consultation due to begin in September 2024.

Partners told us the local authority offered business audits in addition to quality monitoring support, which helped them work more effectively and reduced the risk of financial concerns. For example, in the previous 12 months 1 domiciliary service, 1 residential home and 2 supported living services had support to change their business model to meet changing local market needs and avoid these providers leaving the local market.

The local authority also collaborated with Partners in Care Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin to offer support, guidance, and training to the local workforce including supporting personal assistants. The local authority's 'job box' team provided key skills training and worked alongside Telford Jobcentre Plus to support providers with recruitment. Data provided by Skills for Care (2022-2023) show 57.87% of Adult Social Care staff in Telford and Wrekin had either completed or partially completed the Care Certificate, compared to the average for England of 49.65%. The Care Certificate is an agreed set of standards which define the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. It is made up of the 15 minimum standards which should form part of a robust induction programme.

According to Skills for Care, in 2022-2023 the total number of care worker posts in Telford & Wrekin was around 6,700. This included a just under 10% vacancy rate. The total number of posts had increased by 325 (5%), the number of filled posts has increased by 200 (3%) and the number of vacancies had increased by 125 (22%) from the previous year. In the social care workforce across the borough (all sectors), turnover and vacancy rates were higher than those seen nationally, with vacancies at 11.4% (national 9.6%) and turnover 29.8% (national 28.1%).

Partnerships and communities

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

What people expect

I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me.

The local authority commitment

We understand our duty to collaborate and work in partnership, so our services work seamlessly for people. We share information and learning with partners and collaborate for improvement.

Key findings for this quality statement

Partnership working to deliver shared local and national objectives

Telford and Wrekin had strong partnership working links with health partners, neighbouring authorities, the voluntary and community sector, and regional organisations to ensure strategic and operational plans met national and local objectives. Senior leaders told us how national and regional objectives, concerns, and areas of best practice were shared through membership and joint working with multiple cross-boundary boards and committees. These included the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), the West Midlands ADASS Executive Council, learning from the lives and deaths of people with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR), and a number of sector specialist forums and professional associations.

Partnership-working priorities and funding arrangements were agreed through the Strategic Commissioning Board and TWIPP, with oversight from the ICS board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, to ensure strategies aligned across partners, with clear lines of accountability and arrangements for oversight. Staff and leaders told us of good working relationships with health and community partners to ensure the best outcomes for people using services.

The local authority had a number of shared partnership boards with key priorities and strategic focus. For example, the jointly funded Autism Partnership Board had recently been looking at leisure facilities to improve accessibility, and the Learning Disability Partnership Board had been looking at access to paid employment opportunities. People told us how paid employment opportunities were limited at present, with voluntary employment through local cafes being supported by the voluntary and community sector.

Staff told us working relationships between health partners and the local authority had not always been effective across the board. Public concerns with the hospitals and disputes about budgets had been detrimental to the prevention agenda, which meant primary care services were overwhelmed. Governance arrangements and improved engagement in partnership boards had started to address this, improving people's experiences of hospital discharge.

Feedback from partners was positive; they told us of close working arrangements, genuine representation on multiple partnership boards, and the inclusion of people with lived experience in decision making. We saw multiple examples of sharing information and data to monitor shared priorities in areas such as hospital discharge and admission avoidance. Staff told us of safeguarding links between the local authority, health, police, and housing to support effective hospital discharges, with multi-agency discharge events looking at delayed discharges and reviewing the barriers to these. The local authority had integrated its care and support functions with health partners to support preventative services in primary care and reduce the need for inappropriate accident and emergency visits, for example, through improving access to GP surgeries.

People told us partnership working had positive impacts from them. For example, jointly commissioned mental health 'crisis crash pads' where people could take themselves to, or be supported to go to by the police, avoided more formal support under the Mental Health Act 1983. They also told us of mental health social workers who worked outside of office hours in the calm café to support people to make management plans and consider how to support themselves, ensuring a person-centred approach to managing their own care needs.

Hospital discharge pathways were supported by TICAT and included Adult Social Care staff based in hospitals to support service provision upon discharge. People's experiences of joint hospital discharge pathways were positive and showed good levels of multi-disciplinary working to promote outcomes for people.

Health partners stated good working relationship helped to support operational challenges during occasions of peak demand. All partners showed a real willingness to engage and to ensure integration around Adult Social Care and the voluntary and community sector. Discharge pathways had been streamlined, and an accelerated neighbourhood approach using community resources to support admission avoidance and proactive care, were having clear positive impacts on local health services.

Partners told us there was a strong joint support offer for unpaid carers. This included the carers champion scheme within GP surgeries, information on notice boards in GP surgeries, coproduction of carer friendly employer offers, the new All-Age Carers strategy, and Carers Network, as well as engagement in the Modern-day Partnership Board.

Arrangements to support effective partnership working

The local authority ensured there were clear arrangements for quality assurance monitoring, information sharing, and accountability through effective use of the partnership board governance arrangements. The ICS, ICB and ICP linked into the Strategic Commissioning Board and TWIPP to enable oversight and scrutiny of all joint strategic decisions. The Health and Wellbeing Board, and the TWSP Board provided data to enable informed choices and the Focused Partnership Boards ensured strategic implementation. Whilst there is no official ICS Director of Place, the role was split with a Director of Strategy and a Director of Operations. Both roles worked jointly with the local authority via TWIPP to support a place-based approach to service provision.

The TWIPP strategic plan (2022-2025) identified 5 key priorities: Population health; prevention and early intervention; integrated response to inequalities; working together stronger; primary care integration. The plan set out how these priorities would be achieved and identified clear roles and responsibilities across partners. For example, the Wellbeing and Independence Partnership was a collaboration with voluntary and community organisations providing a first point of contact for Adult Social Care enquiries, giving information and advice to people who were not known to statutory services. Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin partners in care represented independent care and support providers, giving them a voice on partnership boards and across the integrated care system.

The local authority used opportunities to pool budgets and jointly fund services with partners to achieve better outcomes. BCF contributions through Section 75 agreements were used to build community resilience by supporting unpaid carers, providing independent advocacy services, and recruiting volunteers and befrienders. The need for more complex support was reduced through the provision of equipment, assistive technologies and sensory aids. Care Navigators (based within GP surgeries), unpaid carers support (available through hospital drop-in sessions), and the provision of healthy lifestyle advisors and social prescribers were employed to work with local community services such as community centres, libraries, and leisure centres.

BCF contributions were used to support urgent care needs: TICAT supported discharge planning; enablement therapists supported frontline social work teams; and discharge pathway 1 supported personal care needs. Occupational therapy supported the Planned Overnight Care team, and Rapid Response teams supported admission avoidance. However, data provided by the BCF Board (which reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board via TWIPP) showed demand for these services was outstripping expected use, leading to strained budgets and gaps in funding. Plans to address these funding shortfalls included a review of complex discharge pathways and promotion of pathway 0 and 1 (less-complex cases and 'home-first' approaches), as well as the introduction of an Accelerated Discharge programme and improved use of Virtual Wards (using smart hubs and a device called 'Ethel'). This work was part of the ICS's 'Urgent Care Programme' to improve discharge performance.

Impact of partnership working

Partnership working was monitored and evaluated by the local authority and partners to identify areas of positive impact and inform ongoing development and continuous improvement opportunities. People with lived experience, as well as independent board members, formed part of the monitoring and scrutiny process, and boards reported data and insight to TWIPP, giving feedback on the outcomes and the experience of people using services. For example, feedback from the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP) Board had led to training for accident and emergency staff in identifying self-neglect linked to mental health and dementia, enabling earlier intervention and improved outcomes for people affected by hoarding.

Partners, staff, and leaders told us about the rollout of digitalised care monitoring systems (devices and systems using technology to monitor people's needs and risks to support their independence), funded by NHS England, to support the transition from paper-based to digitalised records and care plans across the borough and neighbouring local authorities. The initiative was aimed at reducing waste and improving the security and accuracy of personal information records. Telford and Wrekin have a 91% compliance rate, compared to the target of 80% nationally by the end of 2025.

Mental health partners spoke about the local authority being supportive and easy to work with and people told us least restrictive options were always explored. For example, people described staggered discharges back into the community, supported by multi-disciplinary agencies, enabling people to return home successfully. Partners described how changes to local autism services diagnostic pathways meant people could be assessed more locally, reducing cancellations, and ensuring people got the right support and access to services.

Health partners told us about a jointly funded hydration and nutrition project, working with service providers to raise awareness of the signs of poor nutrition and hydration, and the importance of safe, effective support in this area. This work had reduced people going into hospital with urinary-tract infections. Other partners told us of joint working with the police and probation services to create a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board supporting survivors of domestic abuse and looking at ways to reduce the prevalence and impact.

People described how improved links with housing, the voluntary and community sector, and Public Health was improving outcomes for autistic people at risk of homelessness. Awareness sessions with links into the learning disability community team, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists, were giving services more confidence in recognising people in need. Other people told us how the local authority was tackling the impacts of deprivation and cost of living by providing essential kitchen equipment, food, and clothing.

Working with voluntary and charity sector groups

Telford and Wrekin worked collaboratively with voluntary and community organisations to understand and meet local social care needs. The local authority provided funding, and other support opportunities, to encourage growth and innovation. The local authority used a joint population health management approach, working across the borough, NHS Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin, to identify areas of support need by comprehensive community engagement, coproduction, and use of local, regional, and national data.

Staff and leaders told us one of the strongest areas of joint working with voluntary and community organisations was within mental health support; alliance agreements brought partners together to discuss cases of complex mental health needs. This ensured the voluntary sector were not left holding the risk and support was shared equally across all services to get the best outcomes for the person. Calm Cafés were delivered in partnership between Telford Mind and Telford & Wrekin's mental health social work team. A specific Calm Café had also been set up for Armed Forces Personnel and veterans. People told us the cafés had become very well regarded in the local area and recognised as being a notable example of place-based preventative support, with up to 300 people attending each month.

Whilst some voluntary and community organisations highlighted improvements needed around sharing of personal information, feedback was mostly positive, with clear examples of genuine coproductive working arrangements, communication and interaction with senior leaders, and opportunities for people with lived experience to influence service changes. For example, faith groups worked closely with Ghanian, Afghan and Syrian communities.

Theme 3: How Telford and Wrekin ensures safety within the system

This theme includes these quality statements:

- Safe pathways, systems and transitions
- Safeguarding

We may not always review all quality statements during every assessment.

Safe pathways, systems and transitions

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

What people expect

When I move between services, settings or areas, there is a plan for what happens next and who will do what, and all the practical arrangements are in place. I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks.

I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks.

The local authority commitment

We work with people and our partners to establish and maintain safe systems of care, in which safety is managed, monitored and assured. We ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services.

Key findings for this quality statement

Safety management

The local authority understood local, regional, and national risks to people receiving care and support. Risks were identified and managed through proactive risk management, overview and scrutiny.

Safety was a priority for everyone, supported by a culture of openness and learning. People's care journeys were coproduced with people using services, partners, staff, and communities to ensure continuity of care, choice and control, and the least restrictive options were used to promote independence. Funding decisions were agreed in a timely way to mitigate delays in provision of care.

The corporate risk register held oversight of Adult Social Care concerns and actions taken to mitigate strategic and operational risks, and was subject to scrutiny by senior leaders, cabinet members and independent partners. Risks to Adult Social Care service delivery were managed at a departmental level through quality assurance and governance processes, including the recording of mitigating actions and the use of prioritisation tools to analyse and triage concerns.

Data and insight of risk was collated through community engagement. Feedback from safeguarding enquiries, complaints and concerns supported the experiences of frontline teams, partners, and users of services. Identified risks were then analysed for likelihood and impact on financial, physical, reputational, environmental, and service areas.

Policies and processes aligned with partners and enabled shared learning to drive improvement. Information sharing protocols supported safe, secure, and timely sharing of personal information between agencies in ways which protected people's rights and privacy.

The Adult Social Care risk register identified increased service demand, ongoing concerns around waiting lists for assessments, staffing levels, the growing number of complex cases, and capacity in the market to meet demand as areas to prioritise resources and support. Actions taken to mitigate risks were agreed at monthly Quality Assurance and Governance Board meetings, and progress reviewed through weekly senior leader resource meetings, and practitioner forums.

Multi-agency partnerships, use of partnership board structures, assurance and governance arrangements, coproduction, strategic use of finances, and improved workforce development, as well as use of JSNA 2024 data to predict future demand, were all cited as ways to manage risk. For example, in response to waiting lists and increased demand for DoLs assessments the local authority had adopted the ADASS prioritisation tool to identify which applications should be prioritised to proceed to full assessment and authorisation. Staff recruitment, including the role of DoLs operational lead, training of Trusted Assessors, and the refreshed legal gateway panel (to screen more complex applications and reduce the risk of delays), as well as weekly and monthly reviews (including escalation processes) were cited as further mitigation of risk.

Safety during transitions

Care and support pathways were planned and organised with people, together with partners and communities in ways which improved safety across care journeys and ensured continuity in care. There were processes and pathways in place for all major transitions including children to adult services, hospital discharge and reablement, moving out of area, moving between services, and changing from self-funded to funded care. These processes were all linked to best practice guidance's and local authority policies. Process maps were easy to follow and gave good direction for staff and people using services.

Staff told us all referrals for support came through the frontline Family Connect service, who gathered information, triaged cases, and directed them to the appropriate team. This included conversations about the needs of unpaid carers, family members and dependants, as well as the person requesting support. Assessments identified current and future needs and included financial appraisals, contingency planning, and referrals to relevant partner organisations.

Transitions from children to adult services used a 'Preparing for Adulthood' policy which referenced relevant legislation and best practice. Frontline Adult Social Care teams work with Children's services to identify children likely to require ongoing support as adults support to transition to adult services from the age of 14 years old, work with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team to establish networks of communication and support. This support included identification of housing, education, training, and employment needs. Named workers to support the person transitioning into adult services, and referrals to relevant frontline teams and partners ensured a multi-disciplinary approach, signposting those who were not eligible for support from Adult Social Care. The Preparing for Adulthood policy outlined the importance of early intervention and a person-centred approach to transitions.

Most people told us of positive experiences of transitioning into adult services, with proactive approaches and appropriate sharing of information between organisations. However, despite the clear processes in place, people also shared poor experiences of transitions, with delays, poor communication, and short-notice housing decisions impacting support. People told us where the young person had a personal assistant in place this was easier to transfer to direct payments as the young person reached 18 than if a personal budget application was a new preferred option to receiving care for the first time.

Partners told us of memorandums of understanding between the local authority and health partners detailing how funding, including CHC funding, was agreed to reduce the risk of delayed transitions.

Safe hospital discharge pathways had been the focus of considerable work, with the ICS highlighting safe discharges and reduced readmissions as a key priority in improving outcomes for people accessing hospital services. Multiple pathways had been agreed, depending on the location of discharge. Pathways were supported by joint working from integrated discharge teams and reablement. Weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings reviewed progress, ensured effective coordination of support, and reviewed long-term needs (including assistive technology options). The Hybrid team then completed a post-reablement review to identify further support needs, with Community Specialist teams overseeing longer-term case management.

Most discharges from hospital were supported by TICAT during people's enablement period. If individuals had long term needs after this period, those were identified by the TICAT team and people would be transferred to the community teams overseeing longer-term care management. Complex needs identified prior to discharge were led by community team case workers who supported the discharge and subsequent enablement support.

People's experiences of hospital discharge and the support received was positive, and whilst discharges to residential and nursing care services took longer, these were managed well and based on outcomes rather than budgets. Long-term placements were only considered after the initial enablement period and following a Care Act assessment identifying long-term needs (in line with hospital discharge pathways).

Autism, learning disability and Mental Health teams, including approved mental health professionals (AMHPs) were part of the Transforming Care Partnership and met with the ICB, NHS England and wider multidisciplinary teams to support people with managing risk of admission and planning timely discharge from hospital. AMHPs (Social Workers who have undertaken further specialised training to become Approved Mental Health Professional) are professionals who assess whether there are grounds to detain people assessed as requiring admission to hospital or mental health secure setting under the mental health act. This applies to people who need urgent treatment for their mental health needs and are at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Mental Health teams worked closely with the psychiatric intensive care units and wider health colleagues to support hospital discharges. Specialist commissioners attended and planned services and any housing need as part of the discharge planning process. On discharge the social work team coordinated community support as part of ongoing monitoring and review. If a person has a period of section 17 leave (if they are high risk and have complex needs, detained on sec 3 of the mental health act) prior to being discharged from a mental health ward, this is monitored, and support is put in place on discharge using a combination of sec 117 after care and Care Act funding to prevent a mental health relapse and readmission to hospital.

Contingency planning

Telford and Wrekin undertook contingency planning to ensure preparedness for potential interruptions in the provision of care and support. The local authority knew how it would respond to different scenarios with plans, including business failures, temporary disruptions in service provision, and planning for emergency evacuation of services. Information sharing arrangements were set up in advance to minimise the risks to people's safety and wellbeing.

The local authority collaborated closely with providers to meet changing demand for services, improve service quality where ratings showed areas of concern, and provided training and information on business viability, including workshops and forums on financial stability to reduce the risk of provider failures. Services were monitored to ensure they were safe, effective, and financially viable. This was done by commissioning and quality monitoring teams who supported early interventions for providers identified as requiring support, worked with providers to resolve service interruptions, and informed senior leaders and relevant partner organisations of progress and actions taken.

In the event of provider failure, the local authority had a duty to meet care and support needs for people and unpaid carers, where the commissioned provider was unable to continue. The duty was temporary and triggered when Telford & Wrekin became aware the provider could no longer execute its support activities. Despite increased demand for Adult Social Care services, senior leaders felt confident there was enough flexibility in the provider market to cover emergency service provision needs and had funding arrangements in place which would avoid delays in the provision of care and support.

Providers told us the local authority's Provider Business Failure and Contingency policy outlined expectations in relation to provider failure, when they should be notified, timescales for action to be taken to maintain service continuity, details of service quality monitoring, and what legislation governed this. People told us emergency provision for unpaid carers was discussed as part of carers assessments and up to 25 hours emergency respite could be accessed per year. Staff told us commissioning arrangements enabled unplanned respite provision for unpaid carers both at home and in residential services.

Staff and leaders told us contingency planning formed an integral part of the commissioning and quality assurance process, with policies detailing full timescales and priorities for how services should operate should there be major disruption. The safeguarding team conducted impact assessments and risk ratings, including detailing how impactful disruption would be to people receiving services. Providers were expected to mirror this process in their own documentation and planning. Service evacuation plans included step by step guides on what to do if a service needed to be evacuated for any reason, and included details needed to be shared with emergency services, as well as detailing places of safety for people to be evacuated to.

Staff and leaders told us there was a civil contingency plan in place (last used during severe flooding in 2020) to allow staff, working with partner agencies, to respond effectively to different scenarios. The local authority's pre-planning and clear lines of joint responsibility allowed staff to quickly coordinate placements and reduce the risk to people.

Safeguarding

Score: 2

2 - Evidence shows some shortfalls

What people expect

I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks.

The local authority commitment

We work with people to understand what being safe means to them and work with our partners to develop the best way to achieve this. We concentrate on improving people's lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm and neglect. We make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately.

Key findings for this quality statement

Safeguarding systems, processes and practices

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities, and other parts of the system, should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. One of the key priorities in Telford and Wrekin's strategic plan (2024-2025) was to 'support people with care and support needs to live a life free from abuse'. Key performance measures identified in the strategic plan included data from ASCS, the percentage of Section 42 safeguarding enquiries undertaken where risks were removed or reduced at closure, and the number of completed DoLs applications. A Section 42 enquiry is the action taken by a local authority in response to concerns a person with care and support needs may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect.

Overall, there were effective systems, processes, and practices to make sure people were protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation through the TWSP. TWSP coordinated thematic and locality working to ensure effective delivery of joint safety priorities. For example, the Safer Telford and Wrekin strategy identified the 3 localities experiencing the highest harm from crime and antisocial behaviour. Other areas of focus included child exploitation and domestic abuse. TWSP allocated resources to the Building Safer Stronger Communities Board to support community projects and developments in these areas.

The TWSP Board had an independent chair and worked closely with TWIPP and the Health and Wellbeing Board to deliver a coordinated approach to safeguarding adults in the borough. The safeguarding board ensured there was a multi-agency safeguarding partnership, including West Mercia Police, the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICS, and other internal and external local authority partners. Roles and responsibilities for identifying and responding to concerns at a strategic level were clear and information sharing arrangements were in place, so concerns were raised quickly and investigated without delay.

Governance arrangements ensured the TWSP Board had overview and scrutiny of safeguarding sub-groups, including domestic abuse, adult exploitation, the Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) panel, and the adult review, learning and training sub-group. There were community hub safeguarding drop-in sessions to increase the accessibility of the safeguarding team and plans to add a separate safeguarding lived experience group following feedback. However, people told us coproduction in this area was not as strong as in other Adult Social Care partnership boards.

Senior leaders told us the local authority had identified improving co-production and engagement in safeguarding as a theme in their Safeguarding Strategy, with a member of the Making it Real Board sitting on the SAB as an active member and voice. In addition, the refreshed terms of reference and membership of TWIPP included a member from the Making it Real Board.

National data (ASCS 2023) showed 83.16% of people using services said those services made them feel safe. This was statistically comparable to the average for England (87.12%). Further data provided by the local authority suggested this rate had improved in 2024. National data (SACE 2024) showed 76.92% of unpaid carers said they felt safe, tending towards below the average for England of 80.93%.

Concerns could be sent from any source and were initially received by the frontline, Family Connect team. Concerns were triaged using a safeguarding threshold matrix and care quality concerns thresholds to identify risks of abuse or neglect. These tools were also used to ascertaining whether the person identified as a potential victim was a person who may be made vulnerable. Teams then recorded cases using the local authority's case recording system to ensure security and confidentiality.

Policies allowed for people with concerns which did not meet the threshold for safeguarding to be signposted to information, advice, and other services such as the police or citizens advice bureau. Out of hours concerns indicating risks of abuse or neglect were handled by the emergency duty team who would hold the 'case' and implement any necessary urgent action to keep people safe until they could be passed on to the Family Connect team to help manage risk and prevent potential safeguarding concerns from escalating.

Concerns meeting the criteria for safeguarding were then shared with the frontline safeguarding team who would determine if Section 42 (S42) enquiries were required. There was a dedicated team dealing with safeguarding. If the person at risk or subject to abuse was allocated to a social worker in another team the safeguarding social worker would undertake the S42 enquiry and work in collaboration with the allocated worker.

Frontline teams worked closely with the quality monitoring team when concerns were raised about a provider. The local authority safeguarding team were responsible for oversight of all safeguarding concerns. Where a decision had been made to delegate part or all the investigation to a partner agency, management responsibility remained with the local authority, including decisions on outcomes and actions.

However, partners and staff told us safeguarding policies and procedures were not fully embedded and staff did not always respond quickly enough to concerns. 54% of concerns raised with the local authority were progressed to S42 enquiries (September 2024).

Senior leaders told us the local authority recognised there were areas of development within safeguarding processes, and they were reviewing these for assurances around the application and recording of the threshold for S42 enquiries. As part of their performance reporting approach, they identified details to target and work with providers, referrers, and the care market on key emerging themes. For example, a staff training platform had been created to monitor and improve completion rates.

Responding to local safeguarding risks and issues

There was an understanding of the safeguarding risks and issues across the borough. The local authority insight team produced a safeguarding adult dashboard to give an overview of safeguarding activity. The dashboard contained safeguarding data which covered a breakdown of types of abuse, demographics, outcomes achieved, and identified where risks remained. Senior Leaders used the dashboard to manage workloads, capacity, demand and risk. Staff and leaders told us about emerging themes, including forced marriages, domestic abuse, pressure ulcers, emotional abuse, neglect (including self-neglect), and modern slavery.

In addition to this, the local authority had identified some partner organisations were submitting referrals which did not hold enough data to be easily processed. The TWSP Board collaborated with partners to raise awareness, reduce risks and to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring, and provided toolkits (including '7-minute briefings') for providers and other agencies to use when identifying concerns.

Further partnership working included a focused seminar on pressure ulcers, use of a 'Tricky Friends' animation, new quality framework and standards, a new Domestic Abuse strategy, and a citizen group for those with lived experience of the safeguarding process, to directly feed into the work of the partnership. The TWSP Board had changed the way training was coordinated to allow for a holistic and all-encompassing approach and to ensure learning was brought together across adult and children safeguarding boards. Training included pressure ulcers, the importance of robust recording within casework, SAR awareness, self-neglect, and domestic abuse awareness.

The local authority conducted case reviews, through an adult review learning and training sub-group, to check agreed actions set out in safeguarding plans had been achieved. Where there was ongoing risk of abuse the safeguarding plan could be reviewed within the adult safeguarding framework. Staff and leaders told us processes were in place to ensure lessons were learned when people had experienced serious abuse or neglect.

The TWSP Board had a SAR panel sub-group who were tasked with using learning from case reviews to drive improvements in practice. In 2022 and 2023 Telford & Wrekin Council had not completed any SARs, however the local authority had had 5 SARs in 2024. Partners, staff, and leaders described how learning was shared from SARs nationally, and from neighbouring local authority areas and the ICS, via monthly newsletters, information leaflets, and engagement with regional and national networks. One of the themes from SARs in 2024 had led to an updated strategic SAB priority around self-neglect.

The local authority told us safeguarding concerns in out of borough placements were responded to by the local authority where the concerns were raised (using an out of area protocol), with similar arrangements in place for mental health services and hospitals within the ICS. Partnership working, and quality assurance processes were in place to ensure communication and oversight.

Responding to concerns and undertaking Section 42 enquiries

The local authority set out clear guidance on what constituted an S42 safeguarding concern in their Safeguarding Threshold for Access to Safeguarding Services Matrix (2024). This was under review at the time of the assessment and used in conjunction with the West Midlands multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures. This process included clear guidance on how to manage cases which did not meet the threshold to progress to an S42 enquiry as well as identifying the standards and quality assurance arrangements in place for completing enquiries.

Safeguarding plans and actions to reduce future risks for individual people were in place and were acted on where outcomes had been identified. Data provided by the local authority showed in a recent survey 96% of people who had identified desired outcomes felt they had been partially or fully achieved through the safeguarding process.

Local authority data showed 450 safeguarding concerns were received in 2022-2023 with 28.8% progressed to an S42 enquiry. In 2023-2024 this increased to 494 concerns received with 47.9% progressing to S42 enquiries. Staff and leaders told us improvements in referral processes and increased staff and provider awareness had contributed to the increase in S42 enquiries in the last 12 months. The introduction of regular drop-in sessions where teams could discuss any case issues or seek advice had supported quality and consistency. This was in response to the local authority recognising their progression rates were significantly lower than neighbouring authorities.

Senior leaders told us relevant agencies were kept informed of the outcomes of safeguarding enquiries when it was necessary to the ongoing safety of the person concerned. Staff told us there were clear communication pathways for the safeguarding concerns, and there was open communication and updates as cases progressed. However, partners we spoke to said this was not always the case, giving examples of requesting updates on multiple occasions before receiving a response on case progression and outcomes. The local authority had recently introduced a new feedback process to address these inconsistencies, but this process needed time to embed fully to show improved outcomes for people.

The local authority had also identified a need to improve waiting times for reviews of DoLs applications. Data provided by the local authority showed there were 319 DoLs (with a maximum waiting time of 26 months) and 105 CoPs awaiting assessment in 2022-2023; updated data provided for 2023-2024 showed the waiting times for DoLs had improved, with 233 cases waiting for assessment and a maximum waiting time of 15 months. The number of DoLs referrals received in 2023-2024 was 1,003. CoP means court of protection and is required legal process for all community DoLs.

Partners confirmed there were delays with DoLS applications, explaining the local authority was using a prioritisation tool (provided by ADASS) to respond to higher risk cases but lower-level assessments were often waiting for many months. Partners had similar concerns around CoP assessments, citing inconsistencies in understanding of MCA 2005 assessments and a lack of understanding of the application process. For example, partners told us of occasions where people's rights were inappropriately restricted due to a lack of understanding of the MCA Act 2005 by the frontline social work teams.

Whilst the local authority had policies and procedures about upholding people's rights and making sure people's needs were respected and met, these were not fully understood or consistently followed. Feedback from people, staff, and partners consistently identified concerns with DoLS applications. They gave examples of some frontline staff's understanding of people's rights under the MCA Act 2005 impacting on people's independence, and identified frontline staff did not always involve people fully in investigations.

The local authority told us awareness sessions had been organised, with a refreshed legal gateway panel for more complex cases, improved tracking systems on the case management system, staff drop-in sessions, and the inclusion of DoLS in monthly safeguarding data. Senior leaders told us this had improved staff competencies and reduced waiting times. There were also competency-based training programmes in place to increase the number of Best Interest Assessors (BIAs). BIAs are social workers who have undertaken a further qualification of Best Interest Assessor who assess and determine the best interests of individuals who lack the mental capacity to make specific decisions for themselves.

Staff and leaders told us safeguarding processes were quality assured through audits of practice. Learning from enquiries, including themes and trends were shared with staff via reflective staff forums and training. This included LeDeR learning.

Making safeguarding personal

Staff and leaders told us safeguarding enquiries were conducted sensitively, keeping the wishes and best interests of the person concerned at the centre. People confirmed they had the information they needed to understand safeguarding, what being safe meant for them, and how to raise concerns when they did not feel safe or had concerns about the safety of other people. However, not everyone felt included in the safeguarding process when they raised concerns.

National data from the Safeguarding Adult's Collection showed the number of people lacking capacity who were supported by an advocate, family member, or friend was above the average for England in 2023 (100% compared to 83.12%). However, due to the poor uptake of MCA 2005 staff training across Adult Social Care in the borough it is unclear people's capacity was always assessed correctly. National data shared by the Adult Social Care Workforce Estimates (2023) showed 20.48% of the local Adult Social Care workforce had completed MCA and DoLs training, compared to 37.48% nationally.

Overall, people were supported to understand their rights, including their human rights, rights under the MCA 2005 and their rights under the Equality Act 2010. They were supported to make choices which balanced risks with positive choice and control in their lives. However, feedback from people and partner organisations showed frontline teams were inconsistent in their approach and understanding of people's rights, leading to confusion and an increased risk of restrictive practices being agreed. Providers gave us examples of challenging restrictions within DoLs and CoP's where they felt the local authority had not taken decisions fully in the person's best interest, including least restrictive practices.

Theme 4: Leadership

This theme includes these quality statements:

- Governance, management and sustainability

- Learning, improvement and innovation

We may not always review all quality statements during every assessment.

Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

The local authority commitment

We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.

Key findings for this quality statement

Governance, accountability and risk management

Telford and Wrekin's demographic changes and changes in adult social care need as a borough were mirrored by structural and strategic changes within the local authority. Supported by the cooperative and commercial focus of the local authority, staff, leaders, and cabinet members had worked closely with partner organisations to make difficult strategic decisions on resources. Resources across the Council were reviewed to meet changing needs and increased demand for Adult Social Care services. This had led to reviews of all partnership boards, workforce structures and processes, and a strengthening of focus on community-based services to ensure the local authority met its Care Act 2014 duties and closed the gaps in health inequalities across the borough.

Whilst governance and accountability remained strong at all levels within the local authority, the changes ways of working, combined with challenges in recruitment of staff in particular areas, meant there were inconsistent practices impacting on people receiving services. People told us of mixed experiences when engaging with the local authority frontline teams; most people said they found staff to be skilled, knowledgeable, and compassionate but others gave examples of poor communication of outcomes, a lack of engagement, and variable understanding of people's rights. This was in keeping with the reasons given by senior leaders for the new ways of working to address inconsistent work practices.

There were a number of strategies in development or recently completed. The recent review of the leadership structure had not had time to embed. Senior leaders told us they understood the priorities for adult social care and were putting the infrastructure in place to address these. However, these changes would take time to embed and at the time of the assessment it was too soon to comment on the sustainable impact of these changes.

Staff, leaders, and partners highlighted increased waiting times for assessments, particularly occupational therapy and DoLs assessments, and confusion around direct payments, as areas of learning and development. Senior leaders told us changes to processes and team structures had improved waiting times following feedback from people raised through the various local authority feedback opportunities and through the Making it Real Board, as well as the local authority's complaints procedures. Data provided as part of the assessment (yet unpublished) indicated a reduction in waiting times in April to June 2024. However, it was too soon to confirm if these improvements were sustainable, and the local authority were monitoring progress through partnership boards.

Staff and partners told us of strong, visible leadership from senior managers who had a good understanding of the challenges faced by the local authority due to effective coproduction, engagement and use of data and insight. We saw a culture of learning, transparency and accountability embedded throughout the local authority, driven by leaders and cabinet members with a clear vision of how the council needed to realign to meet future service demands.

Telford and Wrekin had strong working links with place-based partners ensuring priorities and funding arrangements were agreed through the strategic commissioning boards to reduce the risk of delays in service provision. The local authority's Adult Social Care vision was "working together with people, key partners and communities to enable people to live well and independently in Telford and Wrekin." This was brought to life through a preventative, person-centred, strengths-based and community asset-based approach.

The Adult Social Care governance arrangements for delivering Care Act 2014 duties saw frontline teams working with service delivery managers with specific roles and responsibilities covering all aspects of Adult Social Care. Partnership boards and forums provided clear, effective overview and scrutiny, as well as quality assurance and review processes through regular meetings, updates, data analysis and reviews to inform learning and development.

Leaders, cabinet members, partners, staff, and people with lived experience worked together to monitor performance and improve the quality-of-service provision across the borough. The local authority understood local, regional, and national needs and risks to meeting their Care Act 2014 duties. They managed these through corporate and departmental registers, enabling actions to be taken to mitigate concerns and escalation processes for more immediate risks.

Feedback from staff, leaders, people using services, and partners unanimously highlighted coproduction and engagement as a strength of the local authority. Underpinned by the Making it Real Board, people with lived experiences were represented throughout all local authority process and structures. People's care and support experiences influenced strategic decision making and people told us they felt they had a genuine impact on service delivery.

Strategic planning

The local authority used information about risk, performance, inequalities, and outcomes, to allocate resources and inform strategic planning. This enabled them to deliver the actions needed to improve care and support outcomes for people and local communities.

Feedback from people, partners, staff, and regional/national data sources was used as a driver for implementing change. Strategic improvement plans had clear lines of accountability, actions, and resource allocation, as well as reviews and updated actions where relevant. Staff told us leaders were visible and "led from the front," with senior leaders and cabinet members regularly engaging with community events and staff forums to ensure strategic decisions were based on people's needs, experiences and outcomes.

The local authority's priorities include the Home First strategy (community-based approach to services including working closely with the voluntary and community sector), promoting independence, and improving access to services. Staff surveys, completed by the local authority in 2023 suggested 93% of Adult Social Care staff understood the council's priorities and their roles in achieving this.

The local authority had established a 'Housing Task Force' and an 'Adult Social Care Accommodation Oversight Board' which included senior commissioners and Managers from across Adult Social Care and Housing. The Directors of Adult Social Care, Housing and Finance attended to ensure oversight and scrutiny in the identification and prioritisation of housing investments as delivered against people's need, including supported accommodation and more bespoke solutions.

Telford and Wrekin's Adult Social Care Workforce strategy was in development at the time of the assessment, however the workforce position statement (Jan 2024) recognised ongoing investment in staff, unpaid carers, personal assistants, and community-based volunteer organisations, was an essential priority in meeting the increased local demands for care and support services. This included a commitment to ensure pay rates were sustainable for care provision and uplifts reached staff. The new, 3-year, workforce strategy aimed to ensure fee-modelling considered inflationary pressures on wages, demand pressures, travel time, and training, to encourage people to live and work in the borough and attract the skills and experience needed to deliver quality Adult Social Care services.

In addition to the recent review of the All-Age Carer's strategy, at the time of the assessment the local authority was developing a new Adult Social Care Prevention strategy, an All-Age Mental Health strategy, and a new place-based strategy to improve supported accommodation options in the borough past the current 2025 targets.

Staff and leaders told us how ongoing changes to processes had improved performance and helped deliver better outcomes for people using services and unpaid carers. For example, culturally competent staff recruitment and training programmes, along with changes to oversight and monitoring structures, had begun improved uptake of direct payments and reduced waiting lists for Care Act 2014 and carers assessments, with progress around DoLs and equipment assessments as well. Learning from concerns around consistent approaches, shared by people with lived experience, had begun to improve communication of safeguarding outcomes and new processes for keeping people involved in their case progression. Training programmes around MCA 2005 assessments, DoLs, and safeguarding, as well as improved scrutiny and support had enabled staff to start to address concerns around restrictive practices.

Ongoing engagement with community groups to understand local priorities for health and wellbeing, in conjunction with data and insight sources and partner organisations, aimed to improve the diversity of people's voice within the local authority and to help address new and emerging health inequalities. For example, the Making it Real Board were working closely with the Independent Living Centre to provide accessible information, assistive technology, and adaptations to a range of community groups, including people with multiple health conditions. Staff inclusion champions were collaborating with local authority and provider recruitment teams to ensure representative workforces who could meet the cultural and ethnic needs of growing local communities such as Ghanaian, Afghan, and Ukrainian groups.

People told us the work the Making it Real board were doing on improving accessible information standards was having real, positive impacts for people's lives. For example, senior leaders had updated the principles for identifying communication needs and how this should be recorded during Care Act assessments, as well as providing tools to support staff with the process.

Identification of new and emerging groups with communities had impacted on workforce development strategies. Senior leaders told us how equalities data was being used to identify gaps in provision and to enable meaningful, culturally appropriate staff recruitment to continue to reflect the community champions identified to work with coproduction groups. For example, the local authorities Adult Social Care Charter had been co-produced to identify the principles and approaches expected from all staff teams. This included always promoting independence, listening with empathy, and respecting people's decisions.

Information security

The local authority had arrangements to maintain the security, availability, integrity and confidentiality of data, records, and data management systems. Online information and advice were available on cyber-security, and a statement of compliance explained how personal data was collected, stored, used, and destroyed.

Information sharing protocols were agreed by the local authority data protection officers and supported secure sharing of personal information in ways which protected people's rights and privacy. Partners told us this needed further work to include voluntary and community organisations.

Staff had data protection training, and the local authority had an information governance team and Caldicot Guardian with oversight of this. A Caldicott Guardian is the senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people's health and care information.

Learning, improvement and innovation

Score 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

The local authority commitment

We focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across our organisation and the local system. We encourage creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. We actively contribute to safe, effective practice and research.

Key findings for this quality statement

Continuous learning, improvement and professional development

As part of the ongoing changes to structures and processes the local authority had identified, where workforce improvements could offer positive impacts to the delivery of Care Act 2014 duties, including outcomes for people receiving care and support services.

Staff said they enjoyed working in Telford and Wrekin and there was a culture of support and openness which started at the 'top' of the organisation and worked its way throughout. Following the local authority staff survey (2023) staff felt senior leaders and cabinet members had made themselves even more accessible, attending regular engagement meetings and staff forums as well as providing information, training, and support to promote staff wellbeing and resilience. Staff told us managers were supportive and considered personal circumstances, flexible working, wellbeing, protected characteristics, and unpaid caring needs.

Frontline social work teams told us of effective communication between teams, with good use of technology and regular meetings. The PSW and Principal Occupational Therapist (POT) facilitated regular supervisions, peer reviews, audits, and shared learning opportunities. The POT role had recently been introduced to take a professional leadership role across the organisation, and act as a bridge for better communication and understanding between senior leaders and frontline staff. The both roles oversaw quality assurance and improvement of social work practice, advising the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and wider council in complex or controversial cases, and on law relating to social work practice. However, feedback from people we spoke to, and the local authority's analysis of complaints showed these roles still needed time to embed fully.

Senior leaders told us how the local authority was realigning its 2 locality teams to short term and long -term borough wide teams. The social work practice framework was under review at the time of the assessment to ensure clear lines of accountability and understanding of roles and responsibilities. Staff confirmed they had been included in the team changes and felt valued and listened to by leaders.

Staff, leaders, and partners told us there was an inclusive and positive culture of continuous learning and improvement, with annual personal performance and development discussions, sharing of casework with colleagues for support, learning and critical advice, and opportunities to attend events such as International Social Work Day. Learning opportunities focused on not only national areas but were identified through quality assurance processes, including internal and external audits. Corporate Management and Leadership programmes were in place to provide opportunities for leaders and managers to develop, and training days given to ensure staff had time to update professional qualifications and registrations. There was also an online learning platform ('Ollie') supporting induction and refresher training as well as allowing access to awareness training such as the Oliver McGowan mandatory training for staff working with people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Professional development opportunities included trainee social work and occupational therapist apprenticeship schemes with local universities, specialist assessment service coordinators supporting newly qualified social workers, and Practice Educator training to support student social workers. There was a particularly strong emphasis on continuous improvement. The views of people using the service were at the core of quality monitoring and assurance arrangements. Innovation was celebrated and shared.

Staff and leaders engaged with external work, including research, and embedded evidence-based practice in the local authority. For example, the PSW annual report highlighted ways in which the local authority kept up to date with changes in practice and learning, as well as sharing good practice through regional and national work. This included involvement in the West Midlands ADASS PSW and POTs networks, representing PSWs and POTs on the national ADASS workforce, continued involvement with the West Midlands teaching partnership, and implementation of ADASS research posts within Adult Social Care. In addition to this, other senior leaders participated in regional and national committees. For example, the DASS was a member of the West Midlands ADASS, and a member of ADASS executive council, as well as being a member of the West Mercia Strategic Management Board and the ADASS policy lead for learning disabilities and autism.

The local authority actively participated in peer review and sector-led improvement activity. The local authority drew on external support to improve when necessary. For example, Telford and Wrekin had previously invited external challenge from the Local Government Association (LGA), ADASS peer reviews, and the department of health and social care, as well as being part of the Society for Innovation Technology and Modernisation (Socitm) advisory community of practice, which helped support information and advice service improvements. Staff told us they participated in regional best practice sharing forums such as family carers, supporting the local authority's staff champions programme, and were actively involved in the Regional International Recruitment programme, supporting 14 councils to adopt best practice in relation to ethical recruitment.

The local authority collaborated with people and partners to actively promote and support innovative and new ways of working which improved people's social care experiences and outcomes. For example, the implementation of integrated care records across the ICS, a new eBrokerage web-platform to support people looking for support providers, and the development of an on-line and self-assessment service option as part of the 'Live Well Telford' social care Portal. Hospital discharges were supported through a virtual care smart hub and an 'Oyster' scheme supported fully mobile assistive technology enabled people to contact carers when needed during the night to support hospital admission avoidance (including the Planned Overnight Care team).

The Independent Living Centre enabled members of the public to access advice, information and support on how to stay safe and access preventative services. The centre acted as a link to the Virtual House Tour, showing examples of assistive technology, sensory aids, and OT equipment to promote independence. This formed part of a presentation to the LGA's conference innovation zone in July 2023. More recently, the local authority worked alongside Co-Fund and Collaborate to Innovate in developing an app to support people with learning disabilities to prepare for and maintain employment.

Coproduction was embedded throughout the local authority's work. Staff and leaders told us how partnership working with people with lived experience to develop Adult Social Care services was an essential part of strategic and operational practice at every level of the authority. Leaders developed, discussed, promoted and implemented innovative ways of involving people in developing services which exceeded best practice.

In addition to multiple staff champions supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the organisation, the Making it Real Board was set up in January 2018, made up of people who use adult services or who were interested in the development of Adult Social Care in Telford and Wrekin. Members of the board received training and support and attended all local authority and partnership forums, in addition to regional and national coproduction groups, to represent seldom heard people's voice and ensure best practice.

Telford and Wrekin's coproduction framework (2023-2025) set out the local authority's approach to coproduction and engagement, citing national best practice examples, such as 'Think Local Act Personal' and the National Coproduction Advisory Group.

Staff and leaders told us there was a large coproductive presence in the development of new services. There was rigorous and constructive challenge from people who used services, the public and stakeholders, which was seen as a vital way of holding services to account. For example, the new online self-service Portal, allowing people to self-refer for needs assessments, was strongly influenced by members of the Making it Real Board who provided advice on accessibility and ease of use. Reviews and changes to existing services also included 'experts by experience' who gave feedback on how effective services were. For example, feedback on direct payment processes had led to a restructure of the team and the introduction of new quality assurance processes.

People told us the local authority's coproductive approach made a genuine difference to Adult Social Care services. People gave examples of carers wellbeing guides, the All-Age Learning Disability strategy, and the All-Age Autism strategy, as examples of coproduction having a positive impact on local authority approaches to meeting people's needs. Examples of effective changes to accessible information included guides to direct payments and DRE, information on assessments and people's rights, production of support plans and other support documents in formats meeting people's communication needs, and a 'know where to go' document signposting people to Adult Social Care services throughout the borough.

Recently the Making it Real Board had recognised there were gaps in their representation of all communities within the borough, for example, from some ethnic communities and from older people using Adult Social Care services, and were working with frontline teams, as well as using social media and attending awareness events to recruit a more diverse representation of Telford and Wrekin. The addition of unpaid carers and parent carers of people with learning disabilities had supported coproduction in these areas, for example in identifying supported accommodation needs.

People and partners told us coproduction extended into community inclusion projects and joint working with the voluntary and community sector. For example, a community café supporting people with learning disabilities to gain work experience, and digital drop-in sessions based in community hubs and the Independent Living Centre, supporting people to use technology to promote independence and access services. Partners told us how they attended the Making it Real Board, along with senior council leaders and cabinet members to listen to people's concerns and how the board held people to account for safe, effective provision of services.

Learning from feedback

The local authority learned from people's feedback about their experiences of care and support, and feedback from staff and partners. This informed strategy, improvement activity and decision making at all levels. There were processes to ensure learning happened when things went wrong, and from examples of good practice. Leaders encouraged reflection and collective problem-solving.

Staff and leaders told us opportunities for learning were taken from multiple sources, including complaints and compliments, safeguarding concerns (including SARs), and public engagement forums such as community hubs. The local authority also invited feedback from staff and partners and arranged external audits with neighbouring local authorities to ensure impartial scrutiny and objective criticism.

Senior leaders shared their vision of a culture of openness and transparency, ensuring they were visible and accessible to staff and the local community. As part of the assessment, we received multiple examples of leaders engaging effectively with staff, partners and people using services. People told us of genuine cooperative approaches which made them feel listened to. Staff told us of multiple ways to share concerns and learning opportunities, including staff forums, supervisions, awareness sessions, and audits, as well as access to formal policies such as whistleblowing and speaking up.

There was clear evidence learning from concerns and incidents was a key contributor to continuous improvement. Data provided by the local authority showed there had been 40 complaints raised about Adult Social Care services in 2023-2024, with 28 concerns upheld, leading to actions and improvements. The most common themes were concerns around assessment waiting lists, and communication (totalling 61% of concerns).

Examples of learning and actions following feedback on joint working with health partners included the introduction of new and innovative ways to support hospital discharge processes. This included changes to discharge pathways to improve the ratio of complex discharges home as well as the 'Getting it Right First-time' programme looking at rates of 'unsafe' discharges. Improvements to reduce hospital readmissions included Virtual Wards and the Planned Overnight Care team. Recent changes to engagement during assessments and safeguarding enquiries included a refreshed 'keeping in touch' process designed following concerns frontline teams did not always keep people and providers updated on progress and outcomes.

© Care Quality Commission

This page is intentionally left blank

Telford & Wrekin Council Adult Social Care Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment Summary Continuous Improvement Action Plan July 2024 – March 2026



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

This summary action plan brings together areas highlighted within the Care Quality Commission's Assessment of Telford & Wrekin Council's ability to deliver it's Part 1 Care Act Duties – rated 'GOOD'.

Theme 1: Working with People

Ref	Summary Action	Success Measure	Date due	Progress updates - improvements already made
1.1	Focus on Direct Payments (DP)	<p>Increased uptake of Direct Payments, where appropriate for the person and/or carer</p> <p>(ASCOF DP indicator - number of people receiving a DP over the number of people receiving a community-based service (on the last day of the month)</p> <p>(Carers DP indicator - all carers in the year who get a DP over all Carers in the year who receive a service)</p> <p>Improved feedback from people and carers using direct payments.</p> <p>Improved feedback from staff.</p>	Annual outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26	<p>Action plan in progress and utilisation of Direct Payments increasing across people in receipt of care and carers.</p> <p>Increase in number of people with Direct Payments from year end 274 to current 290.</p> <p>Increase in number of Carers with Direct Payments from year end 15 to current 164.</p>

1.2	<p>Provide refresher training for frontline staff on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Capacity Act (MCA) • Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) <p><i>(N/B also referred to within Theme 3)</i></p>	<p>Target: 100% appropriate frontline staff completed refresher training.</p> <p>Staff report improved confidence in MCA and DoLS.</p> <p>Improved feedback from partners and people in respect of MCA and DoLS.</p>	Sept 2025	<p>Training for DoLS and MCA in place for all ASC staff and is monitored through the ASC Assurance Board. Programme of refresher training to be implemented from March 2025.</p> <p>Monthly drop-in support sessions in place with MCA/DoLS Team - open to all adult social care staff to support ongoing improvement.</p> <p>The Team is also working with children's services to support the MCA/DOLS process for post 16 age group and provide any necessary training in line with recent changes to Community DoLS and Court of Protection guidance. Training plan to commence March 2025, which will include monthly drop-in sessions to align with the support offered in adult social care. This will also ensure a smooth transition of the necessary legislative framework when a young person reaches the age of 18 and moves into adult services.</p>
1.3	<p>Continue to manage and prioritise risks associated with waiting times and waiting lists for care act assessments.</p>	<p>Reduced waiting times for assessments and reviews.</p> <p>Reduced number of people waiting for assessment and reviews.</p> <p>Assessment Measure – commence Care Act Assessments within 28 days of contact</p> <p>Reviews Measure – undertake all reviews within 12months</p>	Annual outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26	<p>All contacts are triaged and prioritised according to risk. Limited waiting lists now in place. Hub appointments offered for all people as appropriate.</p> <p>27% reduction in median waiting times for assessments since submission to CQC</p> <p>98% reduction in median waiting times for reviews since submission to CQC</p> <p>56% reduction in the number of people awaiting an assessment since submission to CQC</p> <p>70% reduction in the number of people awaiting a review since submission to CQC.</p>

1.4	Review the Occupational Therapy (OT) Service, including waiting time for assessments and DFGs	<p>Specific action plan in place and associated measures of success.</p> <p>Reduced waiting times for OT assessments and DFGs.</p> <p>Measure - % of OT/sensory assessments completed in 2 weeks</p>	Annual outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26	<p>OT service review completed. People offered a booked appointment for Hybrid assessments with a view to this taking place within 2 weeks of referral.</p> <p>Further work underway to review and promote Disabled Facilities Grants and efficiency of process, building on the OT service review outcomes.</p>
1.5	Review commissioned equipment service	<p>Reduced waiting times for equipment.</p> <p>Improved feedback from people on the service received.</p> <p>Performance measures as per commissioned contract KPIs</p>	Mar 2025	<p>The service has been recommissioned, and its quality and timeliness are monitored through contract monitoring meetings.</p> <p>Current timeliness performance has improved significantly across the service since March 2024, and continues to improve. As of December 2024, 99% of urgent equipment requests were delivered within 24 hours.</p>
1.6	Continued focus on unpaid carers	<p>All-Age Carers Strategy developed and launched.</p> <p>Strategy implementation underway.</p> <p>Improved feedback from carers about services available to support them.</p> <p>Biannual Survey of Adult Carers in England (Measures include support and services satisfaction; looking after themselves; finances)</p>	Dec 2024	<p>All-Age Carers Strategy approved by Cabinet on 8 November and launched on 11 December 2024.</p> <p>Carers Partnership Board, which will drive the delivery of the strategy, launched on 21 November by CVS.</p> <p>Development of a carers specific feedback form underway which will complement the bi-annual NHS Digital Carers Survey.</p>

1.7	Further development of the care provider market <i>(N/B also referred to within Theme 2)</i>	Updated Market Position Statement in place and launched with the care provider market.	June 2025	In progress – consultation with stakeholders underway in order to draft market position statement
1.8	Continue to support and develop the Making It Real Board and associated Partnership Boards, ensuring diverse membership which reflects the local population and includes opportunities for seldom heard groups to engage.	Diversity of experts by experience is reflective of the local population and those in receipt of care and support. Improved feedback from experts by experience on their involvement with the Making it Real Board and Partnership Boards.	Sept 2025	The MIRB is currently reviewing its governance structure and membership.
1.9	Promote further use of translation opportunities for people who do not speak English as a first language and increase promotion as appropriate.	Increased use of translation services across Adult Social Care. Improved feedback from people receiving care and support, and/or their family/carers about use of interpreters Measure – Annual survey – satisfaction of people using services	Mar 2025	Promotion of the services available completed through ASC Communication Sessions, including examples from staff about how using the service to support their assessments and planning with the person has made a difference their lives. Review of utilisation underway by Principal Social Worker. Ongoing promotion of the services available to staff through all ASC Communication Methods.
1.10	Continue to promote the Independent Living Centre (ILC) and associated services	Increased footfall at Independent Living Centre and associated services. Improved feedback and outcomes from people using the ILC and associated services Improved resident knowledge of services available (measured	April 2025	The ILC will be reviewed in line with its current contract. A communication plan is in place that takes on board feedback from the experts by experience and residents; this will be updated and re-launched once the review has been undertaken. The ILC is currently well utilised by ASC.

		through Annual NHS Digital ASC Survey).		
--	--	---	--	--

Theme 2: Providing support

Ref	Summary Action	Success Measure	Date due	Status: what is the progress on the action?
2.1	Development of new Commissioning Strategy	<p>New strategy in place and implementation in progress.</p> <p>Strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving supported accommodation provision within the borough to meet current and future demand choice of care provision, especially in rural areas 	Sept 2025	<p>In progress, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reviewing our approach to commissioning including commissioning governance arrangements within the Council and health and care system wide. ➤ ASC Commissioning & Market Oversight group in development to drive forward commissioning activity and commissioning intentions ➤ Working group developed to update the Councils Market Position Statement for 2025-2028.
2.2	Review of respite provision	<p>Improved respite choices for carers that meets needs</p> <p>Carers report better information and advice about the respite offer.</p> <p>Delivery of the respite element of the All-Age Carers Strategy implementation plan</p>	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work has commenced to review the current respite offer. ➤ Carers Partnership Board established to drive forward the strategy and action plan.
2.3	Review of enablement bed commissioning	Reduction in spot purchasing of beds	March 2025	In progress, including:

		<p>Increased enablement effectiveness as measured by reduction in long-term care packages.</p> <p>ASCOF Measure: Outcome of short term service to maximise independence.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commissioned enablement block beds with dedicated therapies. ➤ Commissioned 2 extra care units utilised to deliver enablement with community support. <p>Performance has improved from 66% 2022/23 to 80% as at December 2024</p>
2.4	Continue to develop the supported paid employment opportunities available for people with eligible care and support needs, including those with learning disabilities	Increase in number of people with learning disabilities in paid employment. (England average of 4.8%.)	Annual outturn 2024/25 and 2025/26	<p>In progress, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Linked to the Governments Connect to Work Programme, we have jointly commissioned with Shropshire and Herefordshire an organisation to develop our delivery plan. ➤ Deep Dive review planned by SMT

Theme 3: Ensuring safety within the system

Ref	Action	Success Measure	Date due	Status: what is the progress on the action?
3.1	Continue to further develop the transition process for people moving into adult social care from children's services with reference to improved communication, housing decisions and reducing delays.	People report improved experiences of transitions	March 2025	<p>Ongoing multi-agency working ensuring referrals into adult services from the age of 14 to enable planned transitions.</p> <p>Improved planning between ASC, housing and commissioning to develop services and future proof care delivery is in place through regular meetings.</p>

				Carers assessments are now being completed for carers children over the age of 14 to further understand the carers needs and support them through the transition process alongside the young person.
3.2	Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Adult Board (TWSAB) to set up an Experts by Experience group to help further embed co-production in safeguarding and Making Safeguarding Personal.	<p>Expert by experience group set up.</p> <p>Feedback from experts and the TWSAB members that co-production is now embedded and makes a difference.</p> <p>TWSAB are able to evidence the difference the experts by experience group has made on their work.</p>	Feb 2025	A group has been set up and is led by an Expert by Experience. Currently establishing governance and looking to hold bi-monthly meetings sharing experiences of the safeguarding process – further enhancing our approach to Making Safeguarding Personal.
3.3	Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Board, alongside the Principal Social Worker, to review the Safeguarding Training programme for all staff within Adult Social Care	100% essential training for adult safeguarding completed within Adult Social Care.	June 2025	Underway and scheduled to be completed this Spring.
3.4	Principal Social Worker alongside the Safeguarding Lead to review and further embed the Safeguarding Audit process within the Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Activity. (Audits to include a focus on timeliness, communication and inclusion in the process.)	ASC Quality Assurance activity alongside performance monitoring of timeliness of communication evidence improvements in timeliness, communication and inclusion in the safeguarding process.	March 2025	In progress and on target for completion.
3.5	Principal Social Worker alongside the Safeguarding Lead to review and further embed the Safeguarding Feedback form process within the	ASC Quality Assurance activity alongside performance monitoring of timeliness of communication evidence	March 2025	In progress and on target for completion.

	Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Activity.	improvements in timeliness, communication and inclusion in the safeguarding process.		
3.6	Focus on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (N/B also referred to within Theme1)	Separate action plan and specific measures of success. Reduction in waiting times for DoLS assessments. Measure – new DoLS to be allocated within 3 months of referral Reviews to be completed within 3months of due date	April 2025	Further training for Best Interest Assessors is in place to further enhance the DoLS team. The DoLS team structure is currently being strengthened to ensure continuation of timely assessments. The DoLS forms have been reviewed, updated and implemented and are helping to streamline the process.
3.7	Focus on Mental Capacity Act (MCA) assessments and Court of Protection actions to address any inconsistencies in application (N/B also referred to within Theme1)	Separate action plan and specific measures of success.	April 2025	Legal Gateway meetings are in place to ensure prioritisation of Community DoLS. Quality assurance processes have been improved to ensure MCA's are completed throughout the person's journey as required.

Theme 4: Leadership

Ref	Action	Success Measure	Date due	Status: what is the progress on the action?
4.1	Embed recent team structural changes and continue to monitor impact on consistent practice and approaches – link to Prevention/Early Intervention approach.	Feedback from people receiving services shows increased positivity and a reduction in complaints received. Staff feedback on the structural changes will be positive.	June 2025	1 st September 2024 the Adult Social Care Community Specialist East and West Teams changed how they operate and transitioned into two new teams: Early Intervention and Prevention Team and Ongoing Assessment and Reassessment. This change builds on the pilot Review and Hybrid Teams which showed positive results for

		Development of Place Based Prevention Strategy and associated action plan	<p>individuals and their outcomes. Feedback from staff involved also highlighted the positives of this focus.</p> <p>Standalone Principal Social Worker position now permanent.</p> <p>Draft Prevention Strategy in development.</p> <p>'Making Prevention Real and Promoting Independence' Diagnostic Review into current prevention services and opportunities to prevent, delay and reduce people's need for formal social care services - Phase 1 completed.</p>
--	--	---	--

This page is intentionally left blank



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 13 February 2025

Children and Young People's Strategy 2025-2028

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills, Cllr Kelly Middleton - Cabinet Member for Public Health & Healthier Communities
Lead Director:	Jo Britton – Executive Director Children Services & Public Health, Helen Onions - Director: Health & Wellbeing, Darren Knibbs - Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support, Simon Wellman – Director: Education & Skills
Service Area:	Children Services & Public Health
Report Author:	Helen Onions - Director: Health & Wellbeing
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 381366 Email: helen.onions@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	14 October 2024
Report considered by:	SMT – 3 December 2024, 14 January 2025 Business Brief – 23 January 2025 Cabinet – 13 February 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve and support the commitments and proposals in the Telford & Wrekin Children & Young People's Strategy 2025-2028.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report summarises the proposals of the draft Telford & Wrekin Children & Young People's Plan for 2025 – 2028.

3.0 Background

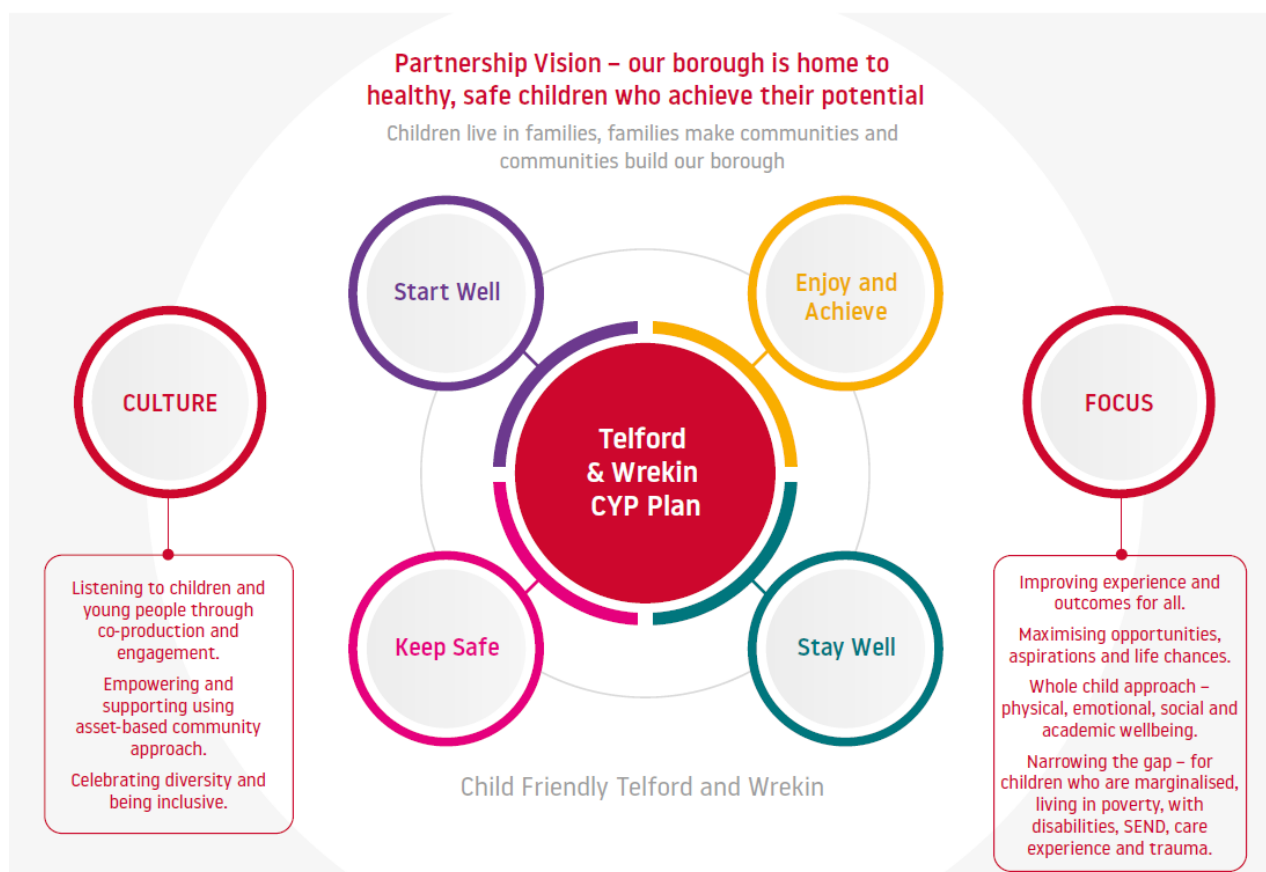
- 3.1 Strong local partnership working between; children, young people and their families, the Council, the Police, the NHS and community and voluntary organisations, is vital to improving the life chances and outcomes for all our children and young people.
- 3.2 In recent years, a variety of local strategies aimed at improving the lives of our children and young people have been in place across a range of partnerships, for example the Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- 3.3 The Government is currently in the process of developing and launching a new set of national policies and reforms, such as the Children's Social Care reforms, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the NHS 10 year plan.
- 3.4 A new Children & Young People's Strategy for Telford & Wrekin is now being proposed to streamline and more effectively deliver our strategic commitments across the range of children and young people's agendas and partnerships, alongside the rapidly changing national policy landscape.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Telford & Wrekin Children & Young People's Strategy 2025-2028 is an overarching plan which will act as an umbrella for a range of supporting partnership strategies and transformation programmes. The vision of the strategy is that our borough is home to *healthy, safe children who achieve their potential*, with the four aims that all our children and young people: *start well, stay well, keep safe and enjoy and achieve*.
- 4.2 The proposals draw on engagement, consultation and co-production work undertaken as part of the development of the supporting strategies, such as the insight gathered from children and families with special educational needs and disabilities, through the development of Family Hubs, the Young Person's Year of Wellbeing campaign and the healthy weight consultation.
- 4.3 The Strategy adopts a whole-child approach to maximise outcomes for all children and young people, with a focus on narrowing the gap for those who are marginalised or in need, for whatever reason. The national Child Poverty Strategy

expected in Spring 2025, will provide further context to improve outcomes for some of our most challenged local families.

- 4.4 The commitment to listen to, empower and support children, young people, parents and carers through community-centered approaches, is at the heart of the Strategy. Celebrating diversity and being inclusive will need to be a clear part of our partnership culture.
- 4.5 Child Friendly communities and cities aim to ensure all children have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. Adopting a child friendly Telford & Wrekin approach fits strongly with the commitments in this Strategy as it will mean - the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children become an integral part of our local policies, programmes and decision-making.



- 4.6 A series of objectives are proposed under the four strategy aims, and these map to existing supporting strategy commitments. A set of high level delivery programme priorities for 2025/26 have been proposed. The strategy performance framework includes outcomes indicators aligned to the aims, objectives and priorities.

- 4.7 The Strategy includes draft proposals for governance relevant at the time of writing. In the context of the Children's Social Care Reforms and other expected national policy changes, further discussions with key strategic partners are needed to firm up the most effective governance arrangements.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 An overarching Children & Young People's Strategy is needed to join up various agendas which are currently fragmented across partnerships, to ensure that the Council with partners take a whole-child approach to maximising aspirations, life chances and outcomes.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Without an overarching Children & Young People's Strategy and shared set of commitments across Council teams, the Police, the NHS and community and voluntary sector there may be silo working which makes it more challenging to effectively take a whole-child approach and improve outcomes for all children.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Children & Young People's Strategy 2025-2028 will predominately to support delivery of the Council priority:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.

However, children and young people and their families build our communities and borough and therefore the Strategy will also contribute to, and will benefit from, work programmes aligning to the other Council priorities:

- Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.
- Our natural environment is protected.
- A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The net 2024/25 budget for Children & Young people (excluding DSG) in 2024/25 is over £62m, made up of £49.6m for Children's Safeguarding & Family Support and £12.8m for Education & Skills. These two directorates represent approximately 40% of the Council's net 2024/25 budget.
- 8.2 All actions within the strategy for forthcoming years are intended to be met from within existing or planned resources. However, should additional resources be required, this will be considered in accordance with the Council's Governance process.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The Children and Young People Strategy has been prepared in line with the council priorities, the priorities of the Local Safeguarding Partnership and in accordance with Working Together 2023. As the report eludes to, there are proposals for a number of national reforms that will impact on the strategy throughout the timeframe of this strategy and therefore the strategy will need to continue to be reviewed in line with these reforms as they take effect.

10.0 Ward Implications

- 10.1 This Strategy affects all Wards, however children and young people in certain Wards are more impacted by poverty or more marginalised for a variety of reasons.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 The four aims of this Strategy encompass a wide range of health, social and economic implications. The start well and stay well aims include health commitments to ensure the best start in life, the reduction of health inequalities and healthy lifestyles. The keep safe aim covers range social care and child protection agendas. The enjoy and achieve aim covers education and skills, aspirations and life chances, which all impact on the future economic prosperity in the Borough.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 The Strategy commits to a partnership culture which is inclusive and celebrates diversity. There is a focus on narrowing the gap for those who are marginalised, for example children living in poverty, with disabilities, SEND, care experience and trauma.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 No specific implications.

14.0 Background Papers

None

15.0 Appendices

A Telford & Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy 2025 - 2028

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	03/01/2025	09/01/2025	HO
Legal	03/01/2025	20/01/2025	DTW
Finance	03/01/2025	09/01/2025	TD



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Page 149

Telford and Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy

2025-2028



Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin



Contents

Foreword	3
Our partners	4
Children and young people matter in Telford and Wrekin	5
CYP Strategy overview	6
Strategy vision, aims and objectives	7
Partnership and Strategy context	8
Listening to children, young people, parents and carers	9
Local picture	10-11
Outcomes we want to achieve - performance we want to improve	13
Transforming Family Help	14
Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin	15
Tackling Poverty	16
Delivering the aims and objectives, 2025/26 priority programmes	
• Start Well	17
• Stay Well	18
• Enjoy and Achieve	19
• Keep Safe	20
Proposed governance	21
What we hear from children and young people?	22-23

Foreword

We are delighted to introduce this Telford and Wrekin Children and People's Strategy for 2025-2028, to support the delivery of the: Council Plan priorities, Health and Wellbeing Board commitments and Safeguarding Children Partnership responsibilities.

Children, young people and families living in Telford and Wrekin build our communities and are the foundations and heart of our borough. This partnership Strategy bridges families and communities, and many organisations alongside the Council, such as the: NHS, community and voluntary sector, specialist providers, the Police, early years settings, schools and other education partners.

This is an overarching strategy which acts as an umbrella for a range of partnerships strategies, plans and transformation programmes. Building on from our excellent Ofsted children's services rating, our strategy vision is that **our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential**, with the aims that all our children and young people start well, stay well, keep safe, and enjoy and achieve.

We have listened to local children and young people to understand what outcomes they want. A whole-child approach should maximise aspirations, life chances and outcomes for all children and young people. Alongside this is a focus on narrowing the gap for those who are marginalised or in need, for whatever reason.

Our partnership is committed to listening to, empowering and supporting children and young people, parents and carers, through asset-based community approaches. Celebrating diversity and being inclusive needs to be a clear part of our partnership culture.

Our Family Hubs offer is clearly making an impact on local children and young people. Going forward, as part of the national Homes Built on Love Children's Social Care Reforms, family help with its strong prevention focus will be a key vehicle for change. Family Help is a crucial element of this Strategy's keep safe aim, but it will also contribute significantly to the other three aims.

The Children's Wellbeing Bill, announced in the Kings Speech 2024 will put children and their wellbeing at the centre of the education and children's social care systems, to ensure children are safe, healthy, happy and treated fairly, removing barriers to opportunity. Tackling child poverty is also at the heart of the new Government's mission to improve the life chances of every child. A Ministerial Taskforce is leading the development of a national child poverty strategy due to be published in the Spring 2025. There is clear context for urgent action on child poverty in Telford and Wrekin given our local picture, and this should support the delivery of all the strategy's aims and objectives. Working towards being a child friendly borough will support successful delivery of our aspirations.

A set of delivery priorities for 2025/26 and a performance framework sits alongside the strategy aims and objectives. The implementation and impact of the strategy over the next three years will be steered and overseen by a newly established Children and Young People's Board star chamber.



Jo Britton

Executive Director,
Children's Services
and Public Health



Councillor Shirley Reynolds

Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People, Education,
Employment and Skills



Councillor Kelly Middleton

Cabinet Member for Public
Health and Healthier
Communities



Children and young people matter in Telford and Wrekin

Children and Young People are front and centre of the refreshed **Telford & Wrekin Council Plan**, with tackling poverty and inequalities in communities at the heart of the plan.

Getting the best start in life is an overarching theme in our **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**. Across healthy pregnancies, support for families in the early years, improving development and education outcomes – there is focus on children affected by poverty, poor mental health, domestic abuse, alcohol and drugs and special educational needs and disabilities.

Telford Vision 2032 partnership ambitions support all children in getting the best possible start in life, from the day they're born, commits to no child being invisible to key services.



Partnership Vision – our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential

Children live in families, families make communities and communities build our borough



Telford and Wrekin Children and Young People's Strategy

Partnership Vision – our borough is home to healthy, safe children who achieve their potential

Start Well

Enabling children to get the best start in life through universal prenatal, antenatal, postnatal and health visiting services and early/family help services.

Empowering parents and carers to care for and nurture their children, with early/family help to avoid issues escalating.

Supporting all children to be ready for school, achieving a good level of development on their language and communication, problem solving and personal-social skills, at home and in early years and community settings.

Stay Well

Encouraging families to be active, with healthy diet and lifestyles.

Improving children and young people's mental health and emotional and wellbeing.

Reducing health inequalities focussing on mental health, asthma, diabetes, oral health, epilepsy and immunisations.

Enjoy and Achieve

Promoting access to a quality education offer for all young people across the borough, with holistic wrap around support for families who need it most.

Encouraging aspirations in all children and young people, enabling them to gain skills they need to fulfil their potential, preparing them for independent, successful adulthood.

Offering all young people opportunities to engage in stimulating activity which improves their sense of wellbeing.

Keep Safe

Creating conditions so every child is safe and feels they belong in their home and educational setting.

Ensuring an environment in our communities where child exploitation is prevented, identified and challenged, resulting in disruption.

Working together to tackle the impact of adverse childhood experiences, such as neglect, alcohol, drugs and domestic abuse – using a whole family approach to empower families and support communities to be resilient.

Culture

Listening to children and young people through co-production and engagement.

Empowering and supporting using asset-based community approach.

Celebrating diversity and being inclusive.

Focus

Improving experience and outcomes for all.

Maximising opportunities, aspirations and life chances.

Whole child approach – physical, emotional, social and academic wellbeing.

Narrowing the gap – for children who are marginalised, living in poverty, with disabilities, SEND, care experience and trauma.

Partnership and strategy context



Listening to children, young people, parents and carers

The voices from a wide range of groups shape our commitments

Page 157

Local schools and youth councils

Leavers Come First

Young Carers

Youth Parliament

Black and Minority Ethnic
Groups engagement

Emotional Health and Wellbeing
focus groups and survey

Young People's Forum

Maternity and Neonatal Voices
Partnership

Dandelion Parents

VOICE
(Children in Care Forum)

Family Hubs

Parents Opening Doors (PODs)

SEND Youth Forum

Autism Hub

Shout Out for SEND

Our local picture

Population



60,300

children and young
people aged 0-25. 1 in 3
people in T&W
(ONS 2023)



6.1%

increase in 0-25 population
since 2013, compared to
2.2% nationally
(ONS 2023)



22.1%

of young people from a
minority ethnic background
(Census 2021)



5%

of the younger population's
main language is not English
(Census 2021)



Higher proportion of children
eligible for **Free School Meals**
than England (27.6% primary,
25.6% secondary) DfE 2023/24



25.4%

(9,570) children live in low
income families, compared to
19.8% nationally
(OHID 2022/23)



30%

of households with
dependent children,
compared to 28.5% nationally
(Census 2021)



7.8%

(5,973) lone parent
households, compared to
6.9% nationally
(Census 2021)

Our local picture

Start well



29.3
YEARS OLD

Mothers are younger on average (30.9) ONS 2021



36.3%

of children are breastfed at 6-8 weeks, lower than England (52.7%)



45.1%

of pregnant women access maternity care early, lower than national average (63.5%)



9.7%

5,493 younger people disabled under the Equality Act. Census 2021



50.8%

of children are physically active, higher than the national rate (47.8%) Sport England 2024



63.9% of children achieve a **good level of development** at 2-2½, lower than national (80.4) OHID 2023/24



9.9%

A higher proportion of mothers smoke at time of delivery than nationally (7.4%) OHID 2023/24



24.6%

of children in Reception are overweight (including obese) – higher than national (22.1%) OHID 2023/24



The number of CYP accessing mental health services across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin continues to increase. NHSE



37.3%

of children in year 6 are overweight (including obese) – rate is improving and similar to the England rate (35.8%) OHID 2023/24

Our local picture

Enjoy and Achieve



69%

of children achieve a **good level of development** at the end of Reception, compared to 68% nationally OHID 2023/24



61% meet expected levels in **reading, writing and maths** at end of primary school compared to 60% nationally



43.3% achieving **Attainment 8** at end of secondary school compared to 46.1% nationally DfE 2024



35.3%

Lower rates of children on child protection plan per 10,000 than national (41.6) DfE 2023/24



96

A higher rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 than national (70) DfE 2023/24

5,017

WITH SEN SUPPORT AND 1435 EHC PLAN higher rates than national DfE 2023/24



Lower rate of permanent exclusions from school than national but higher rate of suspensions.



3.1%

of 16 to 17 year olds **not in education, employment or training**, better than national (5.2%) OHID 2022/23



Rates of hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children similar to national rates



Lower rates than national for hospital admissions as a result of self harm

Performance and outcomes we want to achieve

Our best start in life, social care and education outcomes are linked to Council priorities and a range of national frameworks.

Start Well

- Early access to maternity
- Infant vaccination rates
- Infant mortality rates
- Proportion of mothers smoking in pregnancy
- Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
- Health Visitor: Proportion of New Birth Visits completed in 14 days, infants receiving 6-8 week review and children receiving 12 month review
- Teenage pregnancy rates
- Child development – proportion of children achieving good level of development at age 2-2½

Stay Well

- Childhood vaccination rates
- Prevalence of overweight and obesity – reception and Y6
- Proportion of physically active children and young people
- Hospital admissions for mental health conditions
- CaMHS waiting times
- Percentage of school pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Hospital admissions for asthma, diabetes, epilepsy
- Dental decay experience

Enjoy and Achieve

- School attendance rates
- School readiness – children achieving a good level of development at end of reception
- Attainment – proportion of children achieving 5-9 in Maths and English
- Attainment – progress 8 scores
- Rate of children suspended or excluded from school
- Proportion of children not in education, employment or training
- Proportion of children on education, health and care plans
- proportion of children eligible taking up free school meals
- Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds not in education employment or training

Keep Safe

- Rate of Looked after children
- Rate of Child protection plans
- Repeat referrals to children's safeguarding within 12 months
- Stability of children in care placements
- Proportion of Children and Families Assessments with Domestic Abuse as a factor
- Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries – children and young people
- Hospital admissions as a result of self harm
- Number of missing children
- Proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation and in education, employment or training

Our children and young people have told us what is important to them:



Tackling Poverty

- Children in relative low income families
- Households with dependent children presenting as homeless

Transforming family help



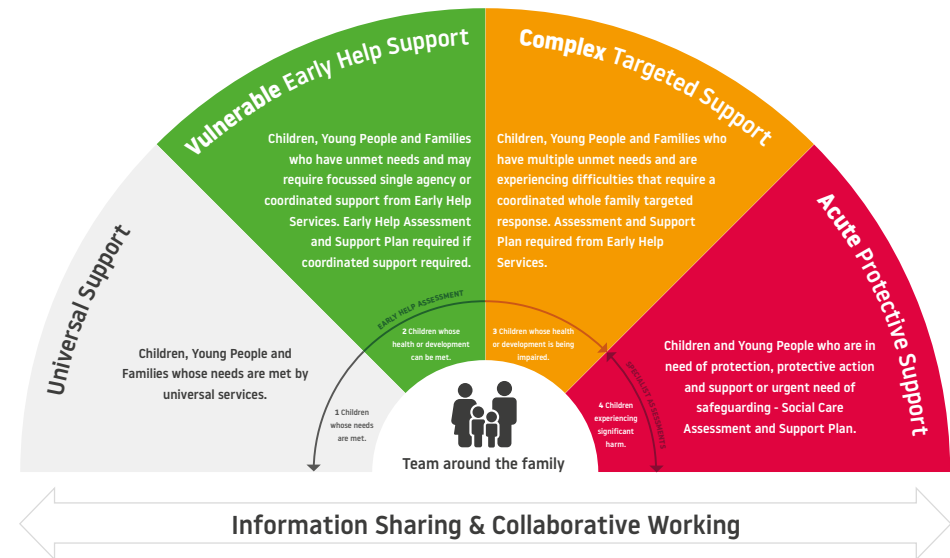
Our Early Help offer is clearly being transformed by Family Hubs. Going forward the Home Built on Love Children's Social Care Reforms, will support a new evidence-based approach called family help, bringing together targeted early help and children in need into a single system.

The transformation will create a Family Help service bring together Family Hubs, our enhanced Strengthening Families Service and our developing youth offer. While Family Help is a key element of this strategy's keep safe aim, it will also contribute significantly to the other three aims – start, well, stay well and enjoy and achieve.

The **Telford and Wrekin Family Hub Locality Service** will provide the following:

- Intense Family Help
- Brief Intervention Support
- Youth and Community Targeted Group Support
- Community Support – Here to help and Telephone support.
- Strengthened participation and engagement with children, young people and parents and will increase peer support and family ambassador roles
- Early Help Coordination support for Partner agencies
- Early Help Training

Family Help has a strong prevention approach and will be led by the Council, but community-based support from local voluntary, sector organisations such as: HomeStart, Families First and MIND are a vital part of the offer. Integration of the healthcare system, part of the Government's Health Mission, should also provide opportunities to offer health services closer to home for families.



We will improve our Early Help System by:

Leaders	Developing and communicating a clear Early Help offer with shared values, language and pathways.
Data	Data and intelligence led services with all partners to include shared Early Help Assessment case management system.
Workforce	Produce a shared workforce training offer to support the implementation of shared values, language and pathways.
Communities	Develop place-based knowledge, communication and sharing across workforce and communities.
Parental Experience	To understand and co-produce an Early Help system which supports the families Early Help journey.

Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin

Child Friendly communities aim to ensure all children are able to have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

These communities are those where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of policies, programmes and decisions so that children:

- have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for;
- are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
- have access to quality social services;
- experience quality, inclusive and participatory education and skills development;
- express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them;
- participate in family, cultural, city/community and social life;
- live in a safe secure and clean environment with access to green spaces;
- meet friends and have places to play and enjoy themselves; and
- have a fair chance in life regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.

Engaging with children and young people is fundamental moving forward with a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin. Their voice will help to identify their own priorities to help understand how a Child Friendly borough should look and feel.

Across the Borough we want everyone to think about ‘what is it like to be a child growing up in Telford and Wrekin and how can we make it better’

Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin priority programme 2025/26

Adopting Child Friendly status will require a robust implementation plan, including the following elements:

- introduce the Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin descriptor within the council;
- understand current Child Friendly initiatives or ideas across the council;
- identify children and young people priorities;
- strengthen the voice of children and young people in all areas of local decision making;
- identify levels of need across the borough to target activities effectively;
- promote Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin with partners; and
- identifying how partners, community and voluntary sector organisations, businesses and communities can get involved.

Local businesses, partners, and community and voluntary organisations could get involved by:

- offering young people, the chance to be part of an interview panel;
- holding an open day to showcase their organisation and invite schools;
- donating prizes to local events or sponsoring a team;
- becoming a mentor;
- offering apprenticeships;
- offering volunteering opportunities;
- engaging children when making decisions;
- offering discounts;
- creating safe places for children to play close to their homes;
- creating sport and physical activity opportunities; and
- creating Child Friendly places and environments for children to visit.

Tackling poverty

Over a quarter of families in Telford and Wrekin, 9,570 children live in poverty, which contributes to a wide range of poorer outcomes throughout childhood, and which then persist into adulthood.

The cost of living crisis has made it harder for families to afford the everyday essentials, forcing many more children into poverty. Worrying about money affects young people's development, mood, and their ability to focus.

Food poverty is all too common with on average one in ten families using food banks in 2024. Ensuring children whose families are struggling to make ends meet can access to healthy and nutritious free school meals is crucial.

Poor housing conditions and homelessness add further layers of uncertainty and stress, disrupting young people's lives in ways which can have serious long-term consequences. Ensuring our most vulnerable local young people have a safe, comfortable and healthy home to grow is paramount.

The national child poverty strategy expected in early 2025 will address systemic drivers of poverty, including employment and housing. Building on the Government's wider reform plans, child poverty is being brought together around four key themes:

- 1 Increasing incomes
- 2 Reducing essential costs
- 3 Increasing financial resilience
- 4 Better local support •

A key commitment for this strategy, focussing especially on the early years, high quality early education and health care. Our community and public sector partners should work together with families to improve access, co-ordination and the quality of services and wider opportunities, for those children of all ages that need them, recognising the particular benefits that early years interventions can have.

Tackling poverty priority programme 2025/26:

Introducing Poverty Aware Practice to support families, by adopting approaches being taken in Leeds and elsewhere through:

Language: guidance on having sensitive discussions with families about poverty

Community Practice: drawing on community support to reduce poverty

Advocacy: ensuring voices are heard

Improving Material Circumstances

Case Studies: best practice for working with poverty

Resources for families experiencing poverty: highlighting where families experiencing poverty can access support

Start Well

Objectives:

Enabling children to get the best start in life through universal prenatal, antenatal, postnatal and health visiting services and early/family help services.

Empowering parents and carers to care for and nurture their children, with early/family help to avoid issues escalating.

Supporting all children to be ready for school, achieving a good level of development on their language and communication, problem solving and personal-social skills, at home and in early years and community settings.

Start Well priority programmes 2025/26:

- Early/Family Help strategy and extension of Family Hubs programme offer;
- refreshed Healthy Child Programme offer; and
- Local Maternity and Neonatal System to reduce maternal and infant health inequalities.



The Family Hubs/Family Help offer now provides a wide range of information, advice and support for parents to promote healthy development of their little ones. This is delivered in partnership with the community and voluntary sector, the NHS and early years setting and includes:

- Healthy Child Programme – health visiting and family nurse partnership (targeted interventions to vulnerable young parents);
- Antenatal education and Baby First Aid;
- Breastfeeding Network Peer Support;
- Social Prescribing – mental health support for mums;
- Families in Telford and HomeStart community groups;
- 0-2s booklet;
- Talking with your little one – for babies and toddlers;
- Early Years Talk Boost: primary schools and early years setting; and
- Dandelion Parents and Father Champions.

The NHS and councils work together with families through the “local maternity and neonatal system” to make maternity and neonatal services personalised, safe, accessible and fair. Reducing health inequalities is a key focus, especially for people from Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnic backgrounds and deprived areas.

Stay Well

Objectives:

Encouraging families to be active, with healthy diet and lifestyles.

Improving children and young people's mental health and emotional and wellbeing.

Reducing health inequalities focussing on mental health, asthma, diabetes, oral health, epilepsy and immunisations.

Stay Well priority programmes 2025/26:

- Healthy weight partnership strategy actions for children, young people and families;
- Integrated Care System development of i-thrive model offer for social, emotional and mental health; and
- Integrated Care System core20plus5 programme expectations to reduce CYP health inequalities.

Adopting healthy lifestyles in childhood supports health throughout life, and vaping and smoking has become an important issue again in the past decade. Healthy lifestyles is a priority area given our local picture. The Council's healthy lifestyles team, leisure services, School Nurses and our community food work offers longstanding support to families, and now the wider work with partners through the whole systems approach to excess weight is starting to have a real impact.

The NHS healthcare inequalities programme (core20plus5) is an approach which target the 20% most deprived residents (the "core20"), which aligns closely to the child poverty agenda. The plus element covers children and young people who are at increased risk such as asylum seekers or those with SEND. The 5 clinical areas are those requiring accelerated improvement in medical treatment.

Mental health can impact on all aspects of children and young people's lives, including their physical wellbeing, relationships and educational attainment. It is widely acknowledged that mental health issue in children and young people has been increasing and access to mental health services is a challenge. The national i-THRIVE Programme, is an evidence-based framework being used across the country to improve outcomes for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.



Enjoy and Achieve

Objectives:

Promoting access to a quality education offer for all young people across the borough, with holistic wrap around support for families who need it most.

Encouraging aspirations in all children and young people, enabling them to gain skills they need to fulfil their potential, preparing them for independent, successful adulthood.

Offering all young people opportunities to engage in stimulating activity which improves their sense of wellbeing.



Enjoy and Achieve priority programmes 2025/26:

- boost the achievement of all children across Telford and Wrekin, through continual improvement activity across settings;
- raise aspirations with a focus on those from a disadvantaged background, through Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters programme;
- provide an inclusive educational offer that meets the needs of children with SEND in mainstream settings; and
- prepare young people for life after school, through youth offer and skills strategy.

Recognising the mixed economy of provision (i.e. maintained, academies, private, independent) that now exists within the national and local educational landscape our approach to achieving our key priority outcomes above is via partnership. Our work is driven through the Education Strategic Partnership Board who have oversight of improvement activity across our place and is made up of our local education leaders.

The Board believes that by collaborating, sharing and developing great practice in our organisations all our children can achieve their potential, at each stage in their education and development, to becoming successful young adults who have a real sense of belonging in Telford.

The Board is made up of education leaders from the early years sector, primary, secondary and special schools (maintained and academies), post 16 providers, diocese and the Local Authority. The partnership provides and opportunity for discussion and consultation between leaders of Telford and Wrekin, focused on education and promoting opportunity for all children and young people.

In addition the Council will further develop its holistic offer promoting best start in life, via the 5by5 and 10by10, expand and promote a community youth offer and develop a skills strategy to create a future fit workforce that will support an inclusive economy.



Keep Safe

Objectives:

Creating conditions so every child is safe and feels they belong in their home and educational setting.

Ensuring an environment in our communities where child exploitation is prevented, identified and challenged, resulting in disruption.

Working together to tackle the impact of adverse childhood experiences, such as neglect, alcohol, drugs and domestic abuse – using a whole family approach to empower families and support communities to be resilient.

Keep Safe priority programmes 2025/26:

- delivery of Government's Stable Homes Built on Love, Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill expectations;
- ongoing development of child exploitation prevention programme;
- tackling youth violence; and
- enhancing offer for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

The Department of Education Children's Social Care Reforms **Stable Homes Built on Love** published in February 2023, is organised under six pillars:

- 1 Family help that provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families.
- 2 A decisive multi-agency child protection system.
- 3 Unlocking the potential of family network.
- 4 Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care.
- 5 A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one.
- 6 A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data.

Across the Council's Children's Safeguarding, Education and Skills and Public Health teams, we continue to drive the recommendations of the Government publications and hold ourselves accountable for the implementation of the reforms both from a local and national context.

Our housing strategy aim to provide suitable high quality housing in the borough, with extra support for those most vulnerable children and families to ensure our young people have a safe environment to live and grow.

We continue to measure our progress in accordance with the legislative context and local delivery to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and their families. We actively engage at a national level with policy and practice change and ensure the implementation of this at a local level, in addition to recognising our strengths and areas of development.

Proposed governance

Children and Young People's Star Chamber

A new CYP Star Chamber - including young people, Elected Members and Leaders from the key statutory organisations, will be put in place to provide sharper focus and critically appraise progress against the key commitments in the Strategy to demonstrate impact.

The existing boards below will continue to provide oversight, assurance and monitor outcomes across their current scope of responsibility.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Responsibilities for:

- public health, healthy lifestyles, best start in life, alcohol and drugs, domestic abuse

Early Help Operational Board

- early/family help transformation

Community Safety Partnership

- domestic abuse, youth violence

Integrated Care System

Responsibilities for:

- health services, maternity and neonatal system, mental health, child mortality, core20plus5 – health inequalities

Safeguarding Children's Board

Responsibilities for:

- children's social care reforms
- Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill
- SEND and alternative provision
- children in care and care leavers

Corporate Parenting Strategic Group

SEND Partnership Board

Responsibilities for:

- continued development of first class education system

Education Strategic Partnership

Start Well

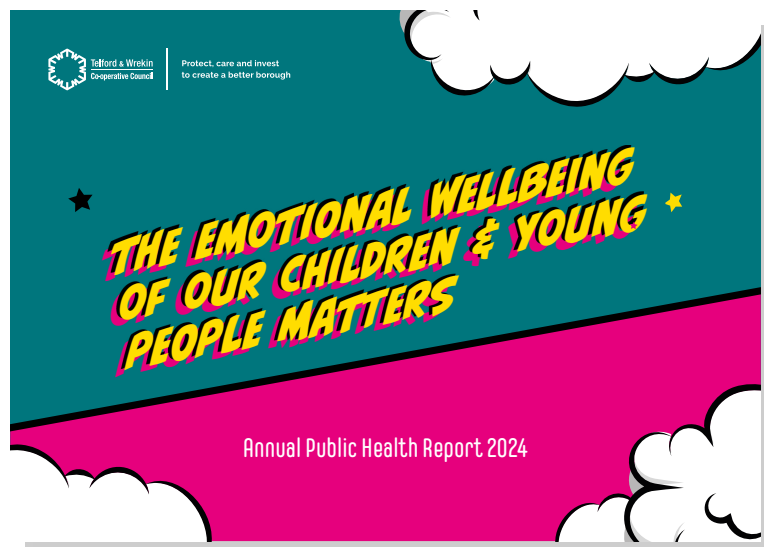
Stay Well

Enjoy and Achieve

Keep Safe

What we hear from children and young people?

Page 170



WHAT MAKES YOU SAD OR WORRIES YOU

...take it hard when my parents push me to do things or see people that I don't like

...not seeing family...

...being alone...basically I spend every day on my own

...situations you can find yourself in with family...
'family drama'

...when my friends start acting up and isolate me for no reason

...anxious about going back to school after the school holidays...everyone finds school difficult at some point...school makes me sad and worried

...bullying and being picked on...being bullied constantly

...not being good enough...disappointing others...
being underestimated...sometimes it motivates you

but often it makes you feel like you don't want to try because you aren't good enough.....can have a positive or negative effect..

...carbon emissions, the environment and the climate

...Friends dying and worrying about dying...

...social media...the news can make me sad...

...worry about things that are happening now, things that you can't change but you wish you could

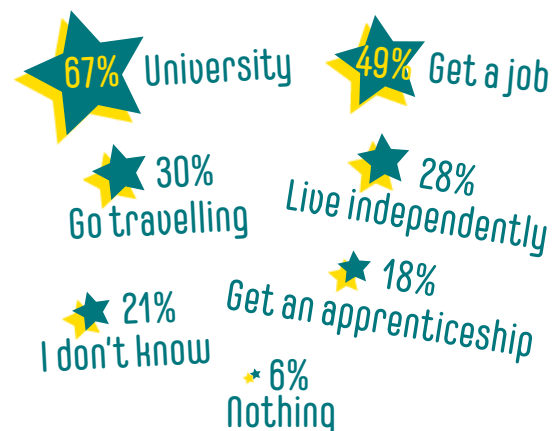
...fake news...altered images...made up stories on social media...avoid all social media...all these images have been edited, they are so fake

...bus times cause me anxiety...I have to get the college bus, which is always crowded and gives me anxiety



What our YPYoW survey shows:

What are your goals for when you leave school/college? Choose all that apply



What we hear from children and young people?

Do you feel you have the right support and opportunities to succeed in your goals?

...there is more support that I am looking for but it is hard to find and I don't drive or use buses so getting there can be difficult as I walk everywhere...

...I think there is adequate support out there but it's knowing what there is...

...from secondary school schools and then colleges should start teaching us about independence...

...lots of things that you do at school can help you in the future when you are independent, but many do not...

...some subjects are not relevant to life once you leave education

...education should teach us more practical things like life skills...school and college should help you more...they should teach us about taxes and bills

...family support system, and experience in going to university affects how much support we can get from them in completing applications for university...

...'parents who have no knowledge are less able to support or advise us than parents who do have experience...

...you have to figure things out for yourself if your family can't give you advice or support...

What do you do to keep fit and healthy

Care leavers are entitled to a free leisure centre membership taking part in PE/Gym at school

Going running on the track

Running around school all day

Flip Out in Stoke

Healthy eating was taught to me

I had no guidance about diet and nutrition

Nutrition the body needs

Can join that are similar to the young carers group

Swimming keeps me focused

Running helps me to destress

What our YPYoW survey shows:

What do you do to keep fit and healthy?
Choose all that apply



This page is intentionally left blank



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 13 February 2025

Publication version of Local Plan

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
Lead Director:	James Dunn - Director: Prosperity & Investment
Service Area:	Prosperity & Investment
Report Author:	Gavin Ashford - Strategic Planning Team Leader
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 384260 Email: gavin.ashford@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	6 January 2025
Report considered by:	SMT 14 January 2025 Business Briefing 23 January 2025 Cabinet 13 February 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

1.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- a) Notes the content of the report and the appendices; and
- b) Recommends that Full Council:-
 - i. Approves the Publication Local Plan, the Publication Policies Map and the Site Allocations;
 - ii. Agrees that any representations on the publication version of the plan are received and;
 - iii. Approves submission of the Publication Local Plan and associated documents, to the Secretary of State for examination.

1.2. It is recommended that Full Council:-

- a) Delegates authority to the Director: Prosperity & Investment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member, to exercise all relevant powers under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and associated law to:
 - i. Receive, action and collate representations made for submission to the Secretary of State
 - ii. Prepare the plan for submission to, and examination by, the Secretary of State
 - iii. Publish the outcome of the examination and recommendations.
- b) Delegates authority to the Director: Prosperity & Investment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member to exercise the Council's powers relating to its duty to cooperate in relation to the planning of sustainable development as set out in Section 33A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and any other associated legislation and guidance; and
- c) Delegates authority to the Director: Prosperity & Investment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member to enter into formal arrangements with any person or body referred to or prescribed in accordance with Section 33A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated law and authorise the Lead Cabinet Member to sign and confirm the Council's agreement to those formal arrangements if required
- d) Approves the new Local Development Scheme and updated Statement of Community Involvement documents for publication.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 Our Local Plan proposals will:

- *Protect* our greenspaces,
- *Care* for our existing communities
- *Invest* in the future

2.2 It will do this and benefit our residents by:

- **Providing more quality homes which local people in Telford and Wrekin can afford** - Around a third of all housing will be for social or affordable rent or shared ownership. These homes will be both cost effective from a rent point of

view but also built to modern sustainability standards making them cheaper to run helping to lift the most vulnerable residents out of fuel poverty.

- **Providing new homes to meet the needs of our community, including homes for our young people, families and older people** - New mixed communities of affordable and open market homes will meet the diverse needs of our residents including homes for; families, less able-bodied residents, key workers (such as nurses, teachers and emergency service workers) and specialist and supported accommodation for older people. This will help residents lead healthier lives in their own homes for longer and help resident's upsize/downsize in their local communities.
- **Providing more energy efficient buildings helping to lower the cost of running homes and businesses** - This work aligns with the Council's ambitions to be carbon neutral by 2030 and helping to create a sustainable climate ready environment. Helping to lower energy costs for businesses will help deliver new inward investment and jobs into the borough.
- **Retaining Telford and Wrekin's proud identity as one of the greenest places in the country by protecting our heritage and enhancing our green spaces for people and wildlife** - All residents will be able to enjoy enhanced green spaces, ecology and biodiversity as new Local Nature Reserves are secured and our green network expanded. This will help secure Telford's place as a 'community in the landscape', and one of the greenest boroughs in the country, and provide interconnected routes for flora, fauna and residents to move around the borough.
- **Investing in our established communities by revitalising borough towns and tackling derelict and vacant sites that blight local people's daily lives** - These derelict sites will benefit from development bringing forward good quality new homes for residents in highly accessible locations.
- **Securing around 17,000 new jobs through new land for existing businesses to grow and new business to invest in Telford and Wrekin** - Secure jobs for the future economy by delivering land for new investments which will provide a range of new job opportunities. This will be supported by the Councils wider approach to up skilling through investments such as the new learning and skills hub (The Quad) in Telford town centre.
- **Securing new and improved infrastructure for the future, including six new schools, expanded GP surgeries and improving transport networks** - Provide a long-term plan-led approach that will help secure new and improved infrastructure for the benefit of our residents and enable partners such as the NHS and Education providers to plan their services effectively and lobby Government for further investment moving forward.
- **Tackling climate change by introducing policies to reduce carbon emissions and improve sustainability** - Climate change is central to the plan and is an integral theme across policies that will help with the switch to low emission transport, renewable energy in the right locations and helps manage our natural resources sustainably.

- 2.3 The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan review will see population growth of c28,500 over the plan period, with a total borough population still below the original vision by Telford Development Corporation of a new town consisting of 260,000 people. Telford remains the key population centre, most accessible location and destination for jobs and inward investment and will continue to grow. The Council are also planning for development needs of our communities in Newport and the rural area.
- 2.4 The existing Telford & Wrekin Local Plan was adopted in Feb 2018 so is subject to review. The Publication Plan is the next stage in this review process. The purpose of this report is to present the Publication Local Plan and site allocations to Cabinet for recommendation to Full Council to publish the plan. It provides the public and stakeholders with a further opportunity to raise matters of soundness they feel should be considered by the Planning Inspectorate at examination.
- 2.5 Government policy over a number of years has required Local Planning Authorities to deliver Local Plans and to keep them up-to-date ensuring they are reviewed every 5 years. The borough must also be able to show a 5-year land supply for development with failure to do so risking speculative development in locations and quantities that the Local Planning Authority would not favour which will impact valuable greenspaces and doesn't support provision of planned key infrastructure, such as schools and highway improvements. As the current Telford & Wrekin Local Plan ages it will also become increasingly out of step with changes in national policy and more open to challenge in determining planning applications.
- 2.6 This report presents the next version of the Local Plan to Cabinet, to recommend Full Council approval to publicise the Publication Plan stage of the review (Appendix 1) in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Regulation 19. Following the comments received from the public and stakeholders these will be collated and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination alongside the Publication version of the plan and the accompanying evidence base. This will be followed by independent examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, with adoption anticipated winter 2026 subject to the Planning Inspectorate.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In line with national guidance the Council previously consulted on Issues & Options (I&O) during 2020/21. This set out and sought public views on four strategic objectives underpinning the review of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan:
- Employment led growth through **inward investment and job creation**
 - A '**Forest Community**' approach which affords the **protection, enhancement and accessibility of the natural environment and green spaces that characterise the Borough**
 - Support for **regeneration of our Borough Towns, new town estates and infrastructure**

- Meet local housing needs including providing **more affordable and specialist accommodation** to support people to live longer and healthier at home

- 3.2 The findings from the Issues & Options consultation informed the draft plan (Regulation 18) which was consulted upon between October 2023 and January 2024 and this included 15 face to face drop-in sessions, a dedicated website, information in local libraries and stakeholder engagement including with; Parish and Town Councils and infrastructure providers (National Highways, NHS, Utilities companies). The Council have reviewed comments received and amended the plan where deemed appropriate.
- 3.3 Nationally government planning policy through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has over a number of years been clear that LPAs are expected to meet their obligations to maintain up to date local plans. The Government's NPPF **requires Councils to review and update local plans every 5 years**. The Government requires Councils to objectively assess their area's development needs and plan accordingly.
- 3.4 It is the administration's position that it will be progressing the Publication version of the Local Plan taking account of the changes set out in the revised NPPF, which was published on 12 December 2024.
- 3.5 The changes to the planning system will continue to require the Council to have an up-to-date local plan in place every five years and maintain a five-year housing land supply in order to maintain control of local housing supply policies.
- 3.6 The local plan review will support the delivery of Council strategies that will help the borough thrive and grow in a sustainable manner, this includes the Economic Development Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The proposals in the Draft Plan will make a positive impact on the Council's ambition of a carbon neutral borough by 2030 as set out in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1. The cabinet report covers the Publication stage of the Local Plan review. This represents the Council's final version of the plan document which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination alongside final comments from the public and stakeholders.

NPPF update

- 4.2. The Government has consulted on changes to the NPPF, the closing date for responses was the 24 September. The newly adopted NPPF was published on 12 December 2024 with the changes in policy having been accounted for within the Publication version of the Plan. The Council are progressing the plan under the updated NPPF, which comes into force on the 12 March 2025.

Draft Local Plan consultation

- 4.3. The Council held a Draft Local Plan consultation between 25 October 2024 and 31 January 2025. The draft plan consultation included 15 face to face drop-in sessions attended by 930 residents and stakeholders and generated over 3,500 comments from over 2,700 individual respondents. This included group responses from residents of Muxton and Rodington which made up over 1,400 of the received comments.
- 4.4. The key themes from the consultation included:
- The number of homes the Council were planning for and the distribution of new allocations weighted towards the north of the borough
 - The need to plan for new infrastructure to accommodate new development
 - The release of agricultural land for new development
 - Concerns around flooding and drainage on and around proposed development sites
 - The need to protect important green spaces
- 4.5. Responses received from stakeholders and the public during the Draft Plan consultation have helped shape the Publication version of the plan, this includes:
- Taking on board feedback regarding potential deliverability issues with sites that has been used to refine the next stage of the site allocations process, for example the removal of proposed employment land at Snedshill.
 - Removal of Rodington as a potential key settlement.
 - Consideration and inclusion regeneration opportunities including the old 'Pink Skips' site, Homes England land at Old Park and the former open composting site at Redhill way.

Local Plan policies

- 4.6. The review process has enabled the Council to update policies within the Local Plan and where needed introduce new policies to better reflect the development priorities of the Council and the needs of the community. This has included:
- **Amendments to the Councils affordable housing policy** HO5 that will direct a portion of developer contributions towards meeting a greater range of affordable housing needs. This will include funding for supported & specialist, older peoples, dementia care and care leaver housing.
 - **The introduction of a policy to cover stalled development sites** HO10. This policy will allow the Council to work proactively with site owners and developers to bring forward previously developed land such as, former pubs,

derelict sites and vacant land in predominantly urban areas. These often accessible well-connected sites blight existing communities and will benefit from redevelopment.

- Strategic Policy S7 (Developer contributions and infrastructure) has been strengthened to ensure the **Council can recoup developer contributions up to the value of a policy compliant scheme**, should a developments viability improve upon completion.

Planning for new homes, communities and jobs

4.7. Delivering new homes that are in reach of residents is a key priority for the Council. To do this the Council needs to plan for a range of affordable housing needs including;

- Homes for families with children
- Young people
- Key workers
- Older people
- People with special needs and disabilities

4.8. There is a demonstratable and pressing need across the borough for affordable homes with a net need for 371 homes for affordable and social rent / pa up to 2040. The Council meets its affordable housing needs through a mixture of Section 106 agreements (c40%) and Homes England Affordable Homes Programme grants (c60%) via Register Provider (RP) partners. The Council recognise that not all demand is likely to be met due to the need to balance viability of schemes, meeting overall need and the ability of the market to deliver new homes, however, the Council have a positive policy approach of seeking a proportion of affordable housing delivery from new major development sites (10+ homes) and work proactively with RP partners to support 100% affordable schemes that greatly assist with delivery.

4.9. The Council's Housing Commissioning Team manages the nomination of residents owed a homelessness duty into available social housing stock. Their evidence shows that there is a need for different accommodation types to meet demand, this is one component of overall local affordable housing need that shows:

- High levels of demand for all sizes of accommodation with notable gaps between demand and supply for 1 bed and 4+ bed homes.
- Demand for adapted properties is significantly outstripping supply

There is significant demand for social housing, to provide accommodation for those owed a homelessness duty, with an average demand of 135 people/families per month compared with supply of around 70 – 80 homes.

- 4.10. The Council's housing requirement is 1,010 homes / pa, over the 20 year plan period (2020-2040) totalling 20,200. This requirement figure will be met through the following sources of supply;
- 57.5% of the housing requirement figure has already been completed, is under construction, has planning permission or was allocated under the adopted Telford & Wrekin Local Plan but has not yet started construction.
 - The balance of 42.5% of new homes would be met through site allocations. This would see a net requirement of 429 new homes / pa through new allocations.
- 4.11. The Council is still planning for an employment land requirement of 167ha. This will be met through existing supply of over 100ha and through new employment land allocations. This will help create approximately 17,000 new jobs across the borough.

Infrastructure planning

- 4.12. The Council are working with internal and external service providers to identify the infrastructure needs of new development proposed in the plan. This new infrastructure will be critical to creating and sustaining new communities. The provision of new infrastructure will also benefit existing communities through the provision of:
- New facilities such as play areas and publicly accessible open space
 - Investment into sports and recreation facilities that can be enjoyed by new and existing communities
 - Investment in existing education facilities and the delivery of new schools.
 - Upgraded transport infrastructure including better connectivity via buses, walking and cycling
 - Investment into the highway network to provide additional capacity
- 4.13. The Council are working with external agencies such as National Highways and the NHS to provide a long-term forward view of the level and location of development. This information is critical for those services to plan ahead and deploy their resources to meet needs in a structured way. In the absence of a plan-led approach it would be difficult for those services to plan effectively. New development can support with opportunities for improved capacity in public services and provide a strong position for services to lobby for additional funding.

- 4.14. The infrastructure projects identified to support the Local Plan will be set out in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) document. This will include details of projected delivery dates and routes to funding. The purpose of the document will be to provide certainty to internal and external partners on infrastructure delivery, such as when new schools will be required to support new homes. The document will also provide a sound footing to the Council when seeking Government funding support for infrastructure projects

Site allocations

- 4.15. As part of the overall review process the Council has refreshed its land supply and carried out two 'call for sites'. In total 212 potential development sites were submitted for consideration, this included 18 sites submitted as part of or following the Draft Plan consultation process.
- 4.16. A total of 53 sites have been recommended for allocation in the Publication version of the Local Plan for housing, mixed use and employment development. This includes a mix of sites that include previously developed land, a range of site sizes to help support local SME builders and sites that can help deliver infrastructure improvements.
- 4.17. Three new Sustainable Communities located to the north of Bratton, at Wappenshall and land northeast of Muxton are recommended for allocation in the plan. These sites will form new communities that will be integrated into Telford via new walking and cycling links and green network corridors. They will include 5 new primary schools, 1 new secondary school, parks, public open space, local centres, employment opportunities and a mix of housing to meet a range of needs.

Duty to Cooperate

- 4.18. The Council has, over the course of developing the Local Plan, liaised with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities regarding Duty to Cooperate. As per the Governments requirements for Councils are required to address requests to meet the unmet development needs of neighbouring Local Planning Authorities. Therefore, contained within the housing requirement figure is a contribution of 153 homes / pa towards the unmet housing needs of the Black Country LPAs of Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall.
- 4.19. This offer is additional to the result of the Government's standard method generating a local housing need of 857dpa. This represents the mandatory minimum number of homes to be planned for. The Council considers it is appropriate to retain the proposed requirement from previous stages of plan-making, thus generating the contribution that can be offered towards unmet needs relative to the standard method result. The continued selection of the proposed requirement reflects demographic trends, housing market and the close proximity

of the Black Country and recent build rates together with specific evidence of the extent of unmet need declared by the BC authorities.

- 4.20. In advance of submission to the Planning Inspectorate the Council will continue to work with these LPAs to agree Statements of Common Ground which will reflect any cross-boundary interests between themselves and the Council.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IA)

- 4.21. The Council is required to assess the sustainability impacts of the Local Plan review. The Council have commissioned an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) report, a version of which is included alongside the Publication plan. The IIA covers; Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment. The IIA has considered a set of reasonable alternatives for the potential levels and distribution of growth across the borough as well as policies included within the plan.

Policies Map

- 4.22. To accompany the Publication Plan a new version of the Policies Map has been produced. This provides a geographical representation of policy contained within the plan and includes the location of allocated housing, employment and mixed-use sites.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 4.23. The LDS is the Council's programme for the production of documents that form part of the development plan as well as other planning documents such as the Authority Monitoring Report and Supplementary Planning Documents. It is not a policy document itself. It enables the local community and stakeholders to find out what planning documents are being prepared by the LPA and the timetable for their production. In particular, it sets out the timetable for the review and update of the Local Plan, and outlines the dates when there will be formal opportunities to get involved with the plan making process. The Council is required to make an up-to-date Local Development Scheme available to the public and the attached updated version, covering 2025 - 2028 forms part of the suite of documents to be approved as part of this report.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 4.24. This document sets out how and through what forms of communication the LPA will consult local residents, stakeholders and statutory bodies on planning issues such as the Review of the TWLP. The SCI also describes the LPA's procedures and arrangements for involving the community when considering planning applications and major proposals for development. The SCI needs to be reviewed

every 5 years, the attached version forms part of the suite of documents to be approved as part of this report.

Regulation 19 process and communications

- 4.25. The Publication version of the plan is the Council's final draft document in preparation for examination by an independent Government appointed planning inspector. The Local Plan has been prepared in line with the new NPPF (December 2024), this document is subject to a short transition period before it comes into force. Prior to submission to the inspector a further chance for the public and stakeholders to make final comments regarding the soundness of the plan will take place, this will be no earlier than the 12 March when the new NPPF comes into force. The Council, as set out in Government guidance, do not make any material changes to the plan as a result of this process.
- 4.26. The Publication version of the plan (plus any minor, non-material, modifications), the final comments submitted by the public and stakeholders and all accompanying evidence base will then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. The inspector will then assess the plan and may instruct the Council to make major modifications to the plan as a result.
- 4.27. An updated evidence base will be published alongside the Publication version of the plan when it is available for public and stakeholders to comment on.
- 4.28. The Council will publicise the final opportunity for the public and stakeholders to review the plan and make comment. Publication will be through;
- the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan website
 - Social media channels
 - Press releases
 - Legal notice in the Shropshire Star to advertise commencement of the formal Regulation 19 stage
 - Depositing documents for viewing at libraries
 - Notifications to stakeholders
 - Notifications to members of the public included on the Councils consultation database.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative to progressing with the Publication Plan would be to delay. This is a highly risky and potentially damaging approach that would expose the borough to a considerable period of unplanned speculative development given the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date local plan under the NPPF in order to demonstrate a Five-Year Housing Land Supply and maintain control of its housing supply policies.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 There are a number of risks associated with the Publication Plan these include:

- A delay in bringing the plan forward would undermine the Councils Housing Land Supply position increasing risk of unplanned speculative development. If developers feel the Council is unduly delaying the process they are increasingly likely to challenge the adopted local plan.
- As plans age policies require updating. A delay in the process will leave the Council unable to maximise benefit from development and provide the protection for areas of value such as conservation areas, landscapes and the natural environment. It also means the opportunity to introduce new policy approaches that extend housing choice and support zero carbon will be missed.
- The Publication Plan will help create new jobs and bring forward new affordable housing opportunities as well as support regeneration of existing housing stock. Failure to bring the plan forward will put the boroughs most vulnerable residents at risk.
- Should the Planning Inspector have concerns at examination about the soundness of a submitted plan they may consider that the examination cannot be completed without additional work being undertaken. If asked to do so by the local planning authority, under section 20(7C) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act the Inspector must recommend 'main modifications' (changes that materially affect the policies) to make a submitted local plan sound and legally compliant. The Inspector will require the local planning authority to consult on all proposed main modifications.
- This will require a pause in the examination process which will delay adoption of the revised Local Plan.
- Further, where the changes recommended would be so extensive as to require a virtual re-writing of the local plan, the Inspector is likely to suggest that the local planning authority withdraw the plan.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The report recommendations link to the following Council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community;
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy;
- 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;
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Local Plan review obtained Cabinet approval on 2nd January 2020 with funding covered by approved budgets. All costs associated with this review to adoption stage will be met from within this funding allocation.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The planning system in England and Wales is plan-led. This means that the process of managing the development and use of land centres around policies set out in development plans. LPAs must prepare a local plan under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the statutory requirements for the form and content of local plans.
- 9.2 The Local Planning Regulations 2012 at regulation 10 set out specific matters which the LPA must have regard to when preparing a local plan. Regulation 10A of the Local Planning Regulations 2012 provide that, in respect of a local plan, a review must be completed every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the local plan.
- 9.3 LPAs must publicise and keep up-to-date their timetable for producing their local plan. This information is contained within a 'Local Development Scheme. LPAs should publish this on their website.
- 9.4 The draft Local Plan document attached as Appendix 1 is considered ready for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination (Regulation 19) has been produced as part of the Regulation 18 consultation). Approval is sought from Full Council to do this. A forum for examination is then decided and a pre-examination assessment is undertaken by the planning inspectorate.
- 9.5 The purpose of the independent examination will be to determine whether, in respect of the reviewed local plan, a number of specified requirements are satisfied and whether the local plan is "sound". Details of the examination are published as are the Planning Inspector recommendations. Reasons for recommendations are also given. The outcome of this stage of the process may be a recommendation that the local plan be adopted or that it not be adopted or the independent examiner may recommend modifications which enable the Council to adopt.
- 9.6 Adoption of the local plan is a non-executive function to be exercised by Full Council. Section 33A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and prescribed public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of

the local plan and in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. Officers are responding to this duty as required and as explained in this report.

9.7 The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 The proposals contained within the Publication Plan will (subject to Examination by a Government Inspector) have implications for all wards in the borough as it will, upon adoption, be used to determine planning applications that are submitted to the Council.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The Publication Plan seeks to deliver positive health, social and economic outcomes including:

- Better quality housing meeting a greater range of needs, including the elderly, frail and young residents. This includes supported and specialist accommodation, allowing people to live at home longer, benefitting communities and reducing pressure on health and social care services.
- The protection and creation of green accessible spaces for play, recreation and exercise which will improve the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.
- New job opportunities through new and expanded businesses in the borough.
- New investment into public infrastructure including the green and natural environment, schools, roads, play facilities and utilities.
- Improved air quality through more investment in sustainable travel and improved development layouts.
- Supporting opportunities to regenerate town centres, derelict buildings and older areas of new town estates.
- Greater opportunities for engagement with the health sector to plan for community and primary healthcare provision up to 2040.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Publication Plan provides opportunities for improving and enhancing equality and diversity in the borough including:

- Opportunities for regeneration of derelict sites, brownfield land and older housing. This will help create more affordable, accessible, supported and specialist accommodation across the borough providing better homes for all residents.
- New policies that will help strengthen the delivery of more energy efficient homes across all types and tenures which will help reduce energy costs for those most in need.
- Opportunities for engagement with wider section of the community that do not ordinarily engage with planning consultations.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 The Publication Plan will have a positive impact on the Council's ambition for a carbon neutral borough by 2030 and maintaining the borough's position as one of the greenest in the UK. This is demonstrated by:

- The protection and creation of multifunctional green spaces across developments.
- Expansion of Green Network and designation of new Local Nature Reserves helping increase residents' access to green spaces.
- Delivering investment into sustainable travel solutions including walking and cycle networks and public transport routes across the borough.
- Strengthened policies that will deliver thermal efficient climate ready homes, helping to reduce energy bills for residents across affordable and open market homes.
- Greener developments by embedding a development greening factor and Bio-diversity Net Gain into the Draft Plan.
- Strengthening policy to ensure a positive approach to the right renewable energy in the right place and the delivery of renewable solutions that meet the scale and needs of housing and employment developments.

14.0 Background Papers

- 1 Telford & Wrekin Local Plan Review, Issues & Options Consultation
24/09/20
- 2 Telford & Wrekin Local Plan Consultation, Draft Plan, 19/10/23

15.0 Appendices

- A [Publication version of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan](#)
- B [Publication version of Policy Map – Telford Insert](#)
- C [Publication version of Policy Map – Borough wide](#)
- D [Non-Technical Summary – Local Plan Integrated Appraisal document](#)
- E [Local Plan - Integrated Appraisal document](#)
- F [Local Develop Scheme – 2025-28](#)
- G [Statement of Community Involvement – 2025-30](#)

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Finance	07/01/2025	08/01/2025	AEM
Legal	07/01/2025	08/01/2025	SH



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 13 February 2025

Telford & Wrekin Skills Strategy

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, Young People and Education
Lead Director:	Simon Wellman - Director: Education & Skills
Service Area:	Education and Skills
Report Author:	Tara Foran / Richard Probert - Interim Strategic Leads Skills
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 382888 Email: Tara.foran@telford.gov.uk / Richard.Probert@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	No Key Decision
Forward Plan:	7 June 2024
Report considered by:	Business Briefing - 23 January 2025 Cabinet – 13 February 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approves the Telford and Wrekin Skills Strategy, A Learning Borough for All, (Appendix A) that sets out our strategic approach to further develop the borough's skills levels to support localised economic growth.
- 1.2 Agrees to delegate authority to the Director for Education & Skills, in consultation with the Cabinet member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & skills, to amend future versions of the Skills Strategy in light of changes to national policy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the attached Skills Strategy which reaffirms the Council's commitment that every child, young person

and adult will live well in their community and everyone will benefit from a thriving economy.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Telford and Wrekin is a vibrant, successful borough and in recent years it has grown rapidly creating jobs and raising aspiration in the process. The Skills Strategy sets out our continued aspiration to further improve the borough's skills levels; supporting Telford's Vision 2032, which articulates an ambition for a robust economy with growth in new sectors, delivering well-paid jobs.
- 3.2 The strategy has been developed in collaboration with key partners including skills providers, education settings and employers; recognising our goals will only be achieved through a partnership endeavour.
- 3.3 Our challenge to sustained growth is ensuring we have a workforce with the skills that meet current and future employer needs. We must also use our economic growth to tackle inequalities across our communities and ensure all residents have access and opportunity to develop their skills that fulfils their potential.
- 3.4 Skills matter because it leads to better jobs, drives social mobility and will ensure everyone prospers. A focus on high quality localised skill provision is key to retaining our talent too, so that we keep hold of our young people and skilled workforce within the borough.
- 3.5 Our town already offers a rich diversity of skills provision, both academic and vocational, delivered by major institutions and specialist providers that supports employability skills through to technical specialisms. The development of Telford's station quarter sees a step change in the borough's skill offer. It will include a highly accessible Further Education campus alongside the Quad, a Digital Skills and Enterprise Hub, with pathways into Higher Education.
- 3.6 Although we have a wealth of provision, this strategy is about how we shape the landscape so it delivers for all, regardless of age, background or stage of life, and for employers who need tailored solutions.
- 3.7 The Skills Strategy aligns with '[Our Strategy for fair and inclusive economic growth, 2024-2034](#)', which sets out seven pillars to drive our economy. Pillar three 'to enhance Telford's Talent Pipeline' describes the importance of having the right people with the right skills and talents to attract inward investors and deliver residents' ambitions and aspirations.
- 3.8 This strategy, whilst focused on responding to the identified needs of Telford and Wrekin, complements the emerging national policy position. It reflects the key themes as set out by the newly established body, Skills England, in their 2024 publication 'Driving Growth and Widening Opportunities' that recognises skills shortages nationally are currently significantly inhibiting growth, improved pathways through learning to higher skilled jobs are necessary and there is a need to focus on core skills to help residents gain and sustain employment.

- 3.9 It is recognised that the national skills landscape will further evolve, given the recent publication of the white paper 'Get Britain Working' (November 2024). The white paper sets out several key changes namely the:
- Creation of a National Jobs and Careers Service through reform of Job Centre Plus
 - Introduction of a Youth Guarantee for those aged 18-21, to ensure all are learning or earning.
 - Creation of a 'Connect to Work' programme that will support people with disabilities and health conditions into work.

The council will adapt and flex its approach including a review of service provision as further detail is released from central government regarding these proposals.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The strategy sets out our vision for Telford and Wrekin to become 'a learning borough for all', so that whatever an individual's aspiration, current skill base or age, they can access learning opportunities relevant to employers today and in the future. The strategy's vision will be realised through 6 objectives and aims:

- **Improve the overall skills levels of residents.** To raise working age skills at qualification levels 1, 2 and 3+ to higher than the national average.
- **Nurturing and supporting aspiration whatever an individual's background or existing skill level to fulfil their talent.** For aspiration to be built into our local skills system from a young age, right from primary school all the way through to lifelong learning.
- **Developing progression pathways to provide a clear route for people to progress through the skills system to employment.** For residents to easily re-engage with the skills system whatever their circumstances, and for them to recognise the benefit, whether accessing employment, increased earning potential or facilitating career development.
- **A skills system which is fully inclusive and representative of our borough.** Ensure all residents and communities, including the business community, are well-served by the skills system and that engagement practices reflect our communities needs. There should be appropriate provision and support available for everyone, to enable full participation and progression at all educational levels.
- **A skills system which provides the skills required by businesses, both current and future, and contributes to economic growth and the prosperity of the town.** Create a responsive skills eco-system, built on effective joint working between skills providers, education settings and employers. We will foster and promote better, more effective linkages between providers and employers, to share opportunities in sectors, and ensure provision is both meeting local employers' needs, and strengthening schools relationships with post 16 providers.

- 4.2 The strategy will enhance the offer provided across the council, building on existing programmes that support our schools to further engage with employers and higher education partners, including Harper Adams, so that higher level qualifications and work based learning and apprenticeships are further developed.
- 4.3 A clear line of sight will be produced so learners are clear where course and skills based opportunities can lead. This will focus on a refresh of the 'job box' website, better use of the existing Careers Guide, that has been produced with businesses, and ensure 'lifelong learning' pathways are well known and marketed.
- 4.4 We will use adult skill provision as a driver to reduce inequality, build an inclusive system and focus on those with higher needs. The council already run a successful adult learning service, Learn Telford, alongside external providers and collectively we will continue to develop our provision in line with our changing communities. Given the increase diversity of our local population there will be focus on supporting the learning of English and build on our success in supporting learners with Special Educational Needs through our successful supportive internship programmes that have helped businesses understand how to support people into employment through supportive employment approaches.
- 4.5 The strategy also focuses on the importance of working with employers to promote in-work upskilling. Collaborations which encourage access to skills and workplace development at all levels including apprenticeships, work experience and internships are critical to creating the workforce we need.
- 4.6 Our aims include raising aspiration and qualification levels to support greater diversity in the local economy including professional occupations. We aspire further development within advanced manufacturing and engineering linked to green growth. It is also crucial that the borough continues to produce a supply of local labour with high-level technical skills and associated leadership and management training.
- 4.7 The same aspiration applies to the health and care sector, which requires targeted intervention in light of the borough's growing older population.
- 4.8 Ongoing responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of our strategy will take place at relevant education and employment boards including the Education Strategic Partnership and Invest Telford Partnership.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 An alternative option would be for the borough to react to nationally driven policy documents but this would not enable us to collectively understand our local needs and develop provision accordingly.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Without a strategy the local area and our key partnerships will not be clear about how we intend to develop our ambitions around this agenda and to support areas

of development. This could result in limited progression of skills and consequential impact on economic growth.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The proposals set out in this report support the following council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their communities.
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are great places to live.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Much of the funding for skills comes through government grants, some of which have delivery criteria attached. The financial position of the area will be kept under review as part of overall financial monitoring, to ensure that the skills strategy is delivered within the overall financial resources that are available.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Council has the power to undertake the activities outlined in the attached skills strategy, and the strategy is aligned to the Council's objectives. Legal advice will be provided on an ongoing basis as and when appropriate in relation to specific aspects of the strategy.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 A borough wide strategy will have a positive impact for residents across all wards.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The strategy aims to close the gap in outcomes for residents that live within different wards of the borough, especially in relation to education, health and care and becoming economically independent.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 This strategy relates to all residents who live within Telford and Wrekin which includes an increasingly diverse range of backgrounds and needs.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 The strategy recognises that a key area of future development will be the green economy and so subsequently appropriate green skill based development is required.

14.0 Appendices

A Telford and Wrekin skills strategy: A Learning Borough for All

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	28/11/2024	28/11/2024	RP
Finance	28/11/2024	29/11/2024	TD
Director	28/11/2024	29/11/2024	SW



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough



SKILLS
TELFORD

Telford and Wrekin skills strategy:

“A learning borough for all”

2025



FOREWORD

Cllr Lee Carter

Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council

Cllr Shirley Reynolds

Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People, Education, Employment & Skills
Telford & Wrekin Council

Telford and Wrekin is a vibrant, successful borough and in recent years it has grown rapidly – creating jobs and raising aspirations in the process.



Our challenge is to sustain this growth and address the challenges facing all towns and cities across the UK. That means attracting new investment and ensuring we have a workforce with the skills to meet current and future employer needs.

But if we are to use economic growth to tackle inequalities across our communities we must also ensure all residents have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

This document sets out a strategy to drive improvement in the borough's skills levels. It has been developed in collaboration with key partners including skills providers, education settings and employers.

It supports **Telford's Vision 2032**, which sets out an ambition for a robust economy with growth in new sectors that delivers well-paid jobs, many of which are linked to our carbon neutral agenda. Delivering these ambitions will require clear pathways through education driven by new infrastructure that develops individuals so they have the right skills for a changing, dynamic economy – enabling them to meet their aspirations and fulfil their potential. This is essential if we are to create a more equitable borough.

We look forward to working with our Partners to achieve this vision.



CONTENTS

4 Why do skills matter?

6 Building an inclusive economy

8 The borough

10 A diverse skills offer

12 What partners told us

14 Our vision

19 Governance and delivery



WHY DO SKILLS MATTER?

This strategy aligns with our Council Plan's vision "to protect, care and invest to create a better borough" and its commitment to ensure:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- All neighbourhoods are great places to live
- Our natural environment is protected, and the council takes a leading role in tackling the climate emergency
- We are a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

Ensuring that all residents have the best possible skills is core to them accessing the best jobs and fulfilling their aspirations while also driving social mobility so that everyone prospers. It's also key to retaining our talent because currently too often young people leave the borough.







BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Telford and Wrekin has a diverse economy and with that comes a wide variety of opportunities. By ensuring all residents are able to access those opportunities, we can achieve inclusive growth.



Businesses are increasingly talent-led and inward investors will locate where they can hire the people they need. Increased mobility and post-Covid hybrid working patterns bring challenges and opportunities as companies rethink their location strategies.

Our Strategy for Fair and Inclusive Growth sets out seven pillars to drive our economy. Pillar three is to enhance 'Telford's Talent Pipeline' and describes the importance of having the right people with the right skills and talents to attract inward investors and deliver residents' ambitions and aspirations.

It's vital that Telford prioritises the skills our businesses need and that also create the best jobs for our residents. We recognise that places which take a holistic approach to growing, attracting and retaining talented people are also the most successful. That's why this pillar is central to Telford's attractiveness as a place where people want to live: creating a borough where there are outstanding economic opportunities; great schools; strong further and higher education offers; outstanding quality of life; and value-for-money housing.

THIS STRATEGY

The development of this strategy will complement the Marches-wide Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) published in late-2023.



Skills Shortages in our Local Area

- Manufacture – unskilled and highly skilled operatives, engineers and IT specialities.
- Construction – wet and dry trades, planners, surveyors.
- Professional – all areas of digital and Information Technology (IT).
- Health Care – Medical, doctors to porters, GPs to specialist admin and maintenance trades all required.

It also recognises the formation of Skills England and the context of a developing and evolving policy and funding landscape. This includes the modified UKSPF funding and further changes introduced by the white paper 'Get Britain Working'.

The 'Get Britain Working' white paper sets out several key changes:

- Creation of a National Jobs and Careers Service
- Introduction of a Youth Guarantee for those aged 18-21, to ensure all are learning or earning
- Establish a 'Connect to Work' programme that will support people with disabilities and health conditions into work

This strategy is focussed on responding to the identified local skills needs of Telford and Wrekin, which also reflect the key themes as set out by Skills England in their publication, 'Driving Growth and Widening Opportunities'. In particular, it is responding to skills shortages, improving pathways through learning to higher skilled jobs, and maintaining a focus on the core skills needed to help residents gain and sustain employment.

It is acknowledged that as the skills and funding landscape evolves, all partners will adapt and shape their provision in response to any changes and maximise new opportunities to support the achievement of the aims set out below. This will include considering the extended UKSPF funding as well as the emerging support through the DWP initiative 'Connect to Work'.

The three local authorities that comprise the Marches area (Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, Herefordshire) share key areas of concern, such as retaining our young people and students after they leave school or university, ensuring everyone of employment age can keep learning and developing key skills, and making our economies work for all residents. Core to this is minimising duplication across education and training providers while making it as easy as possible for employers and providers to work together to develop modules for upskilling and reskilling.

To address these issues requires local knowledge, local endeavour and buy-in from businesses, education providers and residents in the area so that we develop tailored placed-based solutions which support market engagement and enable local skills providers to meet the needs for both residents and employers.

That's why the borough requires a local strategy in addition to the Marches plan which recognises and complements national skills policy. It will enable the development of a programme of provision that creates pathways from school to employment that has Government funding aligned to it. Through greater coordination and collaboration we can avoid duplication and reduce the negative impacts of competition within the market which sees providers competing with each other for the same pots of Government funding.

A local offer of quality lifelong education, underpinned by a joined-up approach that brings together providers and business, is key to Telford's future success being built upon inclusive growth.



THE BOROUGH

POPULATION

It is important that we invest in skills and the opportunity for our employers to draw upon a young workforce.



Ranked one of the top 10 fastest growing areas in the UK*.

*Centre for Cities report 2024.

Median age of the borough 39.

Young people key to accelerating growth in the borough.

4.7% increase in those aged 0-19 in the borough*.

*Between 2011 – 2021.

75 years+ represent 7.76% of the boroughs population. UK average 8.6%.

10.5% increase to 17% in residents from a minority background.

CHALLENGES

This strategy is central to tackling areas of economic challenge by ensuring residents living in those neighbourhoods can access the necessary training to develop the skills required to secure employment and better jobs.

18 neighbourhoods ranked as UK's most economically challenged.

A key focus of this strategy is to ensure residents can access the best skills provision to help them into work or to progress to better-paid roles, through training and education that's delivered with the right flexibility and accessibility to childcare provision and transport. More widely, the way we work is changing, with more people working from home, and we can expect changes in technology to drive different work patterns as well as the jobs and skills needed.

Weekly wages for women in full-time employment are 20.3% lower* than men.

*Compared to the national average.

It is vital that we enable the local education and training system to produce a local labour force with the requisite generic, leadership and management, and technical skills, to fill new roles.

Professional occupations make up a 16.4% of employment compared to 23.3% nationally.

We aspire to create further growth within the sector, specifically within advanced manufacturing and engineering linked to green growth. It is crucial that the borough continues to produce a supply of local labour with high-level technical skills and associated leadership and management training.

Manufacturing makes up 15.7% of the workforce, 3x national average.

The same aspiration applies to the health and care sector, which continues to face significant challenges around recruitment and retention and has wider implications, for example in relation to the borough's growing older population.



A DIVERSE SKILLS OFFER

Telford has experienced strong economic growth in recent years and has the potential to continue doing so. We have a well-placed, well-connected town with the capacity for further growth and it is important the borough has a skills strategy that allows us to continue to attract businesses and people.

Our town offers a rich diversity of skills provision – both academic and vocational – delivered by major institutions and specialist providers that supports employability skills through to technical specialisms. Our anchor FE institution, Telford College, is the largest further education centre in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire. It is recognised as a major skills hub delivering provision spanning A levels, T-Levels, apprenticeships, degree-level higher education programmes, blended and virtual learning and sector-specific specialist training hubs to help plug skills gaps. Its twin campus provides academic and technical centres with specialisms in engineering, construction, retrofit and health. The college engages with around 2,000 young people, plus more than 500 apprentices and over 4,000 adult learners and has links with 700 employers.

The pathway to further and higher education in Telford is strong, anchored by the college and Harper Adams University – whose specialisms in agriculture and agri-tech cross over into the wider engineering, manufacturing and tech sectors. Telford employers can also draw on a large pool of graduates from the region's nine universities, many of which have specialisms relevant to our borough's strong manufacturing and engineering base along with digital and tech skills linked to business and professional services sectors.

Although we have a wealth of provision, this strategy is about how we shape the landscape so it delivers for all, regardless of age, background or stage of life – and for all employers who need tailored solutions. To achieve our aspiration of a truly inclusive borough it must include those furthest from the workforce, for example those not in education, employment or training (NEET). It's clear this will require a range of different providers.

The development of Telford's new Station Quarter sees a step change in the borough's education offer. It includes a highly accessible academic campus with A Level provision delivered by Telford College in a new Telford Sixth Form Centre alongside the Quad – a Digital Skills & Enterprise Hub with pathways from FE to HE delivered by the college and Harper Adams University. Learn Telford, the council's own adult education service, is also present,



ensuring pathways exist for lower-skilled adults to progress through to higher-level provision. The Quad – opened in 2024, brings world class education and training facilities targeting critical areas required by business that are vital to future resilience. It provides seamless pathways for young people and adults in an aspirational setting, playing an important role in attracting and retaining graduates. We know that adults are less able to move from the area to study due to family and caring commitments, so it's key to have a local offer that they can access.

The Quad also includes business incubation space, which raises the visibility of starting a business as a viable career pathway to our local talent and fosters entrepreneurial ambition. It enables direct connections between providers and business making it easier for them to collaborate to diversify, innovate and grow.

- Telford College offers dynamic and employer-driven packages including digital, IT and maths programmes focussed on hardware, software, data analysis, coding and cyber security skills with links to the Marches Institute of Technology.

- Harper Adams University boosts high-end skills through world class engineering, robotics and technology provision that crosses over from its agricultural training heritage into the wider manufacturing and engineering sectors. More widely, it benefits businesses across sectors through research and development and its data science expertise.

Challenges still remain, with Telford and Wrekin's working-age skills profile being behind that of many other places in the country. Cities Outlook 2024 includes a narrative on the competitiveness of 63 cities and large towns across the UK and it shows that half (50.8%) of the borough's adults possess a Level 3 qualification or higher, putting Telford in the fourth quartile nationally.

Children in the borough perform well at primary age, achieving results that are above the national average, however there are some challenges at secondary age including differences in qualification and skill outcomes.



This translates into very different levels of skills across our communities with Priorslee having 38% of residents aged over 16 having a level 4+ qualification. In Woodside the proportion falls to 16%. Areas with the lowest levels of qualification are typically found in our neighbourhoods with the greatest level of economic challenge including Sutton Hill 17%, Donnington 18% and Brookside 19%.



WHAT PARTNERS TOLD US

EMPLOYERS TOLD US

- they wanted to attract more local people to take up their job opportunities. Employers are keen to offer work experience opportunities to young people and view this as a pipeline of local talent.
- they recognise the value of work experience for young people, giving them the opportunity to understand the breadth of roles on offer locally.
- they are keen to encourage a culture of learning in the workplace, to upskill the workforce and ensure diversification across roles.

YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US

- they felt confident about their next steps, with many having aspirations for Higher Education pathways. However, the majority told us they wanted to attend a University outside of Telford and move away to study.
- they were confident they could realise their ambitions and had the information, advice and guidance they needed to make well-informed choices.
- they are keen to find part-time work to fit around their studies, but many had struggled to achieve this.
- they would like more support with life-ready skills, to prepare them for adulthood.
- they felt they knew some of the skills and qualities that employers looked for but would have liked more work experience whilst at school to support with this.



OUR VISION

Our vision is for Telford and Wrekin to become **“a learning borough for all”**. So, whatever an individual's aspiration, current skill base or age, they can access learning opportunities relevant to employers today and in the future. We also recognise the growth opportunities within our businesses and the need to continue to upskill to support them to compete, innovate and adapt to technological and digital change.

This strategy's vision will be realised by delivering on the following objectives:

Objective 1 – Improve the overall skills levels of residents

Our aim: To raise working age skills at qualification levels 1, 2 and 3+ to higher than the national average.

We will achieve this by:

- **Ensuring all children and adults fulfil their potential.** We will continue to ensure that education is focusing on giving every child, young person and adult the skills they need to realise their potential. We will continue to invest in our collaborative approach, working in partnership with all schools and learning providers.
- **Ensuring success at level 2 as a foundation to further and higher education, work-based learning and employment.** Outcomes are currently too inconsistent. Our ambition is for all schools to be better than the national average for attainment of Grade 5 or above in English and maths at GCSE. This will be driven through our strategic partnership with schools.

- **Providing holistic support for whole families.** Building on our family first approach, we will work in our communities and in collaboration with key partners to provide wrap-around support for families with wider issues which affect educational attainment by focussing on the prevention of NEET and unemployment at an early stage.
- **Supporting our further education and training providers to provide a high-quality offer.** Ensuring high levels of participation from all communities – particularly those with lower levels of attainment – and a high-quality offer at all levels for all ages.
- **Increasing participation in adult education and ensuring its quality.** We will do this by supporting skills providers to provide courses of the right quality that are well marketed and meet the needs of business and residents alike.
- **Ensuring access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance.** This will be delivered through Telford & Wrekin Council's Job Box Service.

Measuring progress: The percentage of the working age population with each level of qualification; the change in percentage from a baseline year, and its comparison to the national average. Tracking building blocks to success including attendance and absence rates.

Objective 2 – Nurturing and supporting aspiration whatever an individual's background or existing skill level to fulfil their talent

Our aim: For aspiration to be built into our local skills system from a young age right from primary school all the way through to lifelong learning.

We will achieve this by:

- **Supporting parents to have high aspirations for their children.** This support, starting from early years, will include helping parents to improve their own skills levels and move into or progress within employment. This can improve parental well-being, including self-esteem, and positively impact the aspirations they have for their children. For some, this will mean removing barriers including:
 - Nurturing those without aspiration
 - Providing wraparound support to prevent drop-out
 - Removing barriers to learning, e.g. transport
 - Access to suitable childcare provision
 - Recognising that aspiration to learn starts at home and families need to be supported to nurture ambition in the home.

For others it will mean ensuring there is access to the learning and development opportunities they require to fulfil their ambition with a focus on professional qualifications and essential skills (maths, English, digital and computing etc.).

- **Supporting our schools to increase employer interactions.** We will build on the existing school engagement activities and offer from large employers and develop a suite of age-appropriate activities which can be supported by employers of all sizes.

- **Using council-led networks and partnerships to provide inspiring employer interactions – developing even higher ambitions for Telford's children and their families.** Using Government funding to increase SME interactions in our secondary schools and colleges, we will seek to effectively link small and medium sized employers to local schools to help schools diversify their careers offer.
- **Increasing higher education engagements in our schools.** We will partner with universities and FE to encourage more children and their parents to see higher education as an option. Importantly, this will demonstrate alternative pathways to higher level qualifications such as work-based learning and apprenticeships.
- **Continuing to build on the success of the Marches Careers Hub.** Currently, 19 out of 20 of Telford's schools/college are signed up to the Hub. This supports schools/college careers leaders to embed the 8 Gatsby benchmarks, including increasing employer engagement, embedding careers into the curriculum, encounters with further and higher education and informing students and their parents of their options.
- **Continuing to host our successful annual Telford Skills Show.** This facilitates connections and meaningful encounters between employers, training and education providers, schools, parents/carers, young people and adults. It highlights and promotes local opportunities and pathways to support aspiration and talent retention.
- **Increasing the uptake of in-work adult skills provision to drive upward mobility.** This will involve working with employers to increase skills training within working hours and effectively using any available in-work skills funding. It will ensure skills providers have a flexible offer that can meet the differing needs of residents and employers.

Measuring progress: The percentage of the population progressing through levels of education and take up of adult training and retraining courses.



Objective 3 – Developing progression pathways to provide a clear route for people to progress through the skills system to employment

Our aim: For residents to easily re-engage with the skills system whatever their circumstances and for them to recognise the benefit, whether accessing employment, increased earning potential or facilitating career development.

We will achieve this by:

- **Ensuring learners have a clear line of sight of where courses can lead.** It's important to enable learners to see the value of continuing in education and achieving higher skills levels which can lead to higher-paid work. We will work in partnership with employers, employer representative bodies and our education and skills providers to develop pathways across different sectors and providers and the appropriate means to share and promote this to target audiences.
- **Raising the profile of businesses, the types of jobs within business/sectors and skills requirements on a very practical, accessible basis.** This will include making more use of the Career Guide we already have produced with businesses.
- **Continuing to encourage progression through 'lifelong learning' including adults who are 'In Work'.**

Measuring progress: Take up of training and education courses.



Objective 4 – A skills system which is fully inclusive and representative of our borough

Our aim: Ensure all residents and communities, including the business community, are well-served by the skills system, and that engagement practices reflect our communities' needs. There should be appropriate provision and support available for everyone, to enable full participation and progression at all educational levels.

We will achieve this by:

- **Building on our record of consultation and community engagement.** We will ensure all communities can access adult skills provision at all levels, focusing particularly on evidence of good progression to higher education levels and jobs outcomes for all groups. We will have a specific focus on those who may need additional support to access skills provision due to disability, health and mental health conditions, and drug and alcohol misuse.
 - **Strengthening partnership working.** Through partnerships, we will provide “holistic support to succeed” to families with barriers that can impact educational attainment, such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol misuse, homelessness and domestic abuse.
 - **Using adult skills provision as a driver to reduce inequality.** It's vital we enable out-of-work residents to attain the right skills to meet the needs of the local labour market and move into sustainable and well-paid employment. In addition, targeting skills provision at those in low-paid and insecure work to address in-work poverty.
 - **Ensuring adult skills provision is fully inclusive.** We need to support adult skills providers to be inclusive in their offers to residents who may be considered to have higher learning needs by ensuring appropriate classroom and wraparound support and flexible course delivery.
 - **Supporting the learning of English.** Many businesses have migrant workers and support around the learning of English will enable these employees to progress. Provision of “ESOL” (English for Speakers of Other Languages) is currently limited.
 - **Maximising opportunities for in-work learning.** This includes apprenticeships and supported internships.
 - **Supporting employers to navigate the skills provider market.** It's important they can access timely, appropriate provision to support upskilling and reskilling. This provision must be flexible to meet the needs of the employer, for example enabling shift workers to access learning.
 - **Building on our success in supporting SEND learners to progress into paid employment.** We will develop our supported internship programmes while exploring offer options to help SEND learners progress into meaningful paid employment.
 - **Building a Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP) for adults with learning disabilities.** This will support people into employment and embed a “supported employment” approach within adult skills provision.
 - **Promoting volunteering opportunities.** We will ensure that people are more aware of the benefits volunteering can bring, which includes work skills and experience, health improvement, and community cohesion.
- Measuring progress:** Narrowing the attainment gap between students in our most and least deprived areas; skills system access rates by ward; skills system accessed by demographic and protected characteristics.



Objective 5 – A skills system which provides the skills required by businesses, both current and future, and contributes to economic growth and the prosperity of the town.

Our aim: To create a responsive skills eco-system, built on effective joint working between skills providers, education settings and employers. We will foster and promote better, more effective linkages between providers and employers, to share opportunities in sectors, and ensure provision is both meeting local employers' needs, and strengthening schools' relationships with post 16 providers.

We will achieve this by:

- **Getting the skills and opportunities right for investment.** We will do this by continuing to drive our existing “business supporting, business winning” approach where we include support on skills, recruitment etc as part of our investor “red carpet” offer and our account management approach working with existing employers to connect them into provision, funding and ‘hide the wires’.
- **Co-designing skills solutions with businesses and skills partners.** This will ensure the skills system is responsive, innovative and produces the right skills mix for now and the future, delivered in the way that businesses need. This includes engaging with employees and supporting employers to maximise social value commitments.

- **Working with local employers to promote in-work upskilling.** Collaborations which encourage access to skills and workplace development at all levels including apprenticeships, work experience and internships are critical to creating the workforce we need.
- **Lobbying for streamlined budgets tailored to need.** We will also work to “hide the wires” in how we support employers and further develop links to our Skills for Growth programme.
- **Supporting those at risk of redundancy.** This is about enhancing the work we already do around recognising transferable skills and matching employers downsizing with those recruiting as well as tailored programmes of support for employees facing redundancy. Again, there is an important role for our Skills for Growth programme to play.
- **Facilitating and enhancing the relationship between providers and employers.** The council will facilitate collaboration between employers and providers to create the solutions to skills and training needs in the borough.

Measuring progress: Achieve the Targets/outcomes from LSIP; number of businesses involved in school engagement; number of apprenticeships advertised in borough; Quad outputs including business skills activity; evidence of more flexible provision such as modular, evening etc.

**BUSINESS SUPPORTING
BUSINESS WINNING**

GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

Executive oversight of this strategy will sit with Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet

Telford Education Strategic Partnership will have ongoing responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy. It will have strong links with the Invest Telford Partnership, providing input from a business perspective, and further connections to business groups, eg Telford Business Board. This will ensure businesses understand the strategy and can support with shaping and delivery.



SKILLS
TELFORD