Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 12 November 2026 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

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

Also Present: Councillors A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats Group Leader)

Apologies: Councillor P Watling.

CAB-27 Declarations of Interest

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 8, in respect of condition-discharge work carried out by Red Kite Ltd on the Phoenix School site, an allocated site within the draft Local Plan.

CAB-28 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CAB-29 Leader's Announcements

No announcements were made.

CAB-30 Cost of Living Strategy 2026 - 2029

The Cabinet Member: Public Health and Unlocking Opportunities for All presented the new Cost of Living Strategy 2026-2029. Members were advised that although inflation had reduced significantly from its peak, many residents continued to face financial pressures arising from higher food, housing and energy costs. The strategy committed over £9m of Crisis and Resilience Funding over the next three years, with a renewed focus on supporting residents facing immediate financial hardship whilst building longer-term financial resilience.

The Cabinet Member highlighted a range of measures contained within the strategy including continued emergency welfare support, discretionary housing payments, additional holiday activity provision, enhanced advice

services through Citizens Advice and Age UK, supermarket vouchers for pensioners, free school meal auto-enrolment and continued support through Family Hubs, Live Well Hubs and the Here to Help Bus. The strategy built on significant support already delivered since 2022 and sought to help residents move beyond crisis intervention towards improved financial resilience and independence.

Cabinet Members welcomed the Strategy and the continued commitment to supporting residents facing financial hardship. Members highlighted the importance of free school meals, holiday activities, affordable transport, welfare advice and concessionary leisure opportunities in improving outcomes for residents. The importance of prevention, early intervention and helping residents to build long-term financial resilience was also emphasised. The benefits of the borough-wide £2 bus fare cap and wider support available through Family Hubs, Live Well Hubs and community-based services were noted.

The Liberal Democrat Group Leader welcomed the strategy and support for vulnerable residents, whilst noting the pressures that continued to arise from wider economic conditions. He particularly highlighted the benefits of home energy improvements and the importance of ensuring residents could access advice and support services. He also welcomed plans to improve Ask Tom, noting the importance of ensuring residents could easily contact the Council during times of hardship.

The Conservative Group Leader welcomed support for residents experiencing hardship and stressed the importance of providing both emergency assistance and opportunities for people to become more financially independent.

In response, the Leader highlighted the Council's investment in energy support, community outreach and digital improvements, including enhancements to Ask Tom to improve residents' access to services.

RESOLVED – that:

a) **progress and impact of the previous Cost of Living Strategy 2022-2025, through which the Council has invested to support residents, delivering practical support to help households manage the impact of rising living costs and ensuring that targeted assistance reached those most impacted be noted;**

b) **the new Cost of Living Strategy 2026–2029, which commits to further investment of over £9m with a renewed focus on responding to financial hardship and crisis and strengthening financial resilience, reducing inequalities and helping individuals,**

families and communities to better withstand future economic challenges be approved; and

c) **delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing, Commercial & Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Unlocking Opportunities for All, to take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations within the Cost of Living Strategy 2026–2029, including the approval and allocation of funding from the Crisis and Resilience Fund, together with any other funding awarded to the Council, to support residents and businesses to manage the impact of cost of living pressures and build longer-term financial resilience throughout the duration of the Strategy within approved budgets and in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.**

CAB-31 Better Homes for All Update

The Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing presented the Better Homes for All Update. Members were advised that the programme continued to improve housing standards, tackle rogue landlord activity and support residents facing homelessness and rough sleeping. During the previous two years, the Council had responded to more than 1,000 tenant support requests, undertaken over 700 inspections, served more than 240 improvement notices and secured over £130,000 through enforcement activity.

The report also highlighted progress in homelessness prevention, including support provided to over 1,900 households during the previous two years, reductions in rough sleeping and significant reductions in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. The Cabinet Member thanked officers and partners for their work, particularly in supporting vulnerable residents and improving conditions within local communities.

Cabinet Members welcomed the progress made through the Better Homes for All programme and highlighted the importance of safe, secure and decent housing. Members welcomed ongoing action to tackle poor housing conditions and rogue landlords, alongside the positive impact of homelessness prevention and rough sleeping initiatives. Support was also expressed for the proposed introduction of the Article 4 Direction in relation to HMOs.

The Leader thanked the Housing Solutions Team for their work supporting some of the borough's most vulnerable residents and recognised the complexity of many homelessness cases.

The Conservative Group Leader welcomed the proposed Article 4 Direction and praised the work undertaken to reduce rough sleeping in the Borough. He noted the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between landlord engagement and enforcement activity to improve standards.

The Liberal Democrat Group Leader welcomed the report and the progress made in supporting vulnerable residents. He highlighted the importance of continuing to provide assistance to those facing housing difficulties and ensuring residents were aware of the support and advice available to them.

RESOLVED – that:

a) **the continued impact of the Better Homes For All Programme supporting tenants, landlords and communities across the borough by improving housing standards, supporting access to safe and decent homes, tackling poor housing conditions and rogue landlord activity be welcomed;**

b) **the continued focus of Better Homes for All on Engagement, Education & Enforcement set out in the report be welcomed;**

c) **the introduction of the proposed Article 4 Directive which will require all new Houses in Multiple Occupation to have planning approval from February 2027 be noted;**

d) **the impact of work to relieve, prevent and support those presenting as homeless and its multi agency focus recognised in this year's Housing Excellence Awards be welcomed;**

e) **the programme of work set out in the Report, in line with the Council's adopted Homelessness Strategy, to further support individuals and families faced with Homelessness and Rough Sleeping be approved; and**

f) **the Government's renewed focus and new investment into tackling homelessness and rough sleeping and supports the continued national focus on prevention and improving outcomes for those at risk of homelessness be welcomed.**

CAB-32 Council House Building Programme

The Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing presented proposals to deliver 300 new Council-owned homes over the next three years through a £53.65m investment programme. Members were advised that the programme would represent the first return to direct council house building at scale in 27

years and would provide a mix of affordable, social rented and specialist accommodation to meet local housing needs.

The report outlined the Council's broader housing achievements and the increasing demand for affordable accommodation, specialist housing and accessible homes. The programme would see individual schemes brought forward on a business case basis and would seek to maximise external grant funding and deliver long-term value to residents and the Council.

Cabinet Members welcomed the proposals and highlighted the importance of increasing the supply of affordable and specialist housing across the borough. Members noted the wider benefits that good quality council housing could bring in reducing homelessness, supporting health and wellbeing and creating opportunities for residents. The long-term value of investing in modern, energy-efficient homes was recognised, together with the importance of ensuring that the programme remained financially sustainable and maximised opportunities to secure external funding whilst creating assets that would deliver benefits for local communities over the long term.

The Liberal Democrat Group Leader welcomed the proposals whilst seeking reassurance regarding the long-term financial sustainability of the programme. He commented on the importance of ensuring that future borrowing and investment remained affordable and also raised questions regarding the continuing impact of Right to Buy on the long-term retention of Council-owned homes.

The Conservative Group Leader noted the proposals to increase affordable housing provision and reflected on previous housing stock transfer arrangements. He recognised the need for additional affordable homes whilst noting the financial challenges associated with delivering large-scale Council housebuilding programmes.

In response, the Leader highlighted recent Government reforms and investment supporting a return to council housebuilding, including changes to Right to Buy arrangements and increased funding opportunities for local authorities.

RESOLVED – that:

a) **the delivery of 300 new Council owned homes over the next 3 years, as set out in the report, significantly expanding the Council's stock ownership and:**

- **increasing the quantity of social and affordable rented properties, managed by the Council, for local residents;**

- **maximising delivery of social rented properties including a range of sizes and locations to support both individuals and families;**
- **including specialist and supported housing targeted to need be supported;**

b) that a Council Homes Fund is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reflecting the level of investment outlined in this report be supported and recommended to Full Council for approval;

c) the wider work that is being done to increase the availability of affordable and specialist accommodation in the Borough to meet residents needs be noted; and

d) delegated authority be granted to the Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services and Director: Finance, People & IDT in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Safer Streets & Better Housing to approve investment, subject to business case and enter into any documentation necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report.

CAB-33 Adoption of Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability presented the report on the Adoption of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan. Members were advised that, following examination by independent Planning Inspectors, the Plan had been found sound subject to modifications and was now recommended for adoption by Full Council. More than 3,000 residents and stakeholders had engaged throughout the plan-making process.

The report was described as a long-term framework for sustainable growth across the borough, supporting housing delivery, employment growth, climate change objectives, infrastructure provision and environmental protection. The Local Plan would provide for six new schools, additional healthcare and transport infrastructure, employment growth and new green spaces whilst maintaining a five-year housing land supply and protecting the borough against speculative development.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and recognised the significant amount of work undertaken over a number of years to prepare the Local Plan and support its examination. Members highlighted the importance of having an up-to-date Local Plan to provide a clear framework for future housing growth, employment opportunities and investment across the Borough. The benefits of maintaining a plan-led approach to development, supporting the delivery of

key infrastructure and ensuring that communities could continue to grow in a sustainable way were also noted. Members further recognised the role of the Local Plan in supporting environmental objectives and creating certainty for residents, businesses and developers.

The Liberal Democrat Group Leader acknowledged the importance of maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan and recognised the requirement to plan for future growth. He expressed concerns regarding the delivery of supporting infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure and the impact that additional development could have on existing communities.

The Conservative Group Leader expressed concerns regarding the scale and location of developments proposed within the Local Plan, together with the potential impact on rural areas within the Borough and the character of existing communities. He questioned whether sufficient infrastructure and services would be in place to support the level of growth proposed and referred to concerns that had been raised by residents throughout the Local Plan consultation process. He also raised concerns regarding the Council's five-year housing land supply position and the implications this could have for future development across the Borough.

In response, the Deputy Leader highlighted that the Plan had been independently found sound, included significant biodiversity improvements and would secure infrastructure through the development management process and Section 106 agreements. She also emphasised that the Plan would protect valued green spaces whilst providing for future housing and employment growth. She explained that the adoption of the Local Plan would assist the Council in maintaining a five-year housing land supply and provide a robust framework for managing future development across the Borough.

The Leader thanked officers and everyone involved in the preparation of the Plan and emphasised that, whilst difficult decisions had been required, the adopted Plan would provide certainty, protect communities and support planned growth across the borough.

RESOLVED – that:

a) **the Inspectors have, subject to approval of recommended modifications found the Local Plan sound be noted;**

b) **that this approval will ensure a Local Plan is in place which will protect green spaces, care for existing communities and invest in the future as it will remove the risk of speculative development, create jobs and bring forward new affordable housing opportunities and support regeneration of existing housing stock be noted;**

c) **the recommendations set out in the Inspectors' report on the Examination of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (Appendix A) and accept their Schedule of Main Modifications (Appendix B) be accepted;**

d) **the further Local Plan Additional Modifications and Policies Map Modifications (Appendix C, D and E) be approved;**

e) **the adoption of the Local Plan be recommended to Full Council at its meeting on 26 November 2026 and agreed that it will form part of the Development Plan for the borough;**

f) **the Local Plan Policies Map (Appendix H and I) incorporating changes set out in Appendix D and F, which illustrates geographically the policies in the new Local Plan 2021-2041 and forms part of the Local Plan documents be approved;**

g) **delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Place (or any other authorised officer), in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to undertake all necessary administrative and publication steps consequential upon and following Full Council's adoption of the Local Plan, including publication of the adopted documents, including the Policies Map and related notices. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place (or any other authorised officer), in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, when required; and**

h) **that on adoption by Full Council, the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2031 in its entirety will be withdrawn and cease to have effect be agreed.**

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Debbie Thomas-White
Interim Head of Service: Registrars, Legal and Democracy

Signed .....

Date: Thursday 3 December 2026