Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday 16 July 2026 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors E Aston, S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, B Carter, L D Carter, C Chikandamina, G H Cook, E Davies, P Davis, F Doran, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, J Jones, J Kaur, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, T J Nelson, R A Overton, N Page, L Parker, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, R Sahota, P J Scott, S Syrda, P Thomas, J Thompson, K L Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, K Tonks, R Tyrrell, J Urey, O Vickers and D R W White.

In Attendance: J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy)), A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance) and D Sidaway (Chief Executive).

Apologies: Councillors T L B Janke, A S Jhawar, G C W Latham-Reynolds, I Preece, G Thomas and P Watling.

17 Prayers and Reflections

Hargun Kaur from the Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Gurdwara (Priorslee) said prayers.

18 Declarations of Interest

None.

19 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Special Council meeting and the Annual General Meeting held on 21 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

20 Presentation of Special Recognition Award

Councillor Lee Carter, Leader of the Council, moved, seconded by Councillor Carolyn Healy, that a Special Recognition Award be presented to Dr Graham Wynn OBE, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to enterprise and innovation. As a dedicated advocate for investment, regeneration and employment within the borough of Telford and Wrekin Dr Wynn's influence had been felt across all aspects of community life. This award recognised his

exceptional lifetime of service to the community, a distinction that was both fitting and richly deserved.

RESOLVED – that a Special Recognition Award be presented to Dr Graham Wynn, OBE.

21 Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader commended the England Football Squad for their efforts during the World Cup, noting that occasions such as this brought communities together across the borough. Residents had united in homes, pubs, clubs and public spaces, sharing a sense of pride, ambition and optimism.

The Leader was delighted to welcome Councillor Ben Carter, who was recently elected to represent the Malinslee & Dawley Bank Ward following a positive, community-focused election campaign that was firmly rooted in local issues and engagement.

The Leader welcomed the Government's recognition of the Christopher Turley Armed Forces Hub as a VALOUR Centre. As the first centre of its kind in the West Midlands, it would provide veterans with access to support services including housing, health and wellbeing, welfare, employment and skills development. This recognition demonstrated the positive impact that effective partnership working could have on people's lives.

The Leader also announced that two additional sites within the borough, Ketley Paddock Mound Local Nature Reserve and The Beeches and Lodge Fields Local Nature Reserve, had been awarded Green Flag Status, bringing the borough's total to ten Green Flag sites. This represented a significant achievement and reinforced Telford and Wrekin's position as one of the greenest urban areas in the country.

The Leader emphasised the importance of having a Local Plan in place to safeguard the borough from speculative development. He stated that the Plan represented a responsible approach to protecting valued local assets, strengthening communities, and supporting residents through initiatives such as the capped bus fare scheme to help address cost of living pressures. While acknowledging that further work remains to be done, he reaffirmed the Council's commitment to focusing on the priorities of local residents and continuing to build a better borough for all.

22 Minutes Silence for Ann Widdicombe former MP

Councillor Andrew Eade lead a tribute to former MP Ann Widdicombe following her recent passing. A minutes silence was the observed in her memory.

23 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor asked Members to note the engagements she had undertaken since being elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Since May, both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had had the privilege of attending a diverse range of events across the borough. The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for his continued support and commitment throughout this period.

Among the many engagements attended, the Mayor highlighted three recent events. The first was the Windrush celebration hosted by TAARC, which had provided an opportunity to celebrate heritage, community and belonging. The event featured a keynote speech by Eddy Smythe, who shared the remarkable story of his father's role in managing voyages of the Empire Windrush to and from the Caribbean. The Mayor had also been honoured to grant permission for the Royal Yeomanry's Freedom of the Borough Parade, which was held in Southwater in conjunction with Armed Forces Day. The event recognised the dedication and service of those involved, as well as the wider Armed Forces community. In addition, the Mayor attended the Kushdil Biggest Teeyan Mela at Telford Cultural and Leisure Centre, where more than 300 guests gathered in traditional attire to celebrate their culture and heritage. The Mayor noted that it had been a pleasure to meet and speak with so many attendees and witnessed the enthusiasm and pride with which the event was celebrated.

In closing, the Mayor expressed her pleasure at having had the opportunity to engage with residents, community groups, event organisers and local businesses. She noted that these interactions had been both enlightening and uplifting and she looked forward to meeting many more people and communities throughout the remainder of her mayoral year.

24 Public Questions

The following questions from the public had been received.

(i) The following question to Councillor Ollie Vickers, Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member: Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity was submitted by Ms Joanna Kowalski:

"*What is the Council doing to mitigate the effects of the job losses of Telford & Wrekin residents caused by the transfer of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to the National Trust and what specific Council actions are targeted on supporting those who became unemployed as a result?*"

Councillor Ollie Vickers, Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member: Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity responded that the council had taken proactive steps to support any residents affected by the transfer of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to the National Trust and associated job losses. An entrepreneurship and business start-up training session, which had been funded and delivered by European Innovation, for affected employees interested in starting their own business or gaining a better understanding of self-employment. The council continued to provide employment support through its partner organisations, including access to the Job Box programme, offering practical assistance with CV writing, job searching and job applications. Through these measures, the Council sought to provide employment support and alternative pathways into self-employment for those impacted by the transfer. He asked that Ms Kowalski contact him, following the meeting, to discuss any specific cases.

(ii) The following question to Councillor Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills was submitted by Tvisha Bhat and Mya Hobbs:

"What is the Council doing to help everyone that wants to be involved in democracy to feel safe and able to stand up and have a voice?"

Councillor Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills responded that democracy was strongest when people felt able to share their views and participate without fear of abuse, intimidation or harassment. The Council worked with schools, colleges, the Youth Parliament and community organisations to ensure young people had opportunities to influence decisions and be heard. The council remained committed to creating a safe and respectful environment for participation and worked with partners to challenge hate, tackle abusive behaviour and promote informed and respectful debate. It was important to recognise the impact of misinformation and online abuse on public engagement. She emphasised the importance of decisions being evidence based and acknowledged that everyone, including elected members, had a responsibility to set a positive example both in debate and conduct. The Cabinet Member expressed her thanks to the young people for their valuable contributions to local democracy through their engagement in questioning and challenging decision makers and for representing the view of young people across the borough.

25 Councillor Questions On Notice

The following questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 6.2.2:-

(a) Councillor Andrew Eade asked the following question of Councillor Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing:

"Can the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways update me on what recommendations arising from the recent Consultant's report into road safety on the A518 between Donnington Clock Tower and the 'Sheep Island' at Chetwynd Aston have been implemented, and also detail what recommendations have not been actioned."

Councillor Richard Overton responded that the council took road safety very seriously and continued to invest £91m over the next four years. With regard to collisions on the A518, the council had commissioned an independent road safety review on the route between Donnington Clock Tower and the Sheep Island roundabout which had examined the collision data, road conditions, highway layout and traffic speed to identify any opportunities to improve road safety. The report identified there were no fundamental issues requiring major highway reconstruction but it did identify a number of measures. This included enhanced signage, road markings and improvements to visibility which the council had accepted. A dedicated location to facilitate mobile speed enforcement operations would enable a more visible presence by West Mercia Police. Details of the work would be shared with Ward Members and the Parish Council as well as being published on the council's website.

Councillor Andrew Eade asked a supplementary question in relation to the A518 junction with Wellington Road identified as 3.5 in the safety report and the cluster of accidents, would the Cabinet Member agree that there was a need for traffic lights or an island to control traffic movements at that location. A written response would be acceptable.

Councillor Richard Overton agreed to provide a written response but added that if the development went ahead, s106 fund would be secured for a number of reasons including highway improvements or safety measures.

(b) Councillor Peter Scott asked the following question of Councillor Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing:

"There are a lot of road signs across the borough that are either obscured by tree branches or are just in need of cleaning. Is there an ongoing council programme that will deal with them or do the council rely on members of the public to report them. If the latter, how quickly is any action taken?"

Councillor Richard Overton responded that due to the recent warm weather, the growth of the green and pleasant shrubbery across the borough had increased. The council was working hard to ensure that signs, street name plates, and safety displays were maintained and foliage cut back. The summer safety pruning programme typically started in May and was due to finish around September at which point the team reverted back to a large programme of cutting back during the winter months. It was important to note however, that some vegetation and hedges that obscured visibility were on private land and where improvements were required, the council had to rely on its statutory processes which can be protracted and out of the council's direct control. A programme of sign cleaning was undertaken each year and last week the council had launched its annual dual carriageway maintenance programme which would enable the cleaning of signs, drains emptied, street lights checked and grass cutting to take place. Where issues were found, he encouraged Members and residents to log any issues on the MyTelford App enabling the teams to respond as soon as possible.

(c) Councillor Eileen Callear asked the following question of Councillor Ollie Vickers, Cabinet Member: Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity

"Please can the Cabinet Member update us on the progress that has been made on bus travel across Telford & Wrekin?"

Councillor Ollie Vickers responded that one of the council's biggest achievements had been the introduction and continued growth of the six Travel Telford buses. Since their launch in December 2022, they had carried over one million passenger journeys enabling residents to access work, education, healthcare, shopping and leisure across the borough. It was encouraging to see that numbers continued to grow. Since the network had been refreshed last summer and following resident feedback, there had been a 21% increase in patronage compared with the previous year. This showed the council was adapting to meet the needs of local people and delivering a network that people want to use. Bus fares had been capped across Telford and Wrekin in order to help families face the cost of living pressures with simple, affordable fares at £2 for adults and £1 for children and young people under 19 and now every journey that starts and ended within the borough benefitted from these fares whatever the operator. There had also been improvements to connectivity based on resident feedback with a demand for responsive connectivity which had been expanded. The Wrekin Connect Summer service had recently been launched providing affordable weekend links between Ironbridge Gorge, Wellington and the Wrekin for both residents and tourist and he was proud of what the council had achieved.

(d) Councillor Helena Morgan asked the following question of Councillor Zona Hannington, Cabinet Member: Finance and Resident Services:

"In recent months we have seen an increase in online abuse, hateful language, threats, false allegations and misinformation directed not only at elected members but also at individuals and organisations within our communities. This increasingly hostile environment risks undermining public trust, discouraging people from participating in public life and making it harder to have constructive conversations about important issues.

Can the Cabinet Member explain how Telford and Wrekin Council is working with partners to promote respectful public debate, support those affected by hate and abuse, strengthen community cohesion and ensure that safeguarding and community safety continue to be guided by evidence, compassion and the needs of victims rather than misinformation or attempts to divide our communities?"

Councillor Zona Hannington responded that this was an important issue and in recent years there had been a rise in online abuse, threats, false allegations and misinformation. Health scrutiny and robust challenge was an essential part of democracy and there was a clear difference between legitimate debate and behaviour which was intended to intimidate, harass or silence others making them reluctant to speak up. It discouraged people to get involved or serve their communities and it damaged and weakened trust. The council was committed to creating safe, respected communities without fear of abuse or intimidation and work was undertaking with the police, schools, faith groups, safeguarding partners and the voluntary sector to support victims in order to challenge hate and strengthen community cohesion. By continuing to support those affected, challenging misinformation and making decisions rooted in evidence, compassion and integrity, the council can protect local communities and strengthen local democracy.

(e) Councillor Nigel Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education & Skills

"With the imminent delivery of thousands of new homes in the next few years, what plans does this Council have to provide the hundreds of extra secondary school places that will be required as only one secondary school is included in the local plan and existing secondary schools have limited if any extra capacity to expand?"

Councillor Shirley Reynolds responded that the council had been planning ahead for growth for many years. She was confident that future demand could be met for school places right across the borough. A proactive approach would continue to be taken which would ensure the right

infrastructure was in place as new housing came forward. The building schools for the future secondary schools were designed with expansion in mind using modular construction that allowed additional capacity to be delivered when required. Through the planning process, council officers worked to secure the education infrastructure bringing high quality school places close to home. This included plans for a new secondary school with capacity for 1,200 pupils as well as several new primary schools and additional provision for children and young people with complex special education needs and disabilities through SEND. Over the previous five years, the council had invested over £33.6m into the secondary school estate and had created an additional 1,200 school places which included expansions at Telford Langley School, Holy Trinity Academy and Ercall Wood Academy, together an ongoing expansion of Telford Park School which was due to be completed in September. The council would continue to closely monitor pupil numbers and housing growth and bring forward new schools or further expansions as and when necessary to ensure sufficient places were available for children in the borough.

Councillor Nigel Dugmore asked a supplementary question in relation to the local plan modifications and that this would remove all developer contributions towards the proposed new secondary school and wished to know who would fund the building of this essential secondary school.

Councillor Shirley Reynolds confirmed that the council's budget set out that more than £41m had been set aside for school expansion, maintenance and investment into the existing school estate and much needed SEND provision. This would ensure that local children could learn in a modern, high quality environment and that capacity kept pace with growing demand. Responsible leadership meant planning ahead investing for the future and making the necessary decisions to support growing communities.

(f) Councillor Derek White asked the following question of Councillor Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing

"In light of the withdrawal of PCSOs working past 8pm by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, does the Cabinet Member have any evidence regarding the impact of this decision on issues such as anti-social behaviour? Residents regularly raise concerns on their ability to contact the police but does the council hold any detail on whether there have been any increase in incidents since the PCC's decision? Furthermore, if there is any increase, what representations can the Council make to the PCC regarding the impact of this decision on community safety across the borough?"

Councillor Richard Overton responded that as Members were aware the deployment and working hours of PCSOs was an operational matter for West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner but that the council took very seriously any potential impact on community safety and antisocial behaviour across the borough. The council had continued to invest in the Building Safer and Stronger Communities programme but was limited to what could be done within the enforcement powers and responsibilities it holds. Following the changes to the PCSO work arrangements had been announced, the council had reviewed its antisocial behaviour reports with the police. The picture was mixed and it was important to note that changes in antisocial behaviour could not be directly attributed to the withdrawal of the PCSOs working hours beyond 8pm. The Cabinet Member wished to put on record his appreciation of the frontline police officers who worked hard to keep the community safe. When looking at the data from period from September 2025 to May 2026 and comparing that to the same period in 2024 to 2025 antisocial behaviour had seen some increase but the data from the council and the police was mixed. He would write to the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner requesting a further review and seek an update on any impact and seek assurance that community concerns of safety were addressed as a priority.

Councillor Derek White asked a supplementary question relating to areas such as Sutton Hill who had seen a rise in antisocial behaviour from children of all ages for a few months. Staff and users of the hub felt afraid to attend the centre and felt at risk. The Police had limited knowledge of the problems on the estate compared to that of the PCSOs who had an in-depth knowledge and their influence was missed during the post 8pm hours. Could the Cabinet Member ask the Police and Crime Commissioner to reinstate the hotspot funding for Sutton Hill together with the PCSOs.

Councillor Richard Overton confirmed that a recent meeting was held to discuss the issues being experienced in Sutton Hill. An action was being produced and this would inform the meeting to be held with officers and police representatives to try and resolve the antisocial behaviour issues in Councillor White's Ward. The request regarding hotspot policing would also added to the letter to express the effectiveness of this in the Ward area.

26 Cabinet Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting of the Council

No questions of clarification were raised.

27 CSE Annual Report

Councillor Lee Carter, Leader of the Council, presented the report of the Director of Policy and Governance, which provided Members with the Annual

CSE Report 2026. This was the fourth annual report and set out data, analysis and trends in relation to CSE and the activity that had taken place to ensure the safeguarding of those at risk. The report set out the improvements made to referral pathways, practitioner training, consultation arrangements and safeguarding guidance that would support earlier identification of concerns. Investment into children's service including the CATE Team ensure that children and young people were treated as a priority.

The Leader detailed that the report improved understanding, supported effective safeguarding and maintained public confidence through transparency and in that regard, he would publish an exchange of letters between himself and the Police and Crime Commissioner on the CSE timeline for people to access. Any identified actions set out in the report had been accepted and would continue to be monitored via the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

28 Recommendations from Cabinet

(a) 2025/26 Financial Outturn Report

Councillor Zona Hannington, Cabinet Member: Finance and Resident Services, presented the report of the Director for Finance, People and IDT, which presented the final outturn position for the year in respect of the Council's revenue budget, capital programme and income collection and sought the necessary approvals to comply with financial regulations.

RESOLVED – that:

a) the performance against the 2025/26 Net Revenue budget which resulted in outturn being within budget by £133k be noted;

b) the revenue outturn position for 2025/26, which remains subject to audit by the Council's external auditors, and related virements in Appendix C be noted;

c) the transfers to reserves, and associated approvals to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to spend the reserves detailed in Appendix E be noted. In relation to the 2025/26 Financial Outturn Report Income/Budget equalisation reserve, delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to approve its use;

d) the capital outturn position and approvals related to supplementary estimates, re-phasing and virements shown in Appendix D and as summarised in the report be noted;

e) delegated authority be granted to the Director: Finance, People & IDT to make any changes required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services;

f) the performance against income targets be noted;

g) the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 included at Appendix F be approved.

29 Motions on Notice

(a) Councillor Carolyn Healy will propose the following Motion:-

"This Council rejects the calls from the MP for the Wrekin to allow access to the Telford and Wrekin household recycling centres by residents from outside the borough. The household recycling centres are funded through the council tax payments of Telford and Wrekin residents who also benefit from weekly food waste collections and kerbside green waste collections at no extra charge, services not offered in neighbouring authorities. We send a strong message to the MP for the Wrekin that this Council will not subsidise the lack of services in neighbouring authorities and will always put Telford and Wrekin residents first."

Councillor Lee Carter seconded the motion.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was carried by a majority vote.

RESOLVED – that the motion be approved.

(b) Councillor Rachael Tyrrell will propose the following Motion:-

"This Council notes with concern the continuing problems experienced by residents, local businesses, community organisations and public services as a result of unreliable Royal Mail deliveries, including delayed letters, missed time-sensitive correspondence and inconsistent delivery patterns across the borough. This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Write to Ofcom to express this Council's concern about Royal Mail delivery performance and the impact of delays on residents, businesses and public services in the borough.

2. Ask Ofcom to ensure that Royal Mail is held fully accountable for meeting its universal service obligations and quality-of-service targets.

3. Request that Ofcom considers the particular impact of delivery delays on vulnerable residents, people who are digitally excluded, rural and hard-to-reach communities, and those dependent on postal correspondence for health, legal, financial and welfare matters.

4. Call on Ofcom to require Royal Mail to publish a clear, credible and locally meaningful improvement plan, including how service reliability will be monitored and reported.

5. Ask Royal Mail to provide the Council with information on local delivery performance, staffing levels, delivery office arrangements and the step across the borough."

Councillor Nigel Dugmore seconded the motion.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED – that the motion be approved.

(c) Councillor Andrew Eade will propose the following Motion:-

"This Council undertakes to write to the successor of Keir Starmer's short lived premiership to seek reassurance, on behalf of our communities in Telford & Wrekin, that taxation will not be increased any further from the current record levels but will be reduced by making savings elsewhere."

Councillor Andrew Eade requested that the Motion be withdrawn.

The withdrawal of the Motion was seconded by Councillor Paul Thomas.
The meeting ended at 8.24 pm

Chairman: ----------

Date: Thursday 26 November 2026