



## **Borough of Telford and Wrekin**

### **Cabinet**

**Thursday 15 May 2025**

**10.00 am**

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

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

**Media Enquiries:**     **Corporate Communications**     **01952 382406**

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

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#### **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 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

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	To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 April 2025.	
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	To receive a verbal update from the Leader of the Council.	
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	To receive an update on the progress of the Council's Safer & Stronger Communities programme.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Annual Governance Statement (2024/25)</b> <b>Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance &amp; Customer Services</b>	<b>17 - 48</b>
	To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.	

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## **CABINET**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 3 April 2025 at 10.00 am in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford TF3 4JG**

**PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 2025**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY 14 APRIL 2025)**

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

**Also Present:** Cllr T J Nelson (Conservative Group Leader)

**Apologies:** Councillor Z Hannington and P Watling and Councillor W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat Group Leader)

### **CAB-52    Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **CAB-53    Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB-54    Leader's Announcements**

The Leader gave details of several positive announcements from the government, which were truly encouraging and said it was great to work with a government that understood the challenges local government had faced over the past 14 years.

The Leader announced additional funding had been allocated for local highways, ensuring that Telford and Wrekin's roads remained among the best in the region, far surpassing those of neighbouring authorities.

The Leader spoke about funding for new nurseries and breakfast clubs that had been received which would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Leader was encouraged by news of defence spending that would secure jobs in Donnington, along with ongoing discussions with the government about attracting new jobs in that sector to Telford and Wrekin.

The Leader commented that these positive developments highlighted the impact of having a passionate voice and advocate for Telford in Parliament and the Leader was grateful for the continued efforts in that regard.

## **CAB-55    Vision 2032 Partnership Annual Review**

The Leader presented the Vision 2032 Partnership Annual Review which set out a ten-year vision for the borough.

The report set out the progress that had been made to date by the Council's strategic partners and the ambition and direction of travel for the borough. It recognised the key challenges and identified the aspirations and outcomes for achievement up to 2032 and sought to build a more inclusive borough.

Delivery of the vision would be through partnership working with key strategic organisations which were set out in the report and they would meet regularly to evaluate progress and identify new or emerging challenges and opportunities. Partnership working was essential to deliver the vision as this could not be achieved by the Council working alone.

Following the annual review it was noted that the a Community Diagnostic Centre was now offering services to patients, with almost 57,000 patients being offered appointments, a Town Centre Policing Team had been created to tackle shoplifting, the 'Work Express' Council-run bus service had been introduced with 5,500 trips per week, further community action teams and volunteers had been recruited, the Council's street champions had increased to over 1,500 and were working to keep the area clean and tidy. Investments of over £65m had been secured to develop Oakengates and Wellington Town Centres and The Quad a state of the art skills and innovation hub had started to thrive. An investment of over £45m had been allocated for improvements and modernisation of local schools together with an increase in school places. Antisocial behaviour had dropped by over 30% following investment through safer & stronger communities and nearly 500 people per year had been supported through the monthly Telford Autism Hub.

The Council would continue to lobby for investment to help address challenges, particularly in South Telford and around housing tenure and connectivity but that this could not be done alone. The government was receptive and open to discussion in relation to investment that would change and transform our local communities.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and considered that the Vision was a great roadmap for the future of development, economic growth, community pride, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing and the skills agenda, which were all needed for future prosperity. The police, fire service, NHS, voluntary sector and the education sector were all helping to deliver the Vision up to 2032. By building confidence, trust and cooperation this would create strong and effective partnership and stakeholder working in all key areas and would continue to build a brighter future for the borough. This would continue to ensure that Telford & Wrekin remained a wonderful place to live, work and thrive and help to create a better borough which was cleaner, greener and safer.

The Leader of the Conservative Group commented that the Council should be

ambitious for the borough, talking it up rather than down as it is where we all live and would want the best for all residents. To tackle the big issues facing the borough, the Council had 18 or 20 of the most deprived areas in the country, and the vision should have aimed to reduce that number to a more attainable figure. The borough's design was very road-centric, with roads like the A41, A518, and M54 becoming increasingly full and there was mention of walking and cycling becoming more popular, which was good news, but he considered the Council should have included a mass transit system within the vision. Public health issues in the borough were significant and needed addressing, in particular, the performance of the healthy lifestyle service, particularly quitting smoking, was important to track. The report set out a 30% reduction in safeguarding referrals, but it was unclear what that meant. Good education remained key, with school attendance and secondary school performance being crucial. He felt the Vision was weak on secondary education, but this was an opportunity for improvement. The borough worked hard to protect and enhance green spaces and building 8,000 houses on farmland was not good for the environment. Tackling intergenerational worklessness was essential, with work being the route out of welfare and this was founded on skills and infrastructure, particularly secondary school attainment.

**RESOLVED – that the progress made by the Vision 2032 strategic partnership delivering “Vision 2032”, the ten-year vision for the borough be acknowledged.**

#### **CAB-56    5 by 5**

The Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills presented the 5 by 5 report which summarised the new initiative that the Council had created to encourage young children to participate in fulfilling, life enhancing activities in order that they achieved the best start in life possible and support them in becoming ready for school. This scheme would build on the highly successful 10by10 scheme which enabled children to try out 10 different activities prior to them reaching 10 years of age.

It was crucial that children aged 0-5 years had a great start in life for their overall development as at this stage they were highly receptive to learning and growth. Providing nurturing and stimulating opportunities helps to build a strong foundation for cognitive, emotional and social skills and early childhood experiences shapes future health and behaviour.

The Council would support parents and carers to prepare children for school through the 5by5 key themes: develop and grow, find my voice, make friends, creative curiosity and learning adventures. Each of the themes would have 10 learning activities for children to experience.

A clear design and marketing approach for 5by5 had been developed and although it would have a unique identity, this would compliment the existing 10by10 branding linking the two initiatives under one corporate brand. Families could access a webpage via multiple platforms and this would

promote existing facilities and resources across the borough as well as providing adventure cards and certificates that could be downloaded and printed out.

The 5by5 initiative was the perfect stepping stone to the 10by10 program and was a journey to enable you people to thrive and it would ensure the best start in life for children.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report. Early years were critical and had an impact throughout the lives of everyone and the emotional and social wellbeing of children was vital to build resilience and social skills. It was important to ensure that young people, the next generation, lived healthy and independent lives and that every child had the opportunity to take part in activities in order to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes.

The Leader of the Conservative Group considered that the report was not an easy read and his initial reaction was that the Council was walking a fine line between being supportive and dictating. He had reviewed the report as both a parent and as a Councillor and he felt he would not have been alone in this reaction. The world had changed and was a different place, and after reading the statistics in the national press, it had highlighted the proportion of children who were unable to sit down for prolonged periods, dress and feed themselves and use the toilet. The Council's marketing exercise aimed to provide additional support to parents and served as a reminder of some of the charming activities people had from their past. The targeted work should focus on ensuring school readiness, which was crucial for future prosperity and realizing opportunities.

**RESOLVED – that the implementation of the 5by5 scheme (five themed activities to try before the age of five) across Telford and Wrekin that focuses on supporting the best start in life for children be approved.**

The meeting ended at 10.34 am

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

Anthea Lowe  
Director: Policy & Governance  
Date: **Wednesday 9 APRIL 2025**

Signed .....

Date: Thursday 15 May 2025



Telford & Wrekin  
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest  
to create a better borough

## Borough of Telford and Wrekin

### Cabinet

15 May 2025

### Building Safer & Stronger Communities

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Richard Overton, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing & Enforcement
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Dean Sargeant – Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
<b>Service Area:</b>	Neighbourhood Enforcement
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jas Bedesha, Service Delivery Manager – Safer, Stronger Communities
<b>Officer Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01952 382101 <b>Email:</b> Jas.Bedesha@telford.gov.uk
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Yes – 2 April 2025
<b>Report considered by:</b>	SMT – 15 April 2025 Business Briefing – 1 May 2025 Cabinet – 15 May 2025

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Note the partnership working and continued focus Building Safer & Stronger Communities has on tackling the root causes of crime across the borough.
- 1.2 Endorse the data and intelligence led approach to focus resources and partnership working to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping across the borough.

- 1.3 Delegates authority 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.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Council's continued focus to build safer, stronger & healthier communities through the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme.
- 2.2 If approved, this report seeks approval on the continued use data and intelligence to focus resources and partnership working in areas requiring greater focus in order to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to building safer, stronger & healthier communities while protecting and enhancing our environment.
- 3.2 Working in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Mercia Police, in April 2021 the Council launched the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme. The aim of this initial investment was to work with partners and focus on small pockets of the borough to make all areas safer.
- 3.3 Founded on data, intelligence and community collaboration, this initial two-year programme saw £2.5m invested that delivered a range of interventions to protect vulnerable children, young people and adults most at risk of being exploited and becoming the victims and/or perpetrators of crime while addressing crime in the most vulnerable areas of the borough.



Figure 1 rolling year comparison - 2023/24 to 2024/25

- 3.4 As shown in figure 1 during the last 12 months there has been a reduction in crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping across Building Safer & Stronger Communities investment areas. Since the start of the programme anti-social behaviour and fly tipping has also reduced with borough wide recorded crimes per 1,000 people consistently below the regional average and below the national average since 2023.
- 3.5 The Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme is now entering a further two years which takes the total investment since 2021 to £6m. While evolving to meet the needs of residents across the borough, underpinned through data and intelligence, the programme continues to focus on the following priority themes:
- Education & Skills
  - Housing Standards
  - Crime Reduction
  - Environmental Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour
  - Community Resilience
  - Health Inequalities
- 3.6 Evidence suggests that well-designed youth activities, including after-school programs, mentoring, and sports programs, can reduce crime and reoffending, particularly when they focus on building skills, promoting positive behaviours, and providing structured supervision. During the 2021 consultation and launch events, residents provided feedback on the need to increase the range of youth activities locally.
- 3.7 Building Safer & Stronger Communities, as part of the youth offer that continues to grow across the borough, has developed a range of youth activities working in partnership with external organisations, education settings and Town and Parish Councils. This development included the increasingly popular Urban Games initiative where those aged 8-16 have the ability to participate in a range of sports and physical activity at no cost. During the 2024 summer holidays over 3,000 children and young people attended the free sessions and since launch in 2022 approximately 9,000 children and young people have attended to date.
- 3.8 Urban Games has been complimented by Telford Kicks which is a Friday night free football offer across the borough that regularly has over 130 children and young people attend each week. Some of those who attended Telford Kicks have secured their own coaching qualifications as a result and are now supporting Telford Kicks in a coaching and mentoring capacity.
- 3.9 Working with partnering Town and Parish Councils, investment has supported the development of youth clubs at Park Lane Centre, Woodside, Arlestone Community

Centre, Wellington, Great Dawley Town Hall, Dawley, with two more opening in Ketley Bank and Wrockwardine Wood. These youth clubs are well attended with 30 children and young people attending weekly.

- 3.10 This work has been supported by engagement with education settings to complete safety surveys with pupils to understand safety concerns on the journey to/from school and any gaps in provision. This invaluable feedback has supported the implementation of additional street lighting and/or removal of vegetation as well as the development of the 'Making A Change' competition where children and young people have the opportunity to bid for funding to implement their ideas. This competition has developed 'art and dance' classes providing children and young people the opportunity to engage with the elderly as well as wellbeing initiatives to take a 'break' from social media. This competition is now in its third year.
- 3.11 Further specialist youth provision has been commissioned to support children and young people with specific vulnerabilities; this comprised external support through St Giles Trust who provided lived experience mentors to complement the existing offer for young people at risk of criminal exploitation.
- 3.12 A decent place to live is the foundation on which residents across the borough build their lives. The Council has been working hard to tackle housing concerns in Sutton Hill, Brookside, College, Hadley and Hollinswood to ensure rented property meets the correct standards. This work has enabled the council to proactively inspect over 900 properties and in doing so support both tenants and landlords. Recent work has comprised engagement with landlords and tenants in Hollinswood to tackle issues that residents have raised on the standard of communal areas, rough sleeping, grounds maintenance and fly tipping on private land. This has been supported through regular engagement with residents with teams from across the council as well as West Mercia Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) with positive progress being made.
- 3.13 Working with West Mercia Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, crime data and intelligence has been used to develop local area action plans that make optimal use of available resources. This has included activity to focus on shop lifting in Telford Town Centre and Newport resulting in a 5% reduction. Other interventions have included measures to tackle the illegal use of motorbikes/mini motos and quad bikes through multi-agency working and has seen the seizure of motorbikes and mini motos.
- 3.14 In support of the Council's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls while building on the feedback from the safety matters survey completed in 2023, investment has been delivered into supporting the introduction of the Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (LSAVI). This accreditation scheme commits nighttime economy venues to enhancing safety of all visitors, particularly women,

through providing training and awareness to staff alongside developing best practice for venue safety and supporting vulnerable individuals. There are currently 34 accredited venues across the borough. In supporting the nighttime economy, work has included investment into enhancing safety which has seen investment into two ID scanners at popular late-night venues; one scanner was used to support a successful police investigation into an incident on the first night of operation.

- 3.15 Since 2021, there have been many interventions and initiatives brought forward to tackle anti-social behaviour. Some of which have included the commission of street art to reduce graffiti in repeat locations but also the installation of 170 new street lights as well as CCTV. The live monitoring of CCTV has been supported by trained volunteers who are seeking employment opportunities/experience and compliments the Council's own and West Mercia Police resource.
- 3.16 CCTV has also been extended into taxi's on a voluntary basis with funding provided from this programme and the Community Safety Partnership. The council has worked in partnership with taxi operators to bring forward a voluntary scheme which, once all are installed, will see 20% of Telford and Wrekin licenced taxi's fitted with CCTV units. Choosing to approach this through the use of a pilot has seen growing interest and support from taxi operators with increasing numbers expressing an interest in having CCTV fitted. The council will continue to explore funding opportunities to support the on-going success of the voluntary scheme and is committed to working with Telford and Wrekin licensed taxi operators to have all vehicles fitted with CCTV. This pilot has attracted interest from the Department for Transport that now sees Telford and Wrekin among the highest licensing authorities in the country with the number of CCTV units installed on a voluntary basis.
- 3.17 Working with partners, multi-agency forums have also been established to tackle anti-social behaviour in local centres including Dawley High Street and Wellington Centre. These multi-agency forums have provided focus to tackle community and business concerns in partnership and continue to make a difference locally.
- 3.18 A review of anti-social behaviour reports across the borough during August 2024 shows a reduction of 28% compared with August 2023 with recorded crime also reducing by 16%. On detailed review of the town centre for the same period, there was a reduction of 65% in anti-social behaviour reports and 43% reduction in recorded crime. These initiatives together with the wider offer demonstrate the positive impact that has been made to date.
- 3.19 The Council continues to engage with residents on tackling fly tipping to reduce the impact this crime has on the community and environment. Over the past 12 months, the number of fly tips reported to the council has decreased; in some parts of the borough this has decreased by 48%. During 2024/25, the Council has

investigated over 1,200 fly tips, issued 186 warning letters and 130 statutory notices and 40 fixed penalty notices. Tackling fly tipping remains a priority for the council.

- 3.20 To increase community engagement and awareness in relation to fly tipping, the council developed Telford & Wrekin Watch that launched in 2022. This innovative community engagement and awareness tool allows members of the public to support the council with the identification of offenders. In 2024, this platform issued 38 appeals via social media with the released video footage being viewed over 76,000 times. A recent appeal in resulted in successful identification and issue of £1,000 penalty.
- 3.21 In tackling neighbourhood enforcement issues locally, the Council has continued the successful partnership of the Community Action Teams with partnering Parish and Town Councils. 14 Town and Parish Councils have signed up to this jointly funded service which enables a local focus on priorities via a local area enforcement action plan.
- 3.22 The Health & Wellbeing Strategy clearly references the importance that inclusive resilient communities have on resident's wellbeing, and the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme has supported the development of low impact community activities. These activities for adults and community clubs, include walking football and hockey, which impact on a range of health and wellbeing outcomes, such as tackling isolation and loneliness and physical activity. There are approximately 10 groups across the borough offering various activities including knit & natter, tea, toast & talk, coffee mornings, models for heroes, chair yoga and community gardens. These groups are well attended and continue to grow in popularity.
- 3.23 Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme is data and intelligence led. Using data and intelligence, the next phase of the investment will see continued focus on interventions to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. This will be in parallel to delivering a range of interventions that prevent individuals from being drawn into crime and violence as well as the delivery of activities for adult and young people.

#### **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 Working with partners, the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme seeks to deliver interventions that tackle the root cause of crime across the borough with much of this focus on prevention.
- 4.2 This partnership working is underpinned through data and intelligence to ensure investment decisions are based on evidence and the impact can be clearly demonstrated. The interventions delivered to date continue to evolve to the needs of residents and local communities.

## **5.0 Alternative Options**

- 5.1 There is a variety of legal powers and techniques available that tackle the root causes of crime.
- 5.2 Partnership working and maximising effective use of available resources ensures a continued focus on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. This breadth of partnership working has delivered a variety of interventions since 2021 and is contributing towards the reduction of crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.
- 5.3 The Council and partners could choose not to continue to fund the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme, however given the notable impact the funding to date has delivered such a decision may be counterproductive.

## **6.0 Key Risks**

- 6.1 Data and intelligence demonstrates that this programme and partnership working to date is making a difference to residents and communities across the borough. However, there is a risk that that without ongoing focus and investment, there is potential to undo the significant improvements made to date. Opportunity will continue to be sought to secure funding, primarily external, to build on the positive progress made to date.
- 6.2 There is a risk that interventions bought forward may not have the impact or outcome as initially envisaged. To mitigate this risk, interventions are based on data and intelligence and regularly reviewed to ensure the impact made and the value added.

## **7.0 Council Priorities**

- 7.1 The Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme supports the following priorities:
  - Every child, young person, and adult lives well in their community.
  - All neighbourhoods are a great place to live; and
  - Our natural environment is protected – we take a leading role in addressing the climate emergency.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme has invested £4m since April 2021. In addition to this, a further £1.5m was secured from the Home Office through the Safer Streets Programme along with £500,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity (UKSP) fund.
- 8.2 In continuing this programme for the next two years, existing budgets will be used to compliment the £250,000 funding allocated by the Police & Crime Commissioner in

2025/26 and 2026/27. Opportunity will continue to be sought to maximise Community Safety Partnership funding along with other external sources of funding where available.

- 8.3 Costs associated with fly tipping are met from existing budgets with the income received from issuing fixed penalty notices used to offset associated costs.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

- 9.1 Enforcement Officers have delegated powers under a wide range of legislation relating to environmental offences. This enables them to carry out investigations, issue fixed penalty or other statutory notices, or to refer offences for prosecution where appropriate. Legal advice is sought on an on-going basis in relation to individual cases.

- 9.2 There are no known HR matters arising from the content of this report.

## **10.0 Ward Implications**

- 10.1 While focused on priority areas, the Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme has borough wide benefit with all wards being affected.

## **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

- 11.1 Through tackling the root causes of crime, Building Safer & Stronger Communities seeks to address the long term issues of social deprivation that creates opportunities to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for all communities in the Borough.
- 11.2 The programme promotes and utilises green spaces across the Borough and has seen the use of Apley Woods and the Wrekin to encourage use and awareness of local nature reserves as part of nature walks. This not only promotes physical activity but improves mental health.
- 11.3 Adult and youth activities that have been supported by this programme provide a range of active sessions that improve both physical and mental health while reducing isolation and loneliness.
- 11.4 Reducing the fear of crime and creating safe vibrant spaces actively contributes to economic and social activity.

## **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 12.1 The Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme seeks to work with all residents, to build vibrant, inclusive and cohesive communities.

## **13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications**

- 13.1 The Council is committed to tackling fly tipping while working hard to inform residents on the correct ways in which to dispose waste appropriately. The council has two household recycling centres and a bulk waste collection service which compliments weekly kerb side collections.

## Building Safer & Stronger Communities

- 13.2 The Building Safer & Stronger Communities programme works with the community to bring forward volunteering opportunities. This includes supporting those interested in enhancing environmental standards through the 1,600 Street Champions who volunteer to complete additional litter picks in their community. Such work is complimented by initiatives such as 'clean and green' that encourage children and young people to help keep their local area clean and green.

### 14.0 Background Papers

- 1 Cabinet - 18 February 2021

### 15.0 Appendices

None.

### 16.0 Report Sign Off

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	10/04/2025	10/04/2025	RP
Finance	03/04/2025	03/04/2025	PT
Director	10/04/2025	10/04/2025	DRS

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Telford & Wrekin  
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## Borough of Telford and Wrekin

### Cabinet

Thursday 15 May 2025

### Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
<b>Service Area:</b>	Policy & Governance
<b>Report Author:</b>	Rob Montgomery – Audit, Governance & Procurement Lead Manager
<b>Officer Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01952 383103 <b>Email:</b> Robert.Montgomery@telford.gov.uk
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	Senior Management Team – 15 April 2025 Business Briefing – 1 May 2025 Cabinet Meeting – 15 May 2025 Audit Committee – 28 May 2025

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, attached as Appendix A (including Annex 1) and notes the information in the report.
- 1.2 Approve the Local Code of Good Governance (Appendix B).

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 For the Audit Committee to review and approve the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement to accompany the annual accounts and the Local Code of Good Governance.

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement and it is best practice that the statement is signed by the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council. This statement should accompany the Annual Accounts.
- 3.2 The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix A and has been developed based on the requirements of the regulations and CIPFA/Solace guidance. The statement includes an action plan (Annex 1) to ensure that we continue to improve our existing governance arrangements.
- 3.3 The action plan attached to the 2023/24 statement (implemented during 2024/25) has been reviewed and updated to reflect current progress. Any actions still in progress from the 2023/24 plan have been incorporated into the 2024/25 action plan, see Annex 1 at Appendix A.
- 3.4 The Annual Governance Statement and the Local Code of Good Governance outlines that the Council has a robust governance framework in place but that it is continually reviewing procedures to maintain and demonstrate good corporate governance. It is supported by risk management and sound systems of internal control which are paramount in these continuing times of financial constraint. The Council can be assured that during 2024/25, including during organisational and personnel changes, that the existing or revised governance arrangements have continued to support proper governance. Where required changes to procedures have been agreed by SMT and changes to the Constitution have been agreed by the Council, through the Council's Constitution Committee.
- 3.5 Assurance for the Annual Governance Statement is provided by all areas of the Council and externally by the following:
- a) Leader and Chief Executive – who sign the statement to acknowledge their responsibilities;
  - b) Senior management – Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors;
  - c) Chief Financial Officer;
  - d) The Monitoring Officer;
  - e) Members – Scrutiny arrangements, Standards Committee, Audit Committee and other Regulatory Committees;
  - f) Internal Audit;

- g) Partners;
- h) External Audit; and
- i) Other external inspection agencies.

- 3.6 The 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement sets out adherence to the Council's governance arrangements that operated during the period – 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and measures the effectiveness of them.
- 3.7 The Council's current Local Code of Good Governance was previously approved by the Audit Committee to reflect the CIPFA/SOLACE framework including revised principles and guidance but further application and good practice has been received during the year and the local code has therefore been updated further. The Code continues to reflect the Council's culture and values. See Appendix B for a copy of the local code.

#### **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 Members of the Audit Committee approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, attached as Appendix A (including Annex 1), and note the information in the report.
- 4.2 Members of the Audit Committee approve the Local Code of Good Governance.

#### **5.0 Alternative Options**

- 5.1 There are no alternative options associated with this report.

#### **6.0 Key Risks**

- 6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

#### **7.0 Council Priorities**

- 7.1 The report and its recommendations will ensure a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

#### **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The governance framework includes several financial elements, including the Council's financial regulations, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy. These provide the financial parameters, systems, processes and guidelines within which the Council must operate and, as such, assist in the delivery of good governance. Strong financial management also supports the delivery of value for money in ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's decision making and processes.

The Council's external auditors give an opinion on the financial statements of the authority and a value for money conclusion in their opinion on the accounts and in their Annual Audit Findings Report each year which provides further assurance.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

- 9.1 The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015. Regulation 6 of these Regulations sets out that the authority must conduct a review of the effectiveness of its internal control systems each financial year and prepare an annual governance statement. The annual governance statement must be approved in advance of the annual statement of accounts.

## **10.0 Ward Implications**

- 10.1 The work of the Audit Committee encompasses all the Council's activities across the Borough and therefore it operates within all Council Wards detailed in the Parish Charter.

## **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

- 11.1 There are no health, social or economic implications directly arising from this report.

## **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 12.1 All members of the Internal Audit Team have attended equal opportunities/diversity training. If any such issues arose during any work the appropriate manager would be notified.

## **13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 13.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **14.0 Background Papers**

- 1 CIPFA/SOLACE – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition)

## **15.0 Appendices**

- A Annual Governance Statement 2024/25  
B Local Code of Good Governance

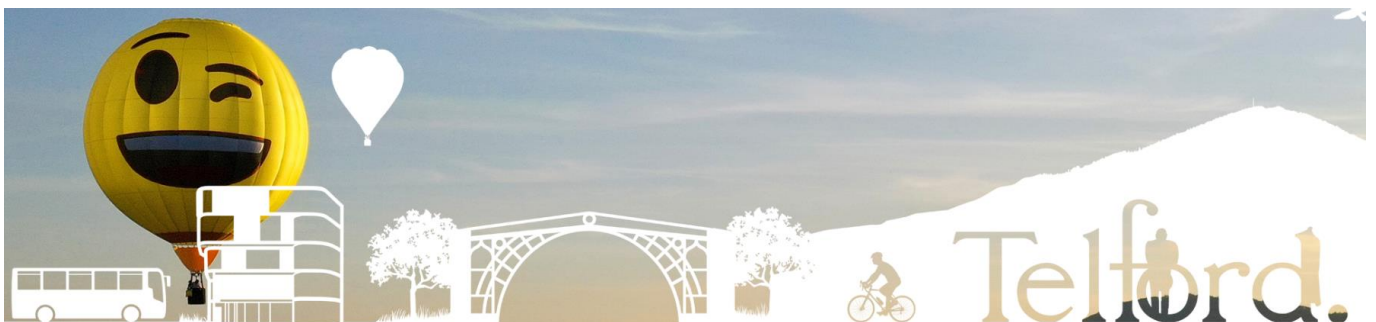
## **16.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	03/04/2025	07/04/2025	RP
Finance	09/04/2025	10/04/2025	AM



# Annual Governance Statement

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

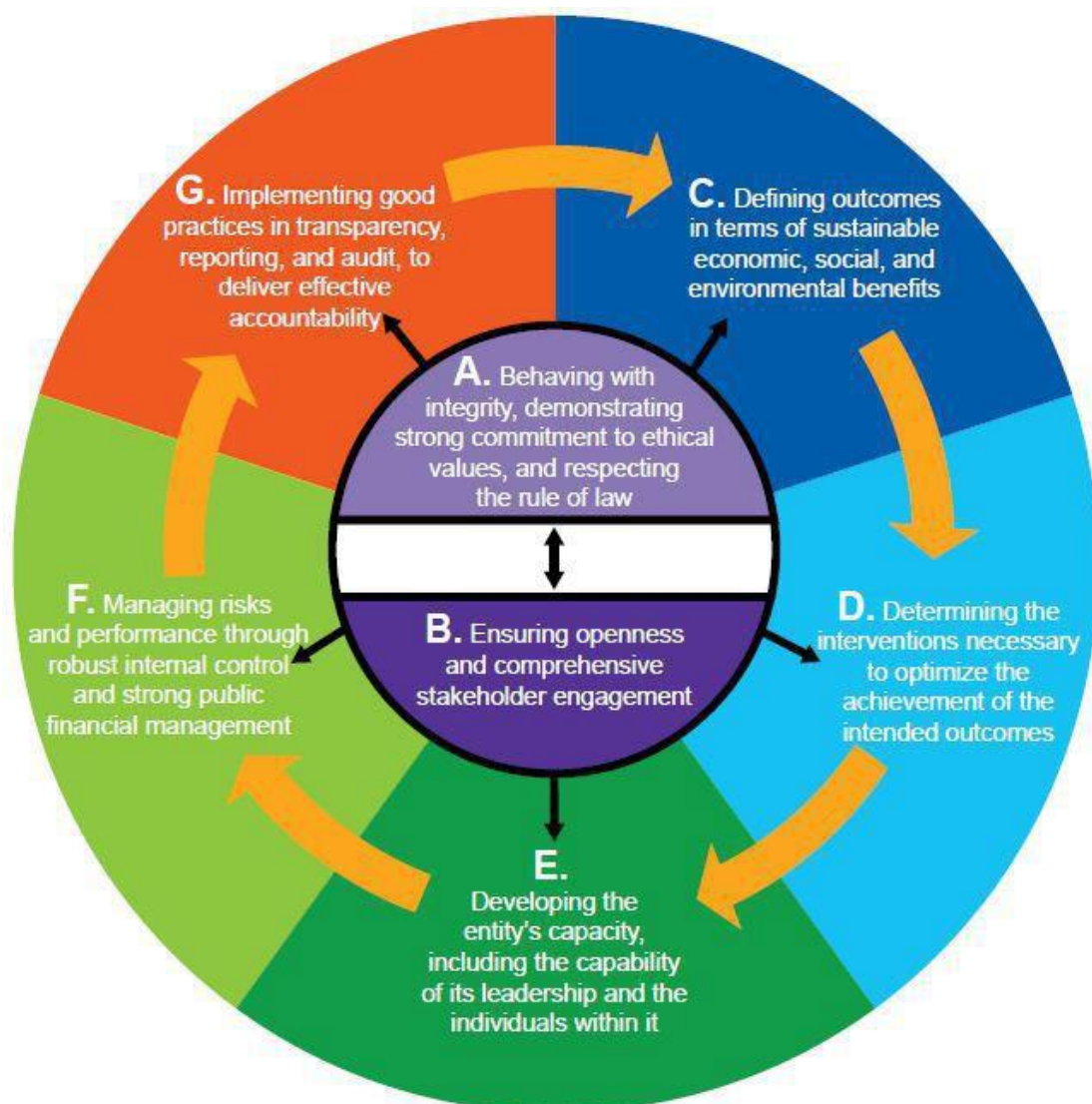


# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Statement of Accounts which is approved by the Audit Committee.

The Annual Governance Statement outlines that the Council has been adhering to the Local Code of Corporate Governance, continually reviewing policies and procedures to maintain and demonstrate good corporate governance and that it has in place robust systems of internal control.

The Council has adopted the Code of Corporate Governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.



## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Telford & Wrekin Council's vision is to protect, care and invest to create a better borough. The Council wants the borough to be a place in which to grow up, work, prosper and grow older. The [Council Plan](#) provides a medium-term view of what it plans to do to achieve this ambition and sets out 5 priorities to underpin this work. In the longer term the Council also has set out its 10 year vision/Vision 2030 which details borough aspirations for the Council and its partners.
- 2.2 To achieve this ambition the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive recognise the importance of having a solid foundation of good governance and sound financial management.
- 2.3 2024/25 has seen continued key challenges around financial management which have been addressed by the Council. It has, and continues to, put in place robust savings and financial management plans which seek to minimise any impact on frontline services.
- 2.4 The past 12 months has seen some notable successes for the Council and its community. The Council continues to be a high performing local authority that places the community in the centre of everything it does. Particular highlights in 2024/25 included:
- The Council has been shortlisted for 3 national awards including Council of the Year
  - The Care Quality Commission assessed the Council's Adult Social Care services as GOOD
  - Ofsted rated the Council's Children's services as OUTSTANDING
  - National recognition for the Council's work within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) arena
  - National recognition for the Council's response to the independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation that it commissioned in 2018.

See paragraphs 6.6 and 7.3.13 for more detail on the Council's key achievements.

- 2.5 Overall this statement provides a **reasonable level of assurance** that the Council's governance arrangements including internal systems of control are fit for purpose.

## 3. Standards of Governance

- 3.1 The Council expects all of its members, officers, partners and contractors to adhere to the highest standards of public service with particular reference to the employee and Members' Code of Conduct, Council vision and priorities as well as applicable statutory requirements.

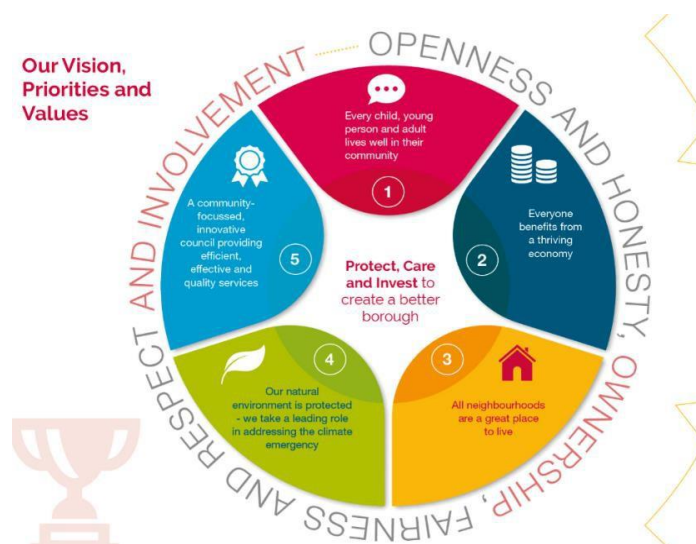
## 4. Scope of Responsibility

- 4.1 Telford and Wrekin Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. The Council needs to demonstrate that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively to secure continuous improvement.
- 4.2 To meet this responsibility, the Council puts in place proper arrangements for overseeing what it does including arrangements for the governance of its affairs including risk management, compliance with regulations and ensuring the effective exercise of its functions.

- 4.3 The Council must do the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, transparent and accountable manner. The Council takes into consideration all systems, processes, policies, culture and values that direct and control the way in which it works and through which it engages and leads its community.
- 4.4 The Council is aware that it does not get everything right 100% of the time. But through consultation, lessons learnt and a robust complaint handling process, it is always looking to develop and be better in everything that it does.

## 5. The Governance Framework

- 5.1 The governance framework allows the Council to monitor how they are achieving its strategic aims and ambitions and how this contributes to the delivery of its vision, priorities and values, see below.



- 5.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve priorities and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- 5.3 The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to appropriately identify, quantify and manage the risks to the achievement of the Council's priorities, objectives and policies.

## 6. Review of Effectiveness

- 6.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by:



- 6.2 The Council has faced a continued challenging financial environment during 2024/25 due to the funding constraints it is working within, coupled with ongoing rising costs that has been experienced nationally. The Council has met these challenges and continues to deliver services against the backdrop of realising considerable savings.
- 6.3 The Council recognises the ongoing importance of information governance and formalised its Information Governance Framework. The main focus of the Information Governance Team in 2024/25 has been to:
- Ensure the Council's continued compliance with the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act/General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
  - Updating relevant training, policies and procedures
  - Managing risks associated with the implementation of new systems
  - Facilitating appropriate and secure information sharing where there is a legal basis to do so
  - Support the prevention/investigation of data breaches ensuring lessons are learnt

The Information Governance Team has continued to report to the Audit Committee and Senior Management Team on information rights requests and data incidents . During 2024/25 no enforcement action has been taken by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) against the Council.

- 6.4 The Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Service Delivery Managers have signed annual assurance certificates confirming that the governance framework has been operating effectively within their area of responsibility, subject to the actions outlined in Annex 1.

Internal Audit undertake sample testing of completed certificates to provide additional assurance that adequate controls/risk management measures have been operating in 2024/25.

- 6.5 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of Internal Audit, management, other internal assurance activities and the External Auditors' review. The Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25 will set out the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion.

- 6.6 The Council has been advised on the implications of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by Cabinet, Standards Committee, Audit Committee, Scrutiny, Senior Managers, Internal Audit and external review.

The Chief Internal Auditor concludes that the Council is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and levels of governance and that the review of governance arrangements provides a **reasonable level of assurance** that these arrangements are effective and continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

### **Internal Audit Work**

One of Internal Audit's key objectives, as detailed in the Internal Audit Charter is *'To review the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes of the Council to aid improvement, provide a level of assurance and an opinion on them to the Council.'*

The work of Internal Audit is based on risk and the scope of each audit assignment as a minimum, includes assessment of the governance, risk management and control arrangements put in place by management.

Internal Audit have completed 93% (23/24 – 90%) of the revised risk-based Annual Internal Audit Plan together with some additional ad-hoc work as required.

Internal Audit have ensured that the Chair/Audit Committee and Senior Management Team have been kept informed of audit resource/work throughout the year.

### **Other Sources of Assurance**

As stated above, reliance has been placed on other sources of assurance in 2024/25 with respect to the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion. Other sources of assurance have been obtained from in-year activity but also by reflecting on past opinions and the basis of these.

2024/25 has seen the Council consistently recognised as a well performing Council by a number of external bodies. Below is a summary of the recognition received.

- The Council has been shortlisted for 3 awards including Council of the Year, the Environmental Services Award (for organising Reuse events to cut waste) and Public Partnership Award (for its response to child sexual exploitation).
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessed the Council's Adult Social Care services as GOOD. CQC recognised that Adult Social Care was performing well and meeting their expectations.
- Ofsted rating the Council's Children Services as OUTSTANDING – the second consecutive outstanding judgment. Ofsted praised the way that the Council put young people at the heart of everything we do and highlighted its approach to participation and co-production as a real strength.
- The Council's Lets Dine Team achieved the bronze standard award catering mark, awarded by the Soil Association Food for Life.
- Telford Town Park ranked the cleanest park in England by LitterBins.co.uk

- The Council's Station Quarter project has been nominated for the Regeneration & Sustainability Project of the Year by the Insider West Midlands Property Awards.
- There has been national recognition for the Council's work within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) arena.
- There has also been national recognition for the Council's response to the independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation that it commissioned in 2018.

Other examples of assurance obtained in year include:

- 1:1 supervision and team meetings
- Case file audits
- Regular contract review meetings
- LGA service review
- Completion of statutory returns
- Quality checks undertaken
- Completion and approval of regular reconciliations
- Lexcel re-accreditation in Legal
- Inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office
- Annual Scrutiny Work Programme
- Quality Assurance Improvement Plan
- Quarterly statutory officer's meetings
- External audit of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim
- DWP audit
- CQC inspection

KPMG have been the Council's External Auditor for 2024/25. They have stated that:

- There are no significant issues identified in their value for money risk assessment to date
- The 2023/24 accounts have been signed off (CIPFA state over 200 disclaimed or qualified opinions have been issued across England) with good relationships forged with the Council's Finance Team
- They expected that there would be very few corrections required to the Statement of Accounts
- No financial management issues had been found by KPMG or the previous External Auditor (Grant Thornton) in the years preceding 2024/25

6.7 In the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion, the above assurance activity reflects that sound governance arrangements are in place as a number of the points above would not have been possible without adequate governance foundations being in place and embedded.

There has been no significant instances of fraud, poor risk management and/or poor financial management that would lead the Chief Internal Auditor to believe poor governance practices have been in place.

However, as part of the AGS certification process and ethics-related audit checks throughout the year, there have been a small number of areas identified that do require further development. Attached as Annex 1 is an agreed action plan to address these areas for development and ensure continuous improvement.

- 6.8 Issues from the previous AGS action plan (2023/24) that have been addressed or mainstreamed have been deleted and those that continue to be addressed are included in the 2024/25 action plan.
- 6.9 The Senior Management Team has monitored implementation of the 2023/24 actions and progress has been reported to the Audit Committee at the January 2025 meeting.
- 6.10 Detailed below is a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA Code on the Principles of Good Governance.

## **7. Statement of Compliance**

### **7.1 Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law.**

- 7.1.1 Members and officers recognise the importance of compliance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Financial and Contract Rules; Procurement Regulations, Scheme of Delegation, Codes of Conduct and Gifts & Hospitality Policy.

However, some improvements are needed in this area and recommendations have been included in the 2024/25 AGS action plan.

- 7.1.2 There is ongoing training for Code of Conduct, Equality Awareness, Leadership and Governance and Contract Procedure Rules/Procurement.

- 7.1.3 The Council has an Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy, supported by the Whistleblowing (Speak Up) Policy, encouraging internal referrals.

The Council has a zero-tolerance policy in relation to fraud and corruption and it is service management's responsibility to ensure there are adequate controls in their areas to ensure the opportunities for fraud are minimised. It is everyone's responsibility to report suspicions and the Whistleblowing (Speak Up) Policy supports this internally.

Internal Audit, along with the Investigations Team, undertakes proactive fraud work based on a fraud risk register and/or other intelligence. Other specific anti-fraud and corruption activities are undertaken by Trading Standards.

An annual report on anti-fraud and corruption activities and an update to the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing (Speak Up) Policy is presented to the Audit Committee.

- 7.1.4 As well as complying with the Council's Employee Code of Conduct, Council officers also comply with their own professional bodies' code of conduct when delivering services.

- 7.1.5 All Internal Audit reviews consist of an ethics questionnaire that is sent to a sample of staff in specific teams to demonstrate their understanding of key corporate policies.

Ethics questionnaire findings have been shared when discussing individual audits with relevant Service Delivery Managers and Directors and taken to SMT as part of reporting corporate recommendations. Identified improvements required highlighted from findings from the ethics work have been included in the 2024/25 AGS action plan.

- 7.1.6 There are both internal and external reviews in social care to monitor compliance with the law, e.g. the Care Act, Deprivation of Liberties, Safeguarding and Mental Health Act.
- 7.1.7 Human Resource and recruitment policies and processes ensure the Council is fully compliant with employment law. Annual audits are undertaken in these areas and ongoing checks take place to ensure compliance with IR35 legislation.
- 7.1.8 Senior officers meet regularly and work closely with members to ensure that they understand and can undertake their roles effectively and legally.
- 7.1.9 Cabinet monitors the effectiveness of the governance framework through the consideration of regular service and financial management information reports from senior management.
- Individual Cabinet Members receive regular feedback from senior officers in respect to their areas of responsibility on the progress of priorities and objectives. Issues of strategic and corporate importance are referred to Cabinet.
- 7.1.10 Statutory responsibilities across the Council are discharged openly and proactively, examples include having key statutory officers in place, i.e. Head of Paid Service, Data Protection Officer, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Director of Children Services, Director of Adult Services, Director of Public Health and Scrutiny Officer.

## **7.2 Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.**

- 7.2.1 To plan for the next ten years, Vision 2032 was developed to describe what the borough would be like to live-in in 2032 presenting a clear ambition and direction of travel for the borough. It was developed through:

- wide ranging engagement with residents;
- analysis of data about our communities and economy; and,
- collaboration with key strategic partners.

In recognising some of the key challenges facing the borough, the fundamental goal of the vision is “to build a more inclusive borough” through four ambitions.

- All neighbourhoods are connected, safe and clean;
- Everyone is able to live a healthy, independent life;
- Everyone benefits from good education and can fulfil their potential in a thriving economy; and,
- The environment is protected for the benefit of everyone.

Against each ambition the Vision describes the ambitions and aspirations for what will be achieved by 2032. Delivery of the Vision is driven through a partnership of key strategic organisations which meet three times each year to evaluate progress in delivering the Vision and to identify new or emerging challenges and opportunities. The latest update report went to Cabinet in March 2025.

- 7.2.2 The Council actively contributes to, and collaborates with, partners to promote good governance and achieve the delivery of outcomes through increased joint working. The Council is a member of a number of sub-regional partnerships and groups.

Many of our services are delivered in partnership with other organisations such as West Mercia Energy, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary groups, etc.

7.2.3 Regular meetings take place between Children's Safeguarding and key partner agencies such as the police, Education and Health.

7.2.4 All Council services feed into transparent reporting processes through Council committee meetings and this is further supported by the transparency agenda.

7.2.5 Annually the public is consulted on the budget for the forthcoming year.

7.2.6 The Council works in partnership with a range of local health partners. This includes TWC being represented on the Integrated Care Board, T&W Health and Wellbeing Board and TWC's Chief Executive chairing the Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership (TWIPP), which is now a formal sub-committee of the ICB.

7.2.7 The Scrutiny provision has looked at the development of policy, the decision-making process and areas of concern. The subject areas for review will be informed by community engagement, direct feedback to members from within the community, the results of review and inspection (both internally and externally) and areas of policy being developed by the Council.

7.2.8 The Council undertook a customer survey in 2024 to obtain views from citizens as to how they perceived the Council's service delivery. Survey findings included:

- 85% of respondents were satisfied with the Council's access channels
- Customer satisfaction score increased from 72.1 in 2022 to 74
- The Council had a score of 4.3 for effort customers have to make to access Council services (therefore a lower score is positive. This compares to a national average of 5.8

7.2.9 In addition to 7.2.8 above, the Council undertook a resident's survey to obtain the views of residents over a number of areas. A targeted approach was undertaken for this survey with households across all wards being represented.

7.2.10 The Council also undertook a young person's online survey for 11-18 year olds. The Council used its existing youth engagement groups to encourage participation.

### **7.3 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.**

7.3.1 The Council Plan was refreshed in 2024. The plan identifies 5 priorities to deliver the Council's vision to 'Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough'. The Council continues to develop commercial projects to generate income to invest in frontline services to mitigate increases in the cost of living and the ongoing impact of Government funding.

7.3.2 Digital transformation, the ethical and appropriate use of artificial intelligence and changes in the way we work are intrinsic to the Council's service delivery model.

7.3.3 The Telford and Wrekin Local Plan sets out the Council's vision and strategy for the physical planning of the borough up to 2031.

The Council are currently undertaking a review of the Local Plan and have completed consultation exercises on this. The Local Plan is now being finalised prior to the plan being submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.

- 7.3.4 All service areas have their own service plans (refreshed in 2024/25) which details how they intend to deliver their service for the coming year and the risks/challenges they face in meeting their service objectives.
- 7.3.5 The Council has a commercial/investment strategy that demonstrates clear visions, objectives and outcomes. This includes financial, economic, social and environmental issues.
- 7.3.6 The Council's economic growth strategy supports and drives increased economic productivity.
- 7.3.7 The financial strategy sets out the short and long term implications for service delivery across the Council. The Service & Financial Planning reports include various papers to Cabinet regarding the budget and sets out short/medium and long-term implications, including capital strategy and savings strategy.
- 7.3.8 Adult Social Services, in respect of financial management and the implementation of the cost improvement plan, have continued to provide updates during the year to SMT and members.
- 7.3.9 Children's Services have partnered with IMPOWER to embed Valuing Care across multiple services. Valuing Care looks to support a needs focused, outcomes driven approach across all of Children's Services. This work also looks at cost savings / avoidance including saving of £9.6m related to changes in placement costs. Other savings streams are also being explored.
- 7.3.10 All reports to members (Committee reports, Cabinet reports and Council reports) show relevant legal and financial implications and risk.
- 7.3.11 Implementation of the IDT Strategy has continued, including infrastructure upgrades and further security improvements particularly in response to spam, phishing and ransomware attacks.
- 7.3.12 An Artificial Intelligence Board has been established to ensure that any AI projects are appropriately governed.
- 7.3.13 The Council has implemented a number of climate actions which contribute to its aims of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Tackling climate change is one of the priorities set out in the Council Plan. Throughout its partnerships, the Council is also playing its part in helping the wider borough to achieve the same targets the Councils has set for itself.

Key actions have included:

- The Council has achieved an overall reduction of 61% in CO2 emissions from a baseline of 2018/18
- Installation of solar panels, electric vehicle charging points and battery storage at Horsehay Village Golf Course
- Decarbonisation work at Oakengates Leisure Centre including the installation of heat pump technology and installing an energy efficient roof covering
- Orchard Business Park development included the installation of solar panels
- Through the Council's Warm and Well Telford fund, grants are given for climate change work in households

- Nuplace, the Council's wholly owned housing company, developed energy efficient properties for rent
- Providing over 9,000 energy saving lightbulbs to the community
- Replacing Council fleet vehicles with electric versions (currently there are 15 electric vehicles in operation), where possible, as existing vehicles reach the end of their useable life
- Creation and maintenance of the Climate Change Adaption Risk Register

Many more activities have taken place in 204/25 to support climate adaption and biodiversity.

#### **7.4 Determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcome.**

7.4.1 The 2024/25 Service & Financial Strategy including the Treasury Management Plan are aligned to the refreshed Council Plan. The strategy sets out how our financial resources will be used to deliver the Council vision and priorities.

7.4.2 Budget plans are produced for all service areas for planning purposes. Budget consultation is undertaken annually with Council Members and members of the public.

#### **7.5 Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.**

7.5.1 The Workforce Strategy was approved in 2021/22 and is available to all employees on the intranet. The strategy consists of 5 priorities which reflects the Council's aims to achieve its objectives.

The Council is currently refreshing this strategy and will look to encompass feedback from the recent employee survey into an updated version in 2025/26.

7.5.2 The Council undertook a survey of all of its employees in 2024/25. A total of 1,405 responses were completed. The survey identified that:

- 84% of employees would recommend the Council as a great place to work
- 95% of employees are interested in their work
- 92% of employees understand how their work contributes to the Council's priorities

7.5.3 Officers understand their respective roles and these are set out in job descriptions. The Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and Contract Procedure Rules clearly details roles and responsibilities, specifically with regard to delegation and authorisation.

7.5.4 There are various training methods available to staff such as mentoring, OLLIE (On-line learning platform), virtual and face to face. The Leadership & Management Programme continued in 2024/25 with approximately 250 Team Leaders/Managers taking part.

7.5.5 Managers continue to be encouraged to look for apprenticeship opportunities for their team. In addition, the Council organised a Skills Show (annual event) with over 50 exhibitors and 4,000 visitors attending. Apprenticeship opportunities were promoted at this show.

7.5.6 An induction programme is in place for members and officers.

7.5.7 The action plan at *Annex A* of this statement details areas of improvement in this area identified from the results of the annual governance certification process and the ethics questionnaire used in audits.

**7.6 The Council continues to manage risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.**

7.6.1 Risk management is an integral part of good management and corporate governance and is at the heart of what the Council does. A number of governance documents details the Council's approach to risk including the Risk Management Framework, Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Policy.

7.6.2 The Council has a Corporate Strategic Risk Register which details key risks that could stop the Council achieving its objectives. This risk register is presented to the Audit Committee 4 times a year.

7.6.3 The Internal Audit plan is informed by the Council's service and financial planning processes, Corporate Strategic Risk Register, external inspection reports, external networking intelligence and comments/opinions from senior management on the current state of governance, risk and control environment. Each area on the plan is risk rated.

7.6.4 During 2024/25 the Internal Audit team achieved 93% of their revised planned work and this has been used, in part, with the relevant output from unplanned work to help form their opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control framework.

All Internal Audit reports produced are given an assurance rating (from poor to good) and each recommendation in the audit reports are risk assessed and given a risk rating.

7.6.5 The Chief Internal Auditor has undertaken checks on the work of Internal Audit as part of the Quality Assurance Improvement Program. No significant issues have been found during these checks but a small number of minor issues have been fed back to the Internal Audit Team to assist in their continuous improvement.

7.6.6 Internal Audit reports to the Audit Committee 4 times a year. The reports include all internal audit activity throughout the year including reports produced and follow up reviews undertaken. The Audit Committee also approved the Internal Audit Charter for 2024/25.

7.6.7 Large projects require the maintenance of a project risk register, this is a working document that is reviewed and amended throughout the lifecycle of the project. Where projects involve the processing of personally identifiable information, a Data Protection Impact Assessment is also completed which requires risks and risk treatment to be documented.

7.6.8 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for managing the risk of fraud and corruption and this has been reflected in the Council's Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing (Speak Up) Policy.

7.6.9 Services report regularly to Council committees such as the Audit Committee, Planning, Licensing, Cabinet, etc. These reports detail any impact assessment, including risk and opportunity. Financial decisions are reported to Cabinet, Full Council and Audit

Committee, who often challenge to ensure appropriate financial management and to demonstrate transparency.

- 7.6.10 Financial Regulations set out our financial management framework for ensuring the Council make best use of the money they have available. Financial roles and responsibilities are clearly shown in the regulations and it provides a framework for financial decision-making.
- 7.6.11 The Treasury Management Strategy and regular updates on treasury matters are provided to Audit Committee. This information clearly details investments, loans and the financial position of the Council. The Council uses external treasury advisors, Link, to support its activities.
- 7.6.12 The Council's financial strategy identifies the short term budget plan and long term aspirational plan linked to the Council plan to be a self-sustaining Council.
- 7.6.13 The Council complies with the Principles and Standards set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code appropriately and proportionately demonstrating sound financial management and providing the expected assurance.
- 7.6.14 The Council has continued to make savings in light of ongoing financial pressures. £181.7m of ongoing savings/additional income will have been delivered by the end of 2024/25 with a further £13.1m to be delivered by the end of 2025/26. As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26, the Government announced its intention to move to multi-year settlements from 2026/27 onwards alongside a reform of the formula funding allocations and a reset of the Business Rates system, both of which will be consulted on throughout 2025.

However, it is unlikely that the Council will know what its funding settlement is for 2026/27 and future years until December 2025, just 3 months before the start of the new year. This makes it challenging to forecast the level of savings required from April 2026 onwards.

## **7.7 Implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.**

- 7.7.1 The Council endeavours to be open and transparent in its activities and reporting. Specific examples of this include:
- All Council/Committee agendas, papers and minutes are published on its website
  - Public consultation is undertaken on the budget
  - All expenditure over £100 is published on the Council website
  - Publication of the Complaints and Compliments annual report
- 7.7.2 The Audit Committee has responsibility for internal and external audit matters, the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and risk management.
- 7.7.3 In 2024/25, the Council continued to be the lead authority for the West Midlands Audit Committee Chairs Forum (WMACCF). The Council's Chairperson of the Audit Committee is also the Chairperson of the WMACCF.

The WMACCF is sponsored by the Local Government Association and is a forum where Audit Committee Chairs from across the West Midlands meet to share good practice.

- 7.7.4 The Audit Committee terms of reference also incorporate the review and monitoring of the Council's Treasury Management arrangements. Members of the committee are kept up to date through awareness training on factors that influence/affect delivery of the strategy and during the year were provided with an update on these matters by MUFG Treasury Services, the Council's Treasury Management advisors.
- 7.7.5 There are various committees, all with their own terms of reference and areas of responsibility, i.e. Licensing Committee, Planning Committee, etc, and there are elected members who are responsible for service areas within the Council.
- 7.7.6 Arrangements are in place to ensure Internal Audit fully complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Internal Audit team complete self-assessments against the standards and the outcome of this is reported to the Audit Committee.

The next internal self-assessment will be completed in 2025/26 against the new revised global audit standards. The next external assessment will take place in 2026/27.

- 7.7.7 The Internal Audit plan is developed using a risk-based approach taking into consideration the Corporate Strategic Risk Register, Service Plans and other relevant information. Audit recommendations made are communicated to the relevant Service Delivery Managers and relevant Senior Management representatives for consideration and implementation of recommendations.

Internal Audit will share best practice in the duty of their work. The Audit Plan is reviewed regularly to ensure it is still relevant and any changes to the plan are reported to the Audit Committee.

- 7.7.8 The Council's Communication Team works with officers and members to ensure key messages are easy to understand and in accessible formats to meet the diverse needs of our borough.
- 7.7.9 The Council's performance management framework is monitored by the Senior Management Team and has procedures in place that drive continuous improvement in performance.
- 7.7.10 The Council has identified lessons learnt from corporate complaints and complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman and implemented measures accordingly.
- 7.7.11 The Council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and publishes an annual EDI report. Key EDI activity undertaken in 2024/25 included:

- Delivery of tailored training programme for elected members, managers and employees to enhance their understanding of the Equality Act 2010, their responsibilities and how they can meet their duties effectively.
- Employee led support groups continue to provide a voice and safe space for employees who share protected characteristics, and their allies, whilst delivering a range of awareness and well-being initiatives for the workforce.
- Residents who share a range of protected characteristics have influenced development of policy and practice through proactive engagement and involvement. This has included amongst others the design of the new Theatre Telford, co-design of Adult Social Care self-service portal and delivery of an inclusive leisure strategy.

## 8 Looking Forward

- 8.1 Although the annual governance process reflects on the past year, it is also important that this statement looks forward to identify future factors that may impact its governance arrangements.

### 8.2 New Global Internal Audit Standards

- 8.2.1 The new Global Internal Audit Standards and the Application Note will form the basis of UK public sector internal audit effective from 1 April 2025. Therefore, the Council's Internal Audit operations must comply with these standards.

### 8.3 Local Government Reorganisation

- 8.3.1 The English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024 sets out the government's vision for simpler local government structures. Although, currently, this will not directly affect Telford and Wrekin Council, changes across the wider West Midlands region in particular will be monitored.

### 8.4 On-going financial challenges

- 8.4.1 Telford and Wrekin Council and other local authorities in England face continued financial challenges. The Council has a good record in meeting these challenges and continues to explore income generation as part of its financial management strategy.

### 8.5 Continued Customer Centric Services

- 8.5.1 The Institute of Customer Service has recently confirmed that it has awarded ServiceMark Accreditation to the Council. It was identified by the institute that the Council is meeting the National Customer Service Standard. The Council are only 1 of 69 organisations across the country to receive this accreditation and the first Council in the country to be accredited.

# Sign-off of the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement

Name/Role	Signed	Dated
David Sidaway Chief Executive		
Cllr Lee Carter Leader of the Council		
Cllr Helena Morgan Chair of Audit Committee		

AGS ACTION PLAN FOR 2024/25 FOR IMPLEMENTATION DURING 2025/26

Ref	Area identified for development and/or ongoing monitoring	Actions	Lead Officers
1	<p>Ongoing savings proposals, budget constraints and continued strategic management of organisational changes.</p> <p>Ongoing from previous AGS</p>	<p>Continued management of budgets, savings, revised structures and commercial/business approach which links to the continued development and implementation of revised governance arrangements.</p> <p>Delivery of in year savings is monitored on a regular basis at SMT.</p> <p>Further consultations on future savings will be undertaken where necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Executive</li> <li>Senior Management Team</li> </ul>
	<p>All internal audits include sending ethics questionnaires to a sample of staff in the team/area being audited. This is to demonstrate their understanding of corporate policies and whether staff feel supported.</p> <p>In a small number of questionnaire responses completed it was noted that not all staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Had received an Annual Performance &amp; Development Discussion</li> <li>Were familiar with particular Council policies</li> </ul>	<p>Report to SMT on the completion rate for Annual Performance &amp; Development Discussion.</p> <p>Reports on the completion of essential learning will be presented to SMT periodically.</p> <p>A reminder will be sent to all staff on key corporate policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Management Team</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had completed all essential learning requirements</li> </ul> <p>These findings have been shared with Service Delivery Managers / Directors when discussing the audit report for their service with recommendations for rectification.</p>		
3	<p>The annual certification process highlighted that there had been some reduction in the number of appropriately skilled staff in some service areas although actions had been identified to address this.</p> <p>Recruitment of staff in local government, particularly in some professions, continues to be challenging. This results in some single points of failure or the use of temporary staff.</p>	<p>The Council continues to explore and implement a number of initiatives in respect to staffing including service and workforce planning, apprenticeship schemes, etc to support managers in addressing these areas.</p> <p>A revised workforce strategy will be launched in 2025 which will cover succession planning, single points of failure and 'growing our own'.</p> <p>The Leadership &amp; Management training and learning programme continues for Team Leaders / Service Delivery Managers. The programme looks to support management development and to enable some resilience planning within the Council.</p> <p>The Council continues to monitor the effectiveness of different channels of recruitment it uses and is developing an employer value proposition, i.e. 'Why work for T&amp;WC'.</p> <p>In 2024/25 the Council has continued to organise the Skills and Apprenticeship Show to support recruitment.</p>	Director: Finance, People & IDT

4	<p>Low/medium risk data breaches are being experienced in some Council Teams.</p> <p>Data breaches are reported to the Information Governance (IG) Team who investigate the circumstances of the breach, assess the associated risk and ensure lessons learnt are identified.</p> <p>The Information Commissioner's Office have not taken any action against the Council in 2024/25.</p>	<p>Incorporate data breach analysis into the Managing the Business dashboard presented to the Senior Management Team.</p> <p>Increase sharing of information internally of trends around data breaches and 'near misses'.</p> <p>IG Team support for services who process high volumes of personal data.</p> <p>Continue to develop/invest in the Council's secure email functionality (Zivver).</p>	Director: Policy & Governance
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## Delivering Good Governance in Telford & Wrekin Council Local Code of Good Governance 2025/26

### Definition:

**Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.**

In order for the Members and Employees<sup>1</sup> of Telford & Wrekin Council to deliver good governance whilst working to achieve the Council's objectives they must **act in the public interest at all times.**

### Public Interest Principles

**- Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:**

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values (including the Council's values<sup>2</sup>), and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (including with individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders).

**- Achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:**

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers.
- F. Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability.

**Annex 1 of this document details the framework in place to deliver good governance.**

### Monitoring and Review

This Local Code of Good Governance is subject to regular review including assessing the effectiveness of the processes contained within the Code.

The results of this review are reported as part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The table below explains how the Council meets the core principles, systems, policies and procedures it has in place to support this.

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<sup>1</sup> Employees include partners, joint arrangements and volunteers.

<sup>2</sup> Fairness & Respect – Ownership - Openness & Honesty - Involvement

**Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law**

- Member and Officer Codes of Conduct underpin the standards of behaviour expected by members and officers
- Designated statutory officers in place – Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Chief Financial Officer (Director: Finance, People & IDT), Monitoring Officer (Director: Policy & Governance), Director of Children's Services (Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support), Director of Adult Services (Director: Adult Social Care) and Director of Public Health (Director: Health & Well-Being), Chief Internal Auditor (Audit, Governance & Procurement Lead Manager), Data Protection Officer (Audit, Governance & Procurement Lead Manager)
- The Constitution (which includes the Scheme of Delegations, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders), Forward Plan and decision making processes
- A Legal Services team to ensure that the Council operates within existing legislation and is aware of and acts upon proposed changes to legislation
- The Standards Committee, Audit Committee, scrutiny function and other regulatory committees
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing (Speak Up) and Prosecution policies support the Council's governance processes and anti-fraud and corruption culture
- The democratic decision making and accountability processes contained within the Constitution
- The development of internal controls and checks within new systems and when existing systems are reviewed
- The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016)
- Clear governance arrangements to manage the Council's change programmes and restructuring occurring across the Council and key capital projects
- The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards and their associated accountability with an independent Chair

**Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (including with individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders)**

- Adoption of an Information Rights Policy that details how information requests will be handled
- Adoption of a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice which details how the Council processes personal data
- The Council's Information Governance arrangements include a Caldicott Guardian and an Information Governance Framework sponsored by a designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), data and information security and sharing policies and procedures.
- A new 10 year/2030 vision document for the borough
- Standard format for all agenda, reports and minutes for Council/committee meetings that are posted on to the Council's website.
- The Council's Medium Term Plan which outlines the Council's ambitions and priorities based on stakeholder feedback and these inform the service and financial planning process and personal targets
- Council Vision, Priorities and Values
- Council website provides help to residents to understand the Council's Vision, Priorities and Values and to access services
- Local consultation has taken place using specific consultation and engagement activity for services and service areas
- Customer satisfaction survey undertaken
- The Council's communication, consultation and engagement strategies ensure that the local community knows what the Council is doing, receives feedback from them including the identification of their needs for incorporation into the Council's vision, priorities and values

**Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits**

- Comprehensive budget strategy and management of the associated risks of reduced resources provides robust financial management and regular reporting to members;
- A process for the completion and approval of business cases' for use of the Capacity Fund, Invest to Save Fund and use of consultants
- The Performance Management Framework and data quality systems. These provide reports to SMT and Cabinet
- Projects are managed, as appropriate, within the principles of good practice. This includes risk identification and management
- The Council has an Environmental Policy highlighting its commitment to sustainable environment. It also has a Sustainable Procurement Policy
- A Social Value Policy Charter is in place that is designed to assist commissioners and procurers to maximise opportunities to improve the social, economic and environment condition of our local area through effective commissioning and procurement.

**Core Principle D: Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

- A standardised format of decision making reports is used to ensure that all relevant information is considered. Options are clearly defined and analysed to ensure decisions are based on the best possible information
- The Commissioning Strategy is applied to ensure clear alignment to need
- There is a clear reporting mechanism for performance information which is presented alongside the financial information for the corresponding period
- The Council's performance framework links directly to the Council's outcomes. Performance is reported regularly to members.
- The annual budget is prepared in line with agreed priorities. The Council publishes its Financial Strategy annually to set an indicative three year financial plan to fit the longer term strategic vision as well as a detailed one year budget. This is intended to include realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure.
- Resources to assist commissioners and procurers to demonstrate the range and amount of social value generated or the financial value to society as a result of the social value they generate.

**Core Principle E: Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Member and officers**

- The Council's Human Resources function and workforce /organisational development procedures are supported by clear recruitment processes. These are followed up by on-line / face to face induction training (which includes information on the constitution, key policies, procedures, laws and regulations appropriate to the post and experience of the post holder) and on-going training and development
- A Member Development Programme to ensure members are properly equipped and have the capacity to fulfil their roles
- Governance awareness and training for members within their Member Development Programme and for officers through induction, Ollie and Staff news (updates/reminders on any revised governance arrangements, including information governance).
- Leadership and Management Development Programme

- Use of Learning Pool (Ollie) as an online learning and training tool that allows courses to be tailored to Council and individual needs
- A Scheme of Delegation that is reviewed annually in light of legal and organisational changes
- A Constitution that sets out financial management arrangements through the Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules
- Members are updated on legal and policy changes etc. as required
- Induction programmes for all members and employees
- Essential learning for employees is identified and made available
- Staff are annually appraised which includes the identification of training and development needs and drawing up of training action plans to address these
- Apprenticeship Programme in place offering training, skills and experience in local government.
- Health and Safety policies designed to protect and enhance the welfare of staff are actively promoted and monitored.
- A coaching and mentoring scheme is in place to build a pool of people who are skilled in facilitating personal development tools and to develop internal coaching capacity. This network provides group and individual personal development and coaching support to help people
- Corporate wide employee survey
- Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services is the lead members responsible for corporate governance including risk management. The key officer for Corporate Governance including risk management is the Chief Executive. The service and financial planning process incorporates risk management and strategic risks are reviewed by SMT and agreed by the Cabinet

**Core Principle F: Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

- Risk management arrangements that are embedded across all service areas as part of the service planning process and help inform decision making
- The Senior Management Team, regularly reviews the Strategic Risk Register, and seeks assurances that it is kept up to date and actions to mitigate risks are implemented.
- Operational risks are reviewed by risk owners on a periodic basis
- Council strategic risks have been identified and a member of the Senior Management Team assigned as the risk owner for each risk
- The Council has scrutiny committees which operate under clear terms of reference and rules of procedures laid down in the Constitution. Scrutiny Committee chairs and members have clearly laid down accountabilities in the Constitution. Members may not participate in the scrutiny of decisions they were involved in
- There is a standardised format for all committee reports which includes background to the report, any recommendations that decisions need to be made upon together with reasons behind those recommendations
- Reports and minutes and decisions under member consideration are published on the website and are available in hard copy in a variety of formats on request.
- Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations set out the Council's arrangements and ensure that processes continue to operate consistently
- Internal audit operates to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and on a risk basis reviews the Council's systems and processes set out to achieve the Council's priorities in order to provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control
- The Council has processes and documents to support governance and reporting arrangements for partnerships, issues, risk management framework, internal control environment, financial reporting and treasury management
- The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and arrangements conform to CIPFA and External Audit guidance and is monitored by the Audit Committee

- An annual report is produced by Internal Audit which provides an opinion on the Council's control environment, and a self-assessment of its arrangements against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which is subject to regular review and is approved by the Audit Committee
- Annual fraud reports are provided to the Audit Committee detailing anti-fraud activity in the year
- An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that is subject to review by the Audit Committee
- Training is provided to Audit Committee members on areas relevant to their role
- There are frameworks in place in relation to child and adult safeguarding
- The Council has an Information Governance team committed to ensuring the principles of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Transparency are followed
- Information governance and security awareness including individual responsibilities and good practice is raised and embedded with officers and elected members through information governance training
- The Council's Information Governance Strategy provides guidance on the arrangements that must be in place to ensure personal data is kept protected and secure
- Effective information sharing is undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Council's Data Protection Policy and Information Sharing Policy
- Data subjects are informed why their personal information is being collected and how it will be processed (including when shared with other bodies) through the Council's overall Privacy Notices published on our website and individual Privacy Statements on forms, in booklets etc.
- Data verification and validation processes are integrated within systems and processes
- An audited and signed Statement of Accounts is published on an annual basis containing:
  - A statement of responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts
  - A statement of the Council's accounting policies
- An Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer/Head of Paid Service
- Financial procedures are documented in the Financial Regulations
- A Financial Strategy is in place
- The financial position is reported on a regular basis to Cabinet
- SMT meets weekly with regular management meetings with Service Delivery Managers and Group Managers/Team Leaders;

**Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability**

- Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the Council's website
- Adoption of a style guide document that outlines how to communicate more effectively and to ensure communications are consistent and clear
- Adoption of the National Transparency Code
- The Cabinet is the Council's key decision making body and makes decisions within the policy framework approved by Full Council. It is made up of the Leader, who is elected by the Council, and up to nine members. When key decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Cabinet forward plan in so far as they can be anticipated. If these key decisions are to be discussed with Council officers at a meeting of the Cabinet, this will be open for the public to attend except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. The Cabinet has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide
- Annual Financial Statements are compiled, published to timetable and included on the Council's website.

- An annual report from each of the scrutiny committees is presented to Council alongside reports from the portfolio holders; the scrutiny reports detail the past work of the Committees, the present work and the plans for the future
- Completion of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS)
- A Business Plan and Financial Strategy setting out the Council's mission and priorities.
- The AGS sets out the Council's governance framework and the results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements. The AGS includes areas for improvement.
- An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained. The Service has direct access to members and provides assurance on governance arrangements via an annual report containing an opinion on the Council's internal control arrangements
- External Audit provides an annual opinion on the Council's financial statements and arrangements for securing value for money
- The Council actively welcomes peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies

## Local Good Governance Framework – 2025/26

### Integrity, ethics and values

Audit Committee	Codes of Conduct
Statutory officer roles	Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy/Report
Constitution	Complaints process
Decision making process	Open data & Transparency Code
Financial Rules	Whistleblowing Policy
Register of Interests	Gifts and Hospitality Policy

### Openness and engagement

Information Rights policy	Open data
Members role	Complaints Policy/annual report
AGS statement and final accounts	Public consultations
Committee meetings streamed	Customer survey
Council website	Whistleblowing Policy
Transparency Code	Committee papers published

### Defining outcomes

Decision making process	Committee reports
Performance framework	Procurement Strategy
Social Value Policy	Committee structure
Service plans	Sustainability Policy
Service and financial planning process	Environmental Policy
Commissioning Policy	Council Plan

### Determine interventions

Engagement with stakeholders	Strategic Risk Register
AGS/AGS Action Plan	Council Plan
Decision making process	Complaints process
Role of members	Budget Strategy
Financial Strategy	Whistleblowing Policy
Service Plans	Forward Plan

### Council capacity

Member Development	Induction programme
APPD process	CPD
Recruitment and selection	Health and wellbeing
Online learning	Employee survey
Peer reviews	Employee assist programme
Management development	Designated essential learning

Risk and performance

Performance framework	External inspection
APPD process	Internal audit
Strategic risk register	AGS
Service planning	Service and financial planning
External audit of accounts	Committee framework
Peer reviews	Constitution

Transparency and audit

Audit Committee	Council website
Internal audit function	Transparency Code
External Audit	Complaints annual report
Scrutiny	Information rights policy
Open data	AGS
Annual accounts	Member role