

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 15 May 2025 at 10.00 am in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2025

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: TUESDAY 27 MAY 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 and O Vickers.

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

Apologies: Councillor P Watling

CAB-57 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-58 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB-59 Leader's Announcements

The Leader highlighted that over the past week, a number of poignant events had taken place across the Borough to commemorate the VE80 anniversary. The Council had allocated £50,000 to support community-led commemorations and the Leader expressed his gratitude towards all participating communities, the MP for Telford, and the Council's Events and Highways Teams for their hard work and efforts towards supporting Council-led events.

A new Armed Forces Community Hub had been announced in Dawley, a project which had been supported by various local partners and would be named in honour of former Councillor Chris Turley to recognise his distinguished military service. The Hub would act as a one-stop shop to provide support for the Borough's armed forces community and their families.

The Leader advised that he had written to Councillor Heather Kidd to congratulate her on her recent election as Leader of Shropshire Council and that despite the position in relation to the merger of each Council remaining the same, he had expressed his willingness to collaborate on shared issues such as cross-border transport.

The Leader also highlighted AFC Telford United's recent promotion, which was a historic achievement for the Borough. The Council had provided an outdoor screen on the Club's pitch which had enabled 1,000 Telford residents to watch the winning away game against Kettering Town over the bank holiday weekend.

Finally, the Council had welcomed national visitors to the Borough which offered an opportunity to showcase the dedication of local staff, volunteers and civil servants, with the Leader reaffirming his administration's commitment to supporting local residents.

CAB-60 Building Safer & Stronger Communities

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement presented the report of the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services. The report outlined the progress and impact of the programme since its initial launch in April 2021 in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues across the Borough.

The programme had grown from an initial £2.5m investment to £6m following a combination of Council funds, PCC contributions and successful securement of external bids. Through the use of a data and intelligence-led approach, it had delivered targeted interventions in high-need areas, resulting in a reduction in crime, fly-tipping, and anti-social behaviour.

Key achievements included the expansion of youth services, improved housing standards, targeted crime reduction through use of local action plans and enhanced community safety infrastructure through the installation of 170 new streetlights and CCTV cameras.

Working in partnership with external organisations and educational settings, the programme had provided a range of youth activities including the Urban Games initiative aimed at children and young people aged between 8 – 16 years old and offered opportunities to participate in sports activity. During the 2024 summer holidays, over 3,000 children and young people had attended the free sessions with a total of 9,000 children and young people attending sessions since its launch in 2022. Telford Kicks, which was another youth activity provided through the programme had offered free Friday night football sessions to over 130 children and young people with a number of attendees securing their own coaching qualifications.

The use of local area action plans had resulted in a 5% reduction in the number of shop lifting incidents in Telford Town Centre and Newport. Other interventions had included tackling the illegal use of motorbikes, mini motos and quadbikes. CCTV had also been extended into taxi's on a voluntary basis through funding provided in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership which would see 20% of Telford and Wrekin licensed taxi's fitted with CCTV units.

A review of anti-social behaviour reports in August 2024 had shown a reduction of 28% when compared to the previous year with recorded crime also continuing to reduce. The Council had continued to engage with residents on tackling fly tipping to reduce the impact on the community and environment. Over the past 12 months, the number of fly tips reported to the council had decreased up to 48% in some areas of the Borough. During 2024/25, the Council had investigated over 1,200 fly tips, issued 186 warning letters, 130 statutory notices and 40 fixed penalty notices.

The report underpinned the core values of partnership working and the programme's success in protecting vulnerable residents and fostering a community resilience approach through continued investment and effective use of CC funding to deliver tangible outcomes for residents.

Cabinet Members praised the work of Council officers and highlighted how the programme had had a clear impact on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. Members recognised that as a result of the programme, crime rates in the Borough had remained below regional and national averages since 2023. They welcomed the expansion of youth activities including the introduction of new youth clubs in areas such as Woodside, Arleston and Dawley as well as the Council's approach to providing targeted support for vulnerable children and young people through partnerships such as the St Giles Trust.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and praised the progress that had been made in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the Borough. He supported the introduction of CCTV cameras in taxi's and noted the dual role it would play in protecting both passengers and drivers. He asked the Council to consider exploring the use of CCTV measures on buses operated by the Council and Arriva. He commended the Council's collaborative work with West Mercia Police and partners and emphasised the importance of providing safe and structured environments for children and young people.

The Leader of the Conservative Group thanked officers for the detailed briefing that had been provided prior to the meeting and supported the use of data intelligence to guide interventions. He urged the Council to take caution around surveillance and asked for considerations to be made in regard to the deployment of CCTV in areas such as Priorslee and for the Council to be flexible in identifying solutions to CCTV issues following the recent criminal damage in Strine Valley Park. He endorsed the Council's continued focus on tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, noting the importance of residents feeling safe in their communities. He also highlighted the importance of community pride and encouraging elected Members to support residents in maintaining their neighbourhoods.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement noted that whilst certain wards had been a key focus for the programme, data had shown a borough-wide impact with continued reductions in crime and

anti-social behaviour. He confirmed that many local buses had CCTV installed including buses owned and operated by the Council. He responded to concerns raised in relation to double taxation, emphasising that Parish & Town Councils who had purchased additional services such as Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs) were paying for an enhanced service rather than duplicating existing services.

The Leader praised the outcomes within the report as a key policy in delivering the administration's ambition for every neighbourhood to be a great place to live and highlighted how the programme's success was underpinned by consistent budget investment. He thanked Town & Parish Council's for the vital role they had played in enhancing the initiative and reaffirmed the Council's position in relation to holding irresponsible private landlords to account.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **the partnership working and continued focus Building Safer & Stronger Communities has on tackling the root causes of crime across the borough be noted;**
- b) **the data and intelligence led approach to focus resources and partnership working to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping across the borough be endorsed; and**
- c) **delegated authority be granted to the Director for Neighbourhood & Enforcement in consultation with the Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing & Enforcement, to submit bids for external funding that supports Building Safer & Stronger Communities.**

CAB-61 Annual Governance Statement (2024/25)

The Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council was required to produce an Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement and the Local Code of Good Governance outlined that the Council had a robust governance framework in place and procedures would be continually reviewed and maintained to demonstrate good corporate governance.

The 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement set out the adherence to the Council's governance arrangements during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and measured their effectiveness by undertaking regular internal quality monitoring across services, peer reviews, benchmarking and external audits.

The Council had been assured that during 2024/25, including during organisational and personnel changes, that the existing or revised governance

arrangements had continued to support proper governance and where changes had been required to procedures, these had been agreed by the Senior Management Team. Changes made to the Constitution were also agreed by the Council, through the Council's Constitution Committee.

Over the past year, the Council had achieved significant national recognition, including being shortlisted for three national awards including Council of the Year. Adult Social Care had been rated 'Good' by the CQC and Children's Services had been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted following their assessments in July 2024. The Council had received national praise for its work in special educational needs and its response to the Independent Inquiry led by Tom Crowther KC into Child Sexual Exploitation.

Despite ongoing financial challenges, the Council had continued to implement robust savings and financial plans to protect frontline services and its governance arrangements had remained strong and fit for purpose, placing the authority in a very positive position.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report, highlighted the Council's strong and transparent governance framework. They acknowledged that the assurance rating of 'reasonable' was one which was positive and that the Council was one of very few local authorities to have achieved this rating. Members praised the Council's ability to maintain high-quality services despite enduring £181m from former Government cuts. They commended officers for their continued work and dedication to deliver the Council's vision to protect, care and invest.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and noted the importance of good governance and how it had contributed to the Council's success. He praised the Council's Audit and Finance teams for their work in achieving a strong result.

The Leader of the Conservative Group thanked the Monitoring Officer for providing a detailed briefing prior to the meeting and commented on the assurance rating as one which was positive for the Council. He praised the professionalism of officers however raised concerns around the accessibility of performance data in relation to some of the Council's strategies. He asked the Council to consider the use of the Council's Scrutiny function to monitor the effectiveness of strategies following their approval by the Cabinet to further strengthen the Council's democratic processes.

The Leader highlighted that the assurance rating given was a strong result when compared nationally and that Auditors had given the Council a clean bill of health which was an achievement shared by only 30% of Councils.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25) be approved and the report be noted; and**
- b) the Local Code of Good Governance be approved.**

The meeting ended at 10.39 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday 21 MAY 2025**

Signed

Date: Thursday 19 June 2025